

Punch

A BOUTIQUE INVESTMENT ADVISORY

Wealth Strategies Group

Cybersecurity: Ways to Protect Yourself

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Technology offers a pathway to efficiently manage our financial lives. With the stroke of a key or a few taps on an app, we can move money between accounts, update our address, change our beneficiary designations, and much more. These benefits come at a price. The convenience technology provides for each consumer can also be extended to the thieves who may be looking to gain access to your accounts. We at Punch, and throughout the financial industry in general, use the measures available to ensure your private data remains private and your accounts can only be accessed by you, the account owner. There are several steps you can take, too, as we work in partnership:

- **Use strong, unique passwords** – Use passwords that consist of a random combination of letters, numbers and symbols. Consider using a password manager to store and keep track of these passwords. Never share your passwords with others.
- **Always enable two-factor authentication when available.**
- **Protect your computer** – Use a firewall and virus/spyware protection software to keep your information secure.
- **Safeguard your social security number** – Never provide your full social security number over the phone or online, if someone asks for your full social security number, you should be wary. Never carry your social security card in your wallet.
- **Go paperless when possible** – This eliminates the possibility of someone stealing sensitive information from your mailbox.
- **Keep your software updated** – Hackers exploit security flaws to steal your data. Companies continually develop and release updates to derail hackers, so take advantage of the most up-to-date protection.
- **Don't send full account numbers or social security numbers via email** – Only include partial account numbers when emailing account information. If you need to provide full account numbers or attach statements, always use our encrypted email service. Also, never email your social security number. If you need to send private information via email, please request we send you a secure email. When you reply to that email, it will continue to be encrypted.
- **Be aware of suspicious links** – Never click on links that come from a sender you don't know, and remember to call the sender to verify the message if you think the email may be illegitimate. Do not respond to emails that ask for your personal information without verbal confirmation.
- **Secure your mobile devices** – Use biometric identity verification to unlock your phone and update your settings to auto-lock after 30 seconds of stalled screen use.

Despite your efforts, you may find yourself in a situation where your personal information has been compromised. In the event of a security breach, please reach out to Punch right away so we can take steps to mitigate losses and protect your information and accounts. Together, our vigilance and awareness can go a long way to protect you. ♦