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February 28, 2024

VIA EMAIL (Idtheft@oag.state.md.us)

Anthony G. Brown
Office of the Attorney General
St. Paul Plaza
Attn: Security Breach Notification
200 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Institute of Food Technologists – Incident Notification

Dear Mr. Bown:

McDonald Hopkins PLC represents the Institute of Food Technologists (“IFT”). I am writing to provide notification of an incident at IFT that may affect the security of personal information of approximately eight (8) Maryland residents. IFT’s investigation is ongoing, and this notification will be supplemented with any new or significant facts or findings subsequent to this submission, if any. By providing this notice, IFT does not waive any rights or defenses regarding the applicability of Maryland law or personal jurisdiction.

On or about April 26, 2023, IFT detected unauthorized access to its network as a result of a cybersecurity incident. Upon learning of this issue, IFT secured its network and commenced a prompt and thorough investigation in consultation with external cybersecurity professionals experienced in handling these types of incidents. After an extensive forensic investigation and manual document review, IFT discovered on January 29, 2024, that a limited amount of personal information was potentially removed from its network in connection with this incident, including the affected resident’s full name and Social Security number, bank and or financial account number, username and/or e-mail address and password, medical information and health insurance information.

IFT has no evidence of financial fraud or identity theft related to this data. Nevertheless, out of an abundance of caution, IFT wanted to inform you (and the affected residents) of the incident and to explain the steps that it is taking to help safeguard the affected residents against identity fraud. IFT is providing the affected residents with notification of this incident, commencing on or about February 28, 2024, in substantially the same form as the letter attached hereto. IFT is offering the affected residents complimentary memberships with a credit monitoring service, for those with Social Security number involved. IFT is advising the affected residents to always remain vigilant in reviewing financial account statements for fraudulent or

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irregular activity on a regular basis. IFT is also advising the affected residents about the process for placing a fraud alert and/or security freeze on their credit files and obtaining free credit reports. Additionally, the affected residents are being provided with the contact information for the consumer reporting agencies and the Federal Trade Commission.

At IFT, protecting the privacy of personal information is a top priority. IFT is committed to maintaining the privacy of personal information in its possession and has taken many precautions to safeguard it. IFT continually evaluates and modifies its practices to enhance the security and privacy of the personal information it maintains.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at (312) 642-6131 or bdawson@mcdonaldhopkins.com.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BLD', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Blair L. Dawson, JD, MS CyS, FIP, CIPP/US, CIPP/E, CIPM

Encl.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

The privacy and security of the personal information we maintain is of the utmost importance to the Institute of Food Technologists (“IFT”). We are writing with important information regarding a recent security incident that may have impacted some of your information. We want to provide you with information about the incident, tell you about the services that we are providing to you, and let you know that we continue to take significant measures to protect your information.

What Happened?

On or about April 26, 2023, IFT discovered a network security incident impacting our systems.

What We Are Doing.

Upon learning of this issue, we immediately commenced a prompt and thorough investigation. As part of our investigation, we have been working very closely with external cybersecurity professionals experienced in handling these types of incidents. After an extensive forensic investigation and document review, on January 29, 2024, we discovered that between April 25, 2023 and April 26, 2023, certain impacted files containing personal information were stored in the impacted systems and may have been subject to unauthorized access or acquisition.

What Information Was Involved?

The potentially impacted information includes your full name and [REDACTED]

What You Can Do.

We have no evidence that any of your information has been used for identity theft or financial fraud as a result of this incident. Nevertheless, out of an abundance of caution, we want to make you aware of the incident. In response to the incident, we are providing you with access to **Equifax Credit Watch™ Gold** for [REDACTED] months. For more information on the services available and how to enroll, please see the Other Important Information page which also provides other precautionary measures you can take to protect your personal information, including placing a Fraud Alert and Security Freeze on your credit files, and obtaining a free credit report. Additionally, you should always remain vigilant in reviewing your financial account statements and credit reports for fraudulent or irregular activity on a regular basis. To the extent that it is helpful, we have included information about protecting against medical identity theft.

For More Information.

Please accept our apologies that this incident occurred. IFT is committed to maintaining the privacy of personal information in our possession and have taken many precautions to safeguard it. IFT continually evaluates and modifies its practices and internal controls to enhance the security and privacy of your personal information.

If you have any further questions regarding this incident, please call our dedicated and confidential toll-free response line that we have set up to respond to questions at [REDACTED] This response line is staffed with professionals familiar with this incident and knowledgeable on what you can do to protect against misuse of your information. The response line is available [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Institute of Food Technologists

– OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION –

1. **Enrolling in Complimentary Month Credit Monitoring.**



Enter your Activation Code: [REDACTED]
Enrollment Deadline: [REDACTED]

Equifax Credit Watch™ Gold

*Note: You must be over age 18 with a credit file to take advantage of the product

Key Features

- Credit monitoring with email notifications of key changes to your Equifax credit report
- Daily access to your Equifax credit report
- WebScan notifications¹ when your personal information, such as Social Security Number, credit/debit card or bank account numbers are found on fraudulent Internet trading sites
- Automatic fraud alerts², which encourages potential lenders to take extra steps to verify your identity before extending credit, plus blocked inquiry alerts and Equifax credit report lock³
- Identity Restoration to help restore your identity should you become a victim of identity theft, and a dedicated Identity Restoration Specialist to work on your behalf
- Up to \$1,000,000 of identity theft insurance coverage for certain out of pocket expenses resulting from identity theft⁴

Enrollment Instructions

Go to [REDACTED]

Enter your unique Activation Code of [REDACTED] then click “Submit” and follow these 4 steps:

1. **Register:**

Complete the form with your contact information and click “Continue”.

If you already have a myEquifax account, click the ‘Sign in here’ link under the “Let’s get started” header.

Once you have successfully signed in, you will skip to the Checkout Page in Step 4

2. **Create Account:**

Enter your email address, create a password, and accept the terms of use.

3. **Verify Identity:**

To enroll in your product, we will ask you to complete our identity verification process.

4. **Checkout:**

Upon successful verification of your identity, you will see the Checkout Page.

Click ‘Sign Me Up’ to finish enrolling.

You’re done!

The confirmation page shows your completed enrollment.

Click “View My Product” to access the product features.

¹WebScan searches for your Social Security Number, up to 5 passport numbers, up to 6 bank account numbers, up to 6 credit/debit card numbers, up to 6 email addresses, and up to 10 medical ID numbers. WebScan searches thousands of Internet sites where consumers’ personal information is suspected of being bought and sold, and regularly adds new sites to the list of those it searches. However, the Internet addresses of these suspected Internet trading sites are not published and frequently change, so there is no guarantee that we are able to locate and search every possible Internet site where consumers’ personal information is at risk of being traded. ²The Automatic Fraud Alert feature is made available to consumers by Equifax

Information Services LLC and fulfilled on its behalf by Equifax Consumer Services LLC. ³Locking your Equifax credit report will prevent access to it by certain third parties. Locking your Equifax credit report will not prevent access to your credit report at any other credit reporting agency. Entities that may still have access to your Equifax credit report include: companies like Equifax Global Consumer Solutions, which provide you with access to your credit report or credit score, or monitor your credit report as part of a subscription or similar service; companies that provide you with a copy of your credit report or credit score, upon your request; federal, state and local government agencies and courts in certain circumstances; companies using the information in connection with the underwriting of insurance, or for employment, tenant or background screening purposes; companies that have a current account or relationship with you, and collection agencies acting on behalf of those whom you owe; companies that authenticate a consumer’s identity for purposes other than granting credit, or for investigating or preventing actual or potential fraud; and companies that wish to make pre-approved offers of credit or insurance to you. To opt out of such pre-approved offers, visit www.optoutprescreen.com ⁴The Identity Theft Insurance benefit is underwritten and administered by American Bankers Insurance Company of Florida, an Assurant company, under group or blanket policies issued to Equifax, Inc., or its respective affiliates for the benefit of its Members. Please refer to the actual policies for terms, conditions, and exclusions of coverage. Coverage may not be available in all jurisdictions.

2. **Obtain and Monitor Your Credit Report**

Under federal law, you are entitled to one free credit report every 12 months from each of the three major nationwide credit reporting companies. You can obtain a free copy of your credit report by calling **1-877-322-8228**, visiting www.annualcreditreport.com, or by completing an Annual Credit Report Request Form and mailing it to Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348. You can access the request form at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>. Alternatively, you can elect to purchase a copy of your credit report by contacting one of the three national credit reporting agencies. The three nationwide credit reporting agencies' contact information are provided below.

Equifax

P.O. Box 105069
Atlanta, GA 30348-5069
<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-fraud-alerts/>
(800) 525-6285

Experian

P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013
<https://www.experian.com/fraud/center.html>
(888) 397-3742

TransUnion

Fraud Victim Assistance Department
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016-2000
<https://www.transunion.com/fraud-alerts>
(800) 680-7289

Once you receive your credit reports, review them for discrepancies. Identify any accounts you did not open or inquiries from creditors that you did not authorize. Verify all information is correct. If you have questions or notice incorrect information, contact the credit reporting company.

3. **Placing a Fraud Alert on Your Credit File.**

Whether or not you choose to use the complimentary credit monitoring services, we recommend that you place an initial 1-year “fraud alert” on your credit files, at no charge. An initial fraud alert is free and will stay on your credit file for at least twelve months. The alert informs creditors of possible fraudulent activity within your report and requests that the creditor contact you before establishing any accounts in your name. To place a fraud alert, call any one of the three major credit bureaus at the numbers listed below. As soon as one credit bureau confirms your fraud alert, they will notify the others. Additional information is available at <https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-fraud-alerts/>.

Equifax

P.O. Box 105069
Atlanta, GA 30348-5069
<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-fraud-alerts/>
(800) 525-6285

Experian

P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013
<https://www.experian.com/fraud/center.html>
(888) 397-3742

TransUnion

Fraud Victim Assistance Department
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016-2000
<https://www.transunion.com/fraud-alerts>
(800) 680-7289

4. **Placing a Security Freeze on Your Credit File.**

Following is general information about how to request a security freeze from the three credit reporting agencies at no charge. While we believe this information is accurate, you should contact each agency for the most accurate and up-to-date information. A security freeze prohibits a credit reporting agency from releasing any information from a consumer's credit report without written authorization. However, please be aware that placing a security freeze on your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prevent the timely approval of any requests you make for new loans, credit, mortgages, employment, housing, or other services. There might be additional information required, and as such, to find out more information, please contact the three nationwide credit reporting agencies (contact information provided below). You may place a security freeze on your credit report by contacting all three nationwide credit reporting companies at the numbers below and following the stated directions or by sending a request in writing, by mail, to all three credit reporting companies:

Equifax Security Freeze

P.O. Box 105788
Atlanta, GA 30348-5788
<https://www.equifax.com/personal/credit-report-services/credit-freeze/>
(888) 298-0045

Experian Security Freeze

P.O. Box 9554
Allen, TX 75013
<http://experian.com/freeze>
(888) 397-3742

TransUnion Security Freeze

P.O. Box 160
Woodlyn, PA 19094
<https://www.transunion.com/credit-freeze>
(888) 909-8872

In order to place the security freeze, you will need to supply your name, address, date of birth, Social Security number and other personal information. After receiving your freeze request, each credit reporting company will send you a confirmation letter containing a unique PIN (personal identification number) or password. Keep the PIN or password in a safe place. You will need it if you choose to lift the freeze.

If your personal information has been used to file a false tax return, to open an account or to attempt to open an account in your name or to commit fraud or other crimes against you, you may file a police report in the City in which you currently reside.

If you do place a security freeze *prior* to enrolling in the credit monitoring service as described above, you will need to remove the freeze in order to sign up for the credit monitoring service. After you sign up for the credit monitoring service, you may re freeze your credit file.

5. Protecting Your Medical Information.

We have no evidence that your medical information involved in this incident was or will be used for any unintended purposes. However, the following practices can provide additional safeguards to protect against medical identity theft.

- Only share your health insurance cards with your health care providers and other family members who are covered under your insurance plan or who help you with your medical care.
- Review your “explanation of benefits statement” which you receive from your health insurance company. Follow up with your insurance company or care provider for any items you do not recognize. If necessary, contact the care provider on the explanation of benefits statement and ask for copies of medical records from the date of the potential access (noted above) to current date.
- Ask your insurance company for a current year-to-date report of all services paid for you as a beneficiary. Follow up with your insurance company or the care provider for any items you do not recognize.

6. Additional Helpful Resources.

Even if you do not find any suspicious activity on your initial credit reports, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends that you check your credit reports periodically. Checking your credit report periodically can help you spot problems and address them quickly.

If you find suspicious activity on your credit reports or have reason to believe your information is being misused, call your local law enforcement agency and file a police report. Be sure to obtain a copy of the police report, as many creditors will want the information it contains to absolve you of the fraudulent debts. You may also file a complaint with the FTC by contacting them on the web at www.ftc.gov/idtheft, by phone at 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338), or by mail at Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Response Center, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580. Your complaint will be added to the FTC’s Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse, where it will be accessible to law enforcement for their investigations. In addition, you may obtain information from the FTC about fraud alerts and security freezes.

Iowa Residents: You may contact law enforcement or the Iowa Attorney General’s Office to report suspected incidents of identity Theft: Office of the Attorney General of Iowa, Consumer Protection Division, Hoover State Office Building, 1305 East Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov, Telephone: 515-281-5164.

Maryland Residents: You may obtain information about avoiding identity theft from the Maryland Attorney General’s Office: Office of the Attorney General of Maryland, Consumer Protection Division, 200 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, MD 21202, <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/>, Telephone: 888-743-0023.

New York Residents: You may obtain information about preventing identity theft from the New York Attorney General’s Office: Office of the Attorney General, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224-0341; <https://ag.ny.gov/consumer-frauds-bureau/identity-theft>; Telephone: 800-771-7755.

North Carolina Residents: You may obtain information about preventing identity theft from the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office: Office of the Attorney General of North Carolina, Consumer Protection Division, 9001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-9001, www.ncdoj.gov/, Telephone: 877-566-7226 (Toll-free within North Carolina), 919-716-6000.

Oregon Residents: You may obtain information about preventing identity theft from the Oregon Attorney General’s Office: Oregon Department of Justice, 1162 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97301-4096, www.doj.state.or.us/, Telephone: 877-877-9392.

Washington D.C. Residents: You may obtain information about preventing identity theft from the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, 400 6th Street NW, Washington D.C. 20001, <https://oag.dc.gov/consumer-protection>, Telephone: 202-442-9828.