

# 2025 Cybersecurity Checklist for Special Districts

## Protect against impersonation

- Enable 2-factor (MFA)** - Enable multi-factor authentication and/or other tools like Single-Sign-On (SSO), security keys, and/or passkeys on your main web-accessible systems.
- Get a .gov URL** - Register a .gov URL for your district (bonus points if you use it for your email).
- Authenticate email** - Enable DMARC email authentication, implement a strict policy, and test your setup on [mxtoolbox.com](https://mxtoolbox.com) so no one can send mail on your behalf.
- Prepare for AI-enabled phishing** - Implement security awareness training for employees that includes information for preventing AI-enabled social engineering attacks. If you can't train in person, VC3, Breach Secure Now, and/or Bullphish ID are good automated solutions to consider.
- Confirm wire transfers** - Put a confirmation process in place for wire payments where you call only trusted, verified numbers. Create a separation of duties for oversight. (e.g., one initiates, one approves). Utilize tools like [iMessage Contact Key Verification](#) to ensure text messages can be trusted between key district contacts.

## Protect network and infrastructure

- Conduct network security testing** - Work with a third party to audit the security of your network on a very regular basis (especially essential if you have SCADA/ICS/IoT devices.)
- Password-protect all devices** - Require passwords and/or device-level authorization (biometrics, etc.) on all devices. Consider mobile device management (MDM). (It sounds simple, but one employee who doesn't have a protected device can allow your entire network to be compromised.)
- Consider a password manager** - When logging in through district Office365 or Google Accounts isn't possible, require all staff to use a password manager. Good options include 1Password, Dashlane, Bitwarden.

## Other best practices

- **Consider a secure intranet** - sharing documents over email alone is not as secure as using a secure intranet product that has been audited by a third-party
- **Consider integrated payments** - being able to collect payments on your own .gov improves trust. Be sure to know who has the power to redirect your payment page to a lookalike site.
- **Consider integrated agreements and forms** - allowing people to e-sign on your website is better than having people scan and email forms to your office
- **Consider grant funding** - programs like the SLCGP can cover 60%-100% of the costs to tackle all the above. Managed service providers (IT consultants) and other vendors with knowledge of local government should be able to help you apply!
- **Consider having a Managed Service Provider** - Hire a 3rd party that ensures hardware and software is upgraded and patched as necessary, monitored 24x7x365 (with endpoint detection response/EDR), that key systems are backed up in perpetuity, and that manages your technology roadmap, inventory, and lifecycle.