

Simple Steps for Staying Safe Online

As the old saying goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Well, that’s especially true for keeping your computer safe from the dangers you might encounter while surfing the Internet.

Did you know that the average Internet user has on her/his computer twenty-eight (28) pieces of software that monitor online behavior? And the user has no idea that the software is there! More than that, the user doesn’t know how this monitoring software, often called Spyware, got onto the computer.

What’s the big deal?

Spyware, worms, viruses and other malicious code and applications can infect your system without your knowledge, can compromise your privacy, and produce a variety of problems that affect your computer hardware and Internet experience.

As your provider, it is our goal to help you get the best, and safest Internet experience possible.

To do this, we want you to know how to avoid some of the “bad neighborhoods” online and how to take steps that can save you headaches—and maybe even some money in computer repair bills!

The simple steps

- Keep Windows up to date
- Get—and run—an anti-virus program
- Keep the anti-virus program up to date
- Turn on or install a firewall
- Do not open attachments

Keep Windows updated!

As for the recent Sasser worm, Microsoft releases security patches and updates for Outlook Express, Windows Operating Systems, and certain Microsoft applications.

These patches and updates address security vulnerabilities and ensure you have the most up-to-date software.

We urge you to update your Windows operating system and software regularly—at least once a month.

To update Windows, visit the Microsoft Web site referenced below, or simply run "Windows Update" from the Start menu on your computer. Windows Update automatically connects to the Microsoft Web site, and allows you to scan your system for appropriate patches.

Please be patient when updating your system, as the volume of downloads from the Microsoft Web site may make some pages slow to load.

Microsoft releases security patches monthly basis. We urge our subscribers who use Microsoft products to check at least once a month for updates.

To scan for necessary updates and download patches, go to:

<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>.

If you do not use Microsoft products, please contact your vendor for recommendations for keeping software up to date.

Keep anti-virus software updated

Most new computers come with anti-virus software loaded on them. But these programs provide protection only when they are run and only if they are updated regularly.

To keep the anti-virus software updated, you will need to subscribe to a service. But, if you spend any time online, it's money well spent!

Check for updates regularly—every week or so.

Turn on or install a firewall

A firewall provides a barrier between a computer network and the online world.

Microsoft Windows provides an Internet Connection Firewall (ICF) that can protect a network or a single computer. If you use Windows XP and would like to enable the ICF, please call our technical support number listed below for help.

Other firewall programs that can protect your system include:

- [Zone Alarm Plus](#)
- [McAfee Firewall](#)
- [Norton Personal Firewall](#)

Don't open attachments!

These days, it's not enough to trust the sender. Sometimes, a computer can be "hijacked," taken over and used to send Spam and viruses over the Internet by sending e-mail to all of the addresses listed in the e-mail address book.

Unless you know the sender of e-mail and are expecting an attachment from that sender, be wary.

Be cautious. E-mail the sender to make sure they intended to send you the attachment.

It's a simple step. It doesn't take long to do. And it can save you a lot of trouble!

Prevent spyware

Want to know how to avoid having monitoring software put on your computer?

Again, common sense and simple steps can help keep your computer safe and your privacy secure.

- Do not operate peer-to-peer (P2P) software, which often contains spyware.

- Do not allow any browser plug-ins to install, unless you know what they are
- Research “free” programs before you try them
- Do not allow any Web site to change your home page
- Turn on or install a firewall

Think you might be infected?

If you are concerned that your system may already be infected with a virus or spyware, please visit http://www.trueband.net/protect_yourself.html.

We have posted a link to a free utility to diagnose and clean your system.

This application will be effective for this use, but to prevent re-infection, you will need to patch your operating system.

If you have questions, or are unsure of how to use this utility, please feel free to call technical support at (insert number). They will be happy to assist you.