

Your basic cyber security checklist

Getting started with cyber security doesn't need to feel overwhelming. Think of this as your quick-win list. We've put together the simple first steps that make the biggest difference to keeping your business safe. Practical ways you can protect your people, your data, and your reputation starting today.

Lock it down

Switch on multi-factor authentication (MFA) for email, banking, and payroll.

Use a password manager so no one reuses weak passwords.

Aim for passphrases that are 12+ characters.

Update, don't wait

Turn on automatic updates for laptops, phones, and apps.

Install security patches as soon as they're available (and within 14 days max).

Back it up

Set up automatic daily backups of important files.

Keep at least one copy offsite or in the cloud.

Test a restore every few months to make sure it works.

Safety net

Install trusted anti-virus software on every device.

Keep the built-in firewall turned on.

Do it daily

Give staff regular training on spotting phishing emails and safe browsing.

Encourage a 'stop and check' culture before clicking links or opening attachments.

Protect all devices

Set up a screen lock on every laptop, tablet, and phone.

Switch on built-in encryption.

Remove any unused or outdated apps.

Set some ground rules

Write an acceptable use policy: how staff handle data, use devices, and work remotely.

If staff use personal devices, set some BYOD rules (minimum updates, screen locks, antivirus).

Plan for an incident

Set up an incident response plan and test it.

Make sure everyone knows what will happen in the event of a breach – who to call, what to do

Keep a simple contact sheet with all key numbers in one place.