



**[Enter Organization Name]**

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## CISA Tabletop Exercise Package – Ransomware – Third Party Vendor

**<Exercise Date>**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

<Exercise Title>  
Situation Manual

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## Exercise Overview

<b>Exercise Name</b>	<b>Exercise Name</b>	
<b>Exercise Date, Time, and Location</b>	Exercise Date Time (e.g. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) Exercise Location	
<b>Exercise Schedule</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
	Time	Activity
<b>Scope</b>	X hour facilitated, discussion-based tabletop exercise	
<b>Purpose</b>	To examine the coordination, collaboration, information sharing, and response capabilities of <Organization> in reaction to a ransomware incident.	
<b>INSERT: &lt;NIST, FEMA, or Mission Capabilities&gt;</b>	For example, areas such as Identify, Protect, Respond, etc.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss elements of &lt;Organization's&gt; cybersecurity posture.</li> <li>2. Examine &lt;Organization's&gt; cybersecurity information sharing procedures and mechanisms.</li> <li>3. Examine &lt;Organization's&gt; cyber incident response plans or playbooks.</li> <li>4. Explore processes for requesting additional incident response resources once &lt;Organization&gt; resources are exhausted.</li> <li>5. Explore &lt;Organization&gt; processes for addressing public affairs.</li> </ol>	
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Cyber	
<b>Scenario</b>	A threat actor targets a third-party vendor through a phishing email as an entry point into <Organization> networks/systems. Attackers cause computer latency and network access issues and install ransomware on <Organization> computers.	
<b>Sponsor</b>	Exercise Sponsor	
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	Overview of organizations participating in the exercise (e.g. federal, state, local, private sector, etc.)	

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Exercise Name	Exercise Name	
Points of Contact	Insert Organization	DHS CISA Exercises
	POC(s)	CEP@hq.dhs.gov
	Contact info	CISAServiceDesk@us-cert.gov

## General Information

### Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

**Players** have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.

**Observers** do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.

**Facilitators** provide situation updates and moderate discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key Exercise Planning Team members may also assist with facilitation as subject matter experts during the exercise.

**Note-takers** are assigned to observe and document exercise activities. Their primary role is to document player discussions, including how and if those discussions conform to plans, policies, and procedures.

### Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a multimedia, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following:

- Cyber threat briefing (if desired)
- Scenario modules:
  - Module 1.
  - Module 2
- Hotwash

### Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, no-fault environment. Varying viewpoints are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of existing plans and capabilities, and insights derived from your training and experience.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions and/or suggested actions to resolve or mitigate a problem.
- There is no hidden agenda, and there are no trick questions. The resources and written materials provided are the basis for discussion.
- The scenario has been developed in collaboration with subject matter experts and exercise planners from your organization.
- In any exercise, assumptions and artificialities are necessary to complete play in the time allotted, to achieve training objectives, and/or account for logistical limitations. Please do not allow these considerations to negatively impact your participation in the exercise.

### Exercise Hotwash and Evaluation

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The facilitator will