



November 21, 2022

Via E-mail (Idtheft@oag.state.md.us)

Office of the Attorney General
200 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, MD 21202

To Whom It May Concern:

In accordance with Md. Code Ann., Com. Law § 14-3504(h)(1), I am writing on behalf of the County of Southampton, Virginia to notify you regarding the nature and circumstances of a recent data security incident. Southampton's mailing address is 2602 Administration Center Drive, Courtland, VA 23837.

Southampton was the victim of a cyberattack involving ransomware on September 6, 2022. Southampton is just one of more than 1,000 municipalities to suffer a ransomware attack in the past year. Fortunately, Southampton recovered from backups without any large negative impact on its operations. However, the threat actor then published a single Southampton W-2 to its website. We notified the Virginia State Police Fusion Center of these issues as soon as we became aware of them.

Based on Southampton's investigation of the targeted drive, we believe that the cyber criminals could have accessed personal information relating to employees, delinquent personal property taxpayers, and other individuals. While we are not certain what information was actually acquired, we intend to notify potentially affected individuals out of an abundance of caution. As described in detail in the attached notification letter for affected individuals, the information acquired by the cyber criminals may have included names, Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, and/or addresses.

We discovered that the nefarious actors acquired the published W-2 on September 14, 2022, and promptly took steps to secure our systems and begin investigating the nature and scope of the incident. We have engaged leading outside security experts to assist with our investigation and are implementing various cybersecurity enhancements. We are working closely with and supporting criminal investigations by the Virginia Fusion Center, and the FBI. Southampton has arranged to provide potentially affected individuals with one year of identity/credit monitoring and identity restoration services through Experian at no cost to them.

Collectively, there are approximately 26 Maryland residents affected by this issue. While we knew Marylanders might be impacted on September 14, 2022, due to the nature of our operations, it took time for our outside counsel to conduct a document review to identify the exact individuals impacted. Attached for your reference is a copy of the notice we plan to mail out to impacted individuals on November 22, 2022.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Brian S. Thrower
County Administrator
Southampton County, VA
757-653-3015
bthrower@southamptoncounty.org
Enclosures



Return Mail Processing
PO Box 589
Claysburg, PA 16625-0589

November 22, 2022

i6376-L01-0000001 T00001 P001 *****SCH 5-DIGIT 12345



SAMPLE A SAMPLE - L01 INDIVIDUAL
APT ABC
123 ANY STREET
ANYTOWN, ST 12345-6789



Dear Sample A. Sample,

Southampton County (“Southampton”), like many localities and organizations across the country, has unfortunately been the victim of a ransomware incident. We are writing to share with you how this incident may have affected your personal information and, as a precaution, to provide you with steps you can take to protect your information.

Ransomware is a form of malware that is used by cyber criminals to prevent users from accessing files, and, in some cases, to extract and hold data hostage until a ransom is paid. In this matter, a cyber criminal accessed a single server at Southampton and encrypted it. We were able to recover from this matter and successfully prevent this incident from impacting any of our critical operations. However, thereafter the cyber criminal claimed that they took sensitive data from the server. This caused us to review the server in question to determine any personal information contained on it.

Although we have no conclusive evidence that the cyber criminal was successful in removing your personal information from Southampton’s server, out of an abundance of caution we wanted to alert you to this matter and provide you with free credit monitoring.

Southampton takes the privacy and security of your personal information very seriously and we sincerely regret any concern this incident may cause you.

What Happened and What We Are Doing

On September 6, 2022, a single server at Southampton was encrypted by a cyber criminal. Fortunately, Southampton fought off this cyber-attack with no interruption to essential County operations. However, after Southampton recovered from this incident, a single W-2 form appeared on the dark web with the criminal claiming that they removed sensitive data from the encrypted Southampton server. The server in question held some archived County information.

Upon discovering the incident, our IT team promptly took the appropriate steps to contain the incident. To ensure the safety of our community’s systems, we also engaged with leading outside security experts to conduct a thorough review of our environment. We also notified the FBI Cyber Crimes Division, the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia Fusion Center. We are supporting law enforcement in their efforts to bring the criminals to justice. Southampton County takes its obligation to safeguard personal information very seriously and we are continuing to evaluate additional actions to strengthen our network security in the face of an ever-evolving cyber threat landscape.

0000001



What Information Was Involved

Our outside counsel conducted an extensive review of any information that was held on the server in order to identify any person who might have been impacted in this incident. Based on this review, the types of personal information involved may have included your name, social security number, driver's license number, and/or address.

