

# Legal Update

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## GIVE YOUR COMPANY THE GIFT OF DATA SECURITY

By Peter T. Berk

With the recent Equifax data breach, and holiday time and tax season upon us, now is an ideal time to think about your data security and how you can help protect your company, yourself and your employees. Here are 5 tips for year-end:

### 1. Review and Update Internal and External Policies

Many companies have policies regarding matters such as technology use, data security, privacy, and sensitive information. But when was the last time you reviewed and updated those policies? Set your calendar to annually review these policies and update them to (a) add current best practices, and (b) reflect the reality of how your company does business.

### 2. Get Ahead of the Curve with Training

When was the last time your company trained employees about its data breach related policies? While many companies plan for diversity, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination and other trainings as the new year rolls around, very few plan for data security training. As the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Annual training on policies and best practices for data security is critical in a world of malware, hacking and data breaches. Make it a part of next year's budget and training plans.

### 3. Monitor Bank and Other Statements

During the holidays, individuals and companies buy gifts for others; thieves use this opportunity to steal credit card and other sensitive information to open accounts, obtain credit and run various scams. Watching your and your company's bank and other account statements (as well as advising employees to watch theirs) can help limit potential damages from any unusual activity.

### 4. Watch Out for Tax-Related Scams

With tax season coming, [e-mail scammers](#) will attempt to obtain employee W-2 and other information by posing as a company official, payroll service employee or IRS employee. Having policies in place relating to sharing sensitive employee information, and training employees about these types of scams, can help prevent your company from being a victim.

### 5. Beware of Early Tax Filing Scams

Given the enormity of the Equifax breach, there will likely be an uptick in fake tax filings by criminals to obtain tax refunds. Keep your company on track to get tax information to employees as soon as possible. Also, encourage employees to file their returns as soon as possible, before criminals can file fake returns in their name. More information can also be found on the [IRS website](#).

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