

# Cyber Concerns While Remote Working During COVID-19

During these days of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses and organizations are in full scale emergency planning for – if not execution of – remote working contingency plans. Many of our clients have contacted us with questions and we felt it necessary to put together a communication with some guidance on setting up your employees to work remotely.

Some organizations are using largely cloud based solutions for email, file storage, CRM, etc. This allows users to perform most or all of their daily responsibilities without access to the local office network. If these users also have company provided laptops, they truly have the ability to work from anywhere with an internet connection.

However, most organizations are not fully setup for their users to work remotely and they face scenarios where users have limited to no access to critical systems to perform their responsibilities. Unfortunately, the speed at which the current situation is evolving is such that it does not lend itself to more careful planning. However, care still needs to be taken in executing this to ensure that security is forefront.

## Security Considerations

### Cyber Security

While your office has the best in firewall, wifi security, and anti-virus protection, your employee's home network security is unknown. If an employee is asked to work from home on a personal computer, best practice is going to be to have them remote into a work computer where you know the security on that system is good.

### Organization Data Security

Care should be taken to ensure that your organization's data is kept secure. We advise against sending employees home with data on flash drives to work on their personal computers. Data exposure like this is risky not to mention the potential confusion of data versioning issues that could arise.

### Client Data Privacy

Many organizations have compliance considerations when it comes to client data. This can involve considerations in access, storage, and transmission. Make sure that in your rush to become remotely operational that you do not expose yourself to a compliance breach that could be a headache long after the pandemic is over.

## Productivity Considerations

### Email Access

Most organizations use Office 365 which allows a remote webmail access with most of the functionality of desktop Outlook at <https://outlook.office.com>. If you do not have Office 365, most other email providers have some form of webmail access as well. If your email does not allow for webmail, remote access to your office computer may be necessary to access your email.

### Key System Access

CRM, Accounting systems, etc. may need to be accessed out of the office. Some may be cloud-based and accessible from anywhere; others may be on-premise only and require remote access to an office computer.

## Infrastructure Considerations

### Remote Access

There are a few ways to remotely access your office computer from a home computer and some will also allow you to use Chromebook, Android tablet, or iPad as well. It's important to be in control of what methods your employees are using to remotely access their office computers so that there can be a single approved, secure method. Without this guidance you risk employees going to search for remote access on their own where they could encounter one of the many scams or even systems that may technically work, but may also be unwittingly giving access to hackers.

## Future Planning Considerations

Finally, whenever an event like this occurs, remember that scammers and hackers will take full advantage to use people's fear and curiosity to wreak havoc. **Be on guard against scams** that either play on people's fears or that seem too good to be true. Never click on links on questionable or strange looking emails and never open attachments that you are not expecting – even if sent by someone you know. This is prime time for accounts to be compromised so be on the lookout for phishing attempts. And as always, if there's ever a question, please call our office and we're happy to review it with you.