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

We are alerting you about this issue so you can take steps to help protect your identity, personal information, and credit information. You are entitled to one free credit report annually from each of the three nationwide consumer reporting agencies. To order your free credit report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com or call toll-free at 1-877-322-8228. We encourage you to remain vigilant by reviewing your account statements and monitoring your free credit reports.

In addition, we have arranged to offer credit monitoring and identity restoration services from Experian at no cost to you. The enclosed Reference Guide provides more information about the services and how to register for them, directions for requesting credit reports, and additional recommendations on the protection of personal information.

For More Information

We deeply regret that this incident occurred and are committed to supporting you. If you have any questions regarding this issue or the credit monitoring services, please call **(833) 420-2827** toll-free Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. PST and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST (excluding major U.S. holidays). You may also reach us at privacy@southamptoncounty.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B.S. Thrower", with a stylized, flowing script.

Brian S. Thrower

Southampton County Administrator

Reference Guide

We encourage affected individuals to take the following steps:

Register for Credit Monitoring and Identity Restoration Services. To help protect your identity, we are offering complimentary access to Experian IdentityWorksSM for 12 months.

If you believe there was fraudulent use of your information as a result of this incident and would like to discuss how you may be able to resolve those issues, please reach out to an Experian agent. If, after discussing your situation with an agent, it is determined that identity restoration support is needed then an Experian Identity Restoration agent is available to work with you to investigate and resolve each incident of fraud that occurred from the date of the incident (including, as appropriate, helping you with contacting credit grantors to dispute charges and close accounts; assisting you in placing a freeze on your credit file with the three major credit bureaus; and assisting you with contacting government agencies to help restore your identity to its proper condition).

Please note that Identity Restoration is available to you for 12 months from the date of this letter and does not require any action on your part at this time. The Terms and Conditions for this offer are located at www.ExperianIDWorks.com/restoration.

While identity restoration assistance is immediately available to you, we also encourage you to activate the fraud detection tools available through your complimentary 12-month membership in Experian IdentityWorks. This product provides you with superior identity detection and resolution of identity theft. To start monitoring your personal information, please follow the steps below:

- Ensure that you **enroll by** February 28, 2023 (Your code will not work after this date.)
- **Visit** the Experian IdentityWorks website to enroll: www.experianidworks.com/credit
- Provide your **activation code**: **ABCDEFGHI**

If you have questions about the product, need assistance with Identity Restoration that arose as a result of this incident or would like an alternative to enrolling in Experian IdentityWorks online, please contact Experian's customer care team at **(833) 420-2827** by February 28, 2023. Be prepared to provide engagement number **B080973** as proof of eligibility for the Identity Restoration services by Experian.



ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING YOUR 12 MONTH MEMBERSHIP IN EXPERIAN IDENTITYWORKS

A credit card is **not** required for enrollment in Experian IdentityWorks. You can contact Experian **immediately** regarding any fraud issues, and have access to the following features once you enroll in Experian IdentityWorks:

- **Experian credit report at signup:** See what information is associated with your credit file. Daily credit reports are available for online members only.*
- **Credit Monitoring:** Actively monitors Experian files for indicators of fraud.
- **Identity Restoration:** Identity Restoration specialists are immediately available to help you address credit and non-credit related fraud.
- **Experian IdentityWorks ExtendCARE™:** You receive the same high level of Identity Restoration support even after your Experian IdentityWorks membership has expired.
- **\$1 Million Identity Theft Insurance**:** Provides coverage for certain costs and unauthorized electronic fund transfers.

* Offline members will be eligible to call for additional reports quarterly after enrolling

** The Identity Theft Insurance is underwritten and administered by American Bankers Insurance Company of Florida, an Assurant company. Please refer to the actual policies for terms, conditions, and exclusions of coverage. Coverage may not be available in all jurisdictions.

Monitor Your Accounts

We recommend that you regularly review statements from your accounts and periodically obtain your credit report from one or more of the national credit reporting companies. You may obtain a free copy of your credit report online at www.annualcreditreport.com, by calling toll-free 1-877-322-8228, or by mailing an Annual Credit Report Request Form (available at www.annualcreditreport.com) to Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA, 30348-5281. You may also purchase a copy of your credit report by contacting one or more of the three national credit reporting agencies listed below.

Equifax®
P.O. Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374-0241
1-800-685-1111
www.equifax.com

Experian
P.O. Box 9701
Allen, TX 75013-9701
1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com

TransUnion®
P.O. Box 1000
Chester, PA 19016-1000
1-800-888-4213
www.transunion.com

When you receive your credit reports, review them carefully. Look for accounts or creditor inquiries that you did not initiate or do not recognize. Look for information, such as a home address and Social Security number that is not accurate. If you see anything you do not understand, call the credit reporting agency at the telephone number on the report.

For Colorado, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and Vermont residents: You may obtain one or more (depending on the state) additional copies of your credit report, free of charge. You must contact each of the credit reporting agencies directly to obtain such additional report(s).

Credit Freeze

You have the right to put a security freeze, also known as a credit freeze, on your credit file, so that no new credit can be opened in your name without the use of a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that is issued to you when you initiate a freeze. A credit freeze is designed to prevent potential credit grantors from accessing your credit report without your consent. If you place a credit freeze, potential creditors and other third parties will not be able to access your credit report unless you temporarily lift the freeze. Therefore,

using a credit freeze may delay your ability to obtain credit. Pursuant to federal law, you cannot be charged to place or lift a credit freeze on your credit report. Should you wish to place a credit freeze, please contact all three major consumer reporting agencies listed below.

Equifax
P.O. Box 105788
Atlanta, GA 30348-5788
1-800-685-1111
[www.equifax.com/personal/
credit-report-services](http://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services)

Experian
P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013-9554
1-888-397-3742
[www.experian.com/
freeze/center.html](http://www.experian.com/freeze/center.html)

TransUnion
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016-2000
1-888-909-8872
[www.transunion.com/
credit-freeze](http://www.transunion.com/credit-freeze)

You must separately place a credit freeze on your credit file at each credit reporting agency. The following information should be included when requesting a credit freeze:

- 1) Full name, with middle initial and any suffixes;
- 2) Social Security number;
- 3) Date of birth (month, day, and year);
- 4) Current address and previous addresses for the past five (5) years;
- 5) Proof of current address, such as a current utility bill or telephone bill;
- 6) Other personal information as required by the applicable credit reporting agency;

If you request a credit freeze online or by phone, then the credit reporting agencies have one (1) business day after receiving your request to place a credit freeze on your credit file report. If you request a lift of the credit freeze online or by phone, then the credit reporting agency must lift the freeze within one (1) hour. If you request a credit freeze or lift of a credit freeze by mail, then the credit agency must place or lift the credit freeze no later than three (3) business days after getting your request.

Fraud Alerts

You also have the right to place an initial or extended fraud alert on your file at no cost. An initial fraud alert lasts 1 year and is placed on a consumer's credit file. Upon seeing a fraud alert display on a consumer's credit file, a business is required to take steps to verify the consumer's identity before extending new credit. If you are a victim of identity theft, you are entitled to an extended fraud alert, which is a fraud alert lasting 7 years. Should you wish to place a fraud alert, please contact any one of the agencies listed below. The agency you contact will then contact the other two credit agencies.

Equifax
P.O. Box 105788
Atlanta, GA 30348-5788
1-888-766-0008
[www.equifax.com/personal/
credit-report-services](http://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services)

Experian
P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013-9554
1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com/fraud/center.htm

TransUnion
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016-2000
1-800-680-7289
[www.transunion.com/fraud
-
victim-resource/place-
fraud-alert](http://www.transunion.com/fraud-victim-resource/place-fraud-alert)



Monitor Your Personal Health Information

If applicable to your situation, we recommend that you regularly review the explanation of benefits statement that you receive from your insurer. If you see any service that you believe you did not receive, please contact your insurer at the number on the statement. If you do not receive the regular explanation of benefits statements, contact your provider and request them to send such statements following the provision of services in your name or number.

You may want to order copies of your credit reports and check for any bills that you do not recognize. If you find anything suspicious, call the credit reporting agency at the phone number on the report. Keep a copy of this notice for your records in case of future problems with your records.

Additional Information

You can further educate yourself regarding identity theft and the steps you can take to protect yourself by contacting your state Attorney General or the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Instances of known or suspected identity theft should be reported to law enforcement, your state Attorney General, and the FTC.

The Federal Trade Commission

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580
1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338)
TTY: 1-866-653-4261
www.ftc.gov/idtheft

For Virginia residents: You may contact the Virginia Attorney General's Office, 202 North Ninth Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, <https://www.oag.state.va.us/contact-us/contact-info>

For North Carolina residents: The North Carolina Attorney General's Office may be contacted at 9001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699, (919) 716-6000, www.ncdoj.gov/contact-doj/

For Maryland residents: You may contact the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, 200 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, MD 21202, www.oag.state.md.us, 1-888-743-0023.

For New York residents: The Attorney General may be contacted at: Office of the Attorney General, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224-0341, 1-800-771-7755, <https://ag.ny.gov/>.

For Connecticut residents: You may contact the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, 1-860-808-5318, www.ct.gov/ag.

For Massachusetts residents: You may contact the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, 1-617-727-8400, www.mass.gov/ago/contact-us.html