



WV Executive Branch Privacy Tip

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New Year, New Data Security

A lot has happened over the past year, and a lot of innovations have taken their place in our society. New large-scale data breaches have impacted consumers, and new regulations about how we conduct our daily connected lives are on the horizon. A better understanding of our connected devices has been revealed, as well as official concerns about foreign hacking.

These last few days of the year are a good time to make resolutions for the new year, and that includes security and privacy regulations. While you resolve to eat healthier or walk a few days a week after work, take the time to visit your [personal identifiable information](#) and launch some good habits for 2018, such as:

1. "I will secure my accounts."

This one couldn't be easier. All it takes is setting up a strong password that includes a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, a number or two, and a symbol, then making sure you only use that password on one account. Change it up—a little or a lot—on your other accounts to keep hackers out.

2. "I will update my accounts."

Again, it doesn't get easier than this. The first time you access a commonly used account next year, such as your email or your social media accounts, click "forgot my password." Change that password to your new strong, unique password. Then, each time you use a not-so-common account during 2018, click that same "forgot my password" link and change it again. This way, you'll be blocking hackers from using old login credentials that they purchased online or stole.

3. "I will protect my accounts with 2FA."

This one is a little harder, but the payoff can be big. [Setting up two-factor authentication](#) on sensitive accounts like your online banking, mobile wallet, and email means you'll have to provide two different forms of login information. It's an extra layer of security that can keep a hacker or identity thief out of your accounts.

4. "I will monitor my accounts all year long."

Keeping tabs with on your credit card and bank accounts takes only a few minutes of your time, but can help you [stop suspicious activity in its tracks](#). Checking your credit reports is a little more involved, but worth it in the long run. Request your free copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit reporting agencies once a year to watch out for anything that shouldn't be there, then report it immediately.

5. "I will ask the hard questions."

When it comes to handing over your information, it can be unnerving to ask the recipient how they plan to store the information, who will be able to access it, or why they even need it in the first place. Make 2018 the year that you [stop and think before filling](#) out that form or submitting that information online, and make smart choices about why the entities you do business with need it.

Contact the Identity Theft Resource Center for toll-free, no-cost assistance at (888) 400-5530. For on-the-go assistance, check out the [free ID Theft Help App](#) from ITRC.

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.