



October 4, 2024

Via Email

Office of the Attorney General
Attn: Security Breach Notification
200 St Paul Place
Baltimore, MD 21202

To Whom it May Concern:

Avant Energy became aware of a data security incident on August 9, 2024. Our Office/IT Manager was not able to access the system and information due to a ransomware attack. We quickly engaged a third-party forensic company with expertise in cyber-attacks to investigate the incident. With the help of that forensic company, we conducted a technical systems and extensive data forensics investigation. After a thorough investigation, the forensic investigators were unable to determine how access was gained to our system. Subsequent to the attack, we were able to recover data impacted by the attack and have been diligently reviewing that data to identify whether it contained personal information so that formal notices could be sent to impacted individuals. Through this review, we identified unauthorized access to and potential acquisition of some of personal information.

We have determined that the social security number of one Maryland resident was involved in the security event.

Avant has increased security measures by changing/strengthening passwords, implementing multi factor authentication, implementing a Sentinel program to monitor our systems and provide additional software protections, improving technical safeguards in our firewall, and we are developing improved policies and procedures.

We provided the impacted Maryland resident with a preliminary notice that their data was possibly impacted on August 27, 2024 that included an offer of identity theft protection monitoring service for 24 months.

On October 7, 2024, Avant will send an additional notice by postal mail to the impacted resident. A sample copy of the latest notice is attached. In addition to providing the impacted Maryland resident with information regarding credit reporting agencies, security freezes, fraud alerts, and other identity theft prevention tools, Avant is again offering 24 months of credit monitoring and identity protection services through Experian's IdentityWorks to the affected individual, at no cost to them. A sample copy of the notice is attached.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Jensen', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Julia Jensen
Avant Energy
Human Resources

SAMPLE LETTER

[Name]
[Address]

RE: Important Security Notification
Please read this entire letter.

Dear Name,

We are writing to you because we have determined that a data security event may have resulted in unauthorized access to some of your personal information. We want to provide you with information about the incident, steps we are taking in response, and steps you may take to guard against identity theft and fraud should you feel appropriate.

What Happened?

Avant became aware of a data security incident on August 9, 2024. We quickly engaged a third-party forensic company with expertise in cyber-attacks to investigate the incident. With the help of that forensic company, we conducted a technical systems and extensive data forensics investigation. Subsequent to the attack, we were able to recover data impacted by the attack and have been diligently reviewing that data to identify whether it contained personal information. Through this review, we identified unauthorized access to and potential acquisition of some of your personal information.

What Information Was Involved?

The personal information regarding you that was involved in the security event consisted of your name and Social Security number. Personal information and banking information in the accounting payroll system was not involved in this incident as it is housed in a different location from the servers impacted.

What We Are Doing?

Avant has initiated additional security measures and has found no evidence of continued unauthorized access to its systems. In addition, we have arranged for credit monitoring and identity theft protection services for you at no cost to you. The process for how to enroll in theft protection services is included in this letter.

What You Can Do.

If you choose, enroll in the IdentityWorksSM provided as a complimentary offering by Avant for a period of 24 months(Attached). An additional reference guide is enclosed which includes additional measures you can take to help protect your identity and that also includes additional rights and information for you related to where you live.

For More Information.

Should you have questions regarding this incident, please call our offices at (612) 349-6868.

Sincerely,

Derick O. Dahlen
President and CEO
Avant Energy, Inc.

IDENTITYWORKS PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

To help protect your identity, we are offering complimentary access to Experian IdentityWorksSM for 24 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 24 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 Experian IdentityWorks as a complimentary 24-month membership. 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 December 31, 2024** (Your code will not work after this date.)

Visit the Experian IdentityWorks website to enroll: <https://www.experianidworks.com/3bcredit>

Provide your **activation code**: XXX

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) 931-7577. by December 31, 2024. Be prepared to provide engagement number B132297 as proof of eligibility for the Identity Restoration services by Experian.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING YOUR 24-MONTH EXPERIAN IDENTITYWORKS MEMBERSHIP

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, Equifax and Transunion 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.

REFERENCE GUIDE

Free Credit Report

It is recommended that you remain vigilant by reviewing account statements and monitoring your credit report for unauthorized activity, especially activity that may indicate fraud and identity theft. You may obtain a free copy of your credit report online at www.annualcreditreport.com, or by calling toll-free 1-877-322-8228. You can also order your annual free credit report by mailing a completed Annual Credit Report Request Form (available from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's ("FTC") website at www.consumer.ftc.gov) to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

You may also obtain a free copy of your credit report, once every 12 months from each of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies:

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 2000
Chester, PA 19016-1000
1-800-888-4213
www.transunion.com

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

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

TransUnion
P.O. Box 2000
Chester, PA 19016-2000
1-888-909-8872
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;

Fraud Alerts

There are two types of fraud alerts you can place on your credit report to put your creditors on notice that you may be a victim of fraud—an initial alert and an extended alert at no cost to you. You may ask that an initial fraud alert be placed on your credit report if you suspect you have been, or are about to be, a victim of identity theft. An initial fraud alert stays on your credit report for at least one year. You may have an extended alert placed on your credit report if you have already been a victim of identity theft and you have the appropriate documentary proof. An extended fraud alert stays on your credit report for seven years. You can place a fraud alert on your credit report by contacting any of the three national credit reporting agencies.

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. Instances of known or suspected identity theft should be reported to law enforcement, your 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

You can also obtain information from the consumer reporting agencies and the Federal Trade Commission regarding fraud alerts and security freezes.

Federal Trade Commission and State Attorneys General Offices. If you believe you are the victim of identity theft or have reason to believe your personal information has been misused, you should immediately contact the Federal Trade Commission and/or the Attorney General's office in your home state. You may also contact these agencies for information on how to prevent or minimize the risks of identity theft.

You may contact the **Federal Trade Commission**, Consumer Response Center, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580, www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/, 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338).

For Maryland residents: You may contact the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, 200 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, MD 21202, www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/, 410-576-6491 or the Attorney General's general toll free number at 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.

Reporting of identity theft and obtaining a police report.

For Iowa residents: You are advised to report any suspected identity theft to local law enforcement or to the Iowa Attorney General.

For Oregon residents: You are advised to report any suspected identity theft to law enforcement, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Oregon Attorney General.