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## Cyber: Make Your Home a Haven for Online Safety

*In honor of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) is sharing important tips each week in October to help digital users within the District learn more about cybersecurity and how to better protect themselves and their loved ones from cyber threats.*



You lock the doors of your home to counter the physical threat of an intruder stealing your belongings or harming your loved ones, but have you thought about protecting your home and family from cyber threats? Have you taken steps to protect your home network and keep your internet-connected devices from being hacked? Do you teach your children how to stay safe online?

If you answered “no” to any of these questions, please read the following tips to help protect yourself and your family from some of the more common cyber threats.

- Change default usernames and passwords on devices such as routers, DVRs, security cameras, baby monitors, and other internet-connected devices. Hackers can use default login credentials to gain unauthorized access to devices and infect them with malware, steal data, and spy on users.
- Monitor and limit your children’s internet usage, either by using reputable parental-control software or by modifying the settings on your router. If possible, block access to known malicious or inappropriate websites.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of sharing too much personal information online. Tell them not to share their phone numbers, home addresses, or school locations on social media, public forums, or with people they do not personally know.
- Be careful letting your children play online multiplayer games as they can be used as vehicles for cyberbullying. Additionally, sexual predators can use these games to contact children and gain their trust. Advise your children to tell you immediately if they are victims of cyberbullying or if they have received unwanted contact through an online game.
- Educate senior citizens in your family and community about phishing schemes and phone scams. Seniors are an attractive target for scammers because they are often more trusting and less tech-savvy than younger people.

For more cybersecurity tips, visit the District of Columbia's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) at [octo.dc.gov/cybersecurity](http://octo.dc.gov/cybersecurity) and the National Cyber Security Alliance at [StaySafeOnline.org](http://StaySafeOnline.org).