A SIMPLE GUIDE BY

DIAL A GEEK

YOUR OFFICE IT CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

Assured Service Provider

in association with
National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Advisor (Cyber Essentials)

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GET SET FOR THE HOLIDAY BREAK

The festive season is almost upon us, and many businesses are already preparing to shut down for Christmas.

While visions of mince pies and holiday cheer might be dancing in your head, it's crucial to ensure your IT systems are in tip-top shape before you close the office doors.

For companies with multiple locations and remote employees, the checklist gets a bit longer. But don't worry—we've got you covered.

Here's a comprehensive IT checklist to ensure you can enjoy your Christmas break without any unwelcome surprises!

I Check remote workers are prepared

Remote employees are a vital part of many businesses, and they need to follow the same preparation steps as office-based teams.

- **Backups:** Ensure remote workers back up their files to a secure, company-approved location.

- **Security:** Verify that all devices used for work are updated with the latest antivirus software and system patches.

- **Access:** Confirm that remote employees have secure access to any systems they might need during the break, with multi-factor authentication (MFA) enabled where possible.

- **Emergency Plan:** Provide guidelines on what to do in case of a technical issue, including how to reach your IT support team.

II Update and Restart All Systems

No one wants to come back in January to an inbox full of urgent patching notifications. Take the time now to update all devices and systems, including:

- Operating systems and software on company devices.
- Collaboration tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Slack).
- Security tools, such as firewalls and antivirus software.

Once updates are installed, restart all systems to ensure they're applied correctly. For remote employees, send out reminders to do the same with their equipment.

III Backup Critical Data

Avoid a holiday disaster by backing up all essential business data. This should include files, emails, and any other critical information stored on local devices or company servers. Ideally, backups should be stored in multiple locations:

- A secure cloud service.
- An off-site physical drive for added redundancy.

Test your backups to confirm the data is recoverable, just in case you need it.

IV Secure Your Network and Devices

Cybercriminals don't take Christmas off, and an empty office can be an appealing target. Strengthen your defences with these measures:

- **Review Permissions:** Remove access for employees or contractors who no longer need it.

- **Monitor Systems:** Set up alerts for unusual activity on your network.

- **Update Passwords:** Encourage employees to use a password manager and update passwords if needed.

- **Lock Down Devices:** Make sure all devices are encrypted and password-protected.

V Set Up Call Diversions and Auto-Replies

Don't leave clients or suppliers in the dark during your absence.

- **Call Diversions:** Route office lines to a designated point of contact or a voicemail explaining your holiday schedule.

- **Email Auto-Replies:** Ensure auto-replies are set up to inform senders of your closure dates and an alternative contact for urgent queries.

For businesses with multiple locations, make sure these settings are consistent across all offices.

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VI   Plan for Emergency Access

Even with the best preparation, unexpected issues can arise. Prepare your team to handle emergencies securely:

- **Collaboration Tools:** Test your team's ability to work remotely using tools like Teams, Zoom, or Asana.

- **Access Controls:** Grant temporary access to essential systems for key personnel, using location or device restrictions to maintain security.

VII   Physically Secure the Office

For businesses with physical premises, it's just as important to lock down your office as it is your network:

- Double-check that alarm systems are active and working.

- Lock away laptops, external drives, and other portable devices.

- Unplug non-essential equipment to reduce fire risk and save energy.

VIII Review Cyber Security Protocols

Holiday closures often see a spike in cyberattacks. Stay vigilant by:

- Alerting employees to phishing scams that take advantage of the season.

- Ensuring IT staff monitor security dashboards periodically during the break.

- Running a quick cyber risk assessment to identify any vulnerabilities.

IX Communicate Closure Details with Your Team

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X Enjoy a Stress-Free Break!

Once your IT systems and team are prepared, you can enjoy your Christmas with peace of mind. If you need any help ensuring your IT is secure and compliant before the holiday season, Dial A Geek is here to help.

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Merry Christmas

If you need any further help, get in touch by 20/12!

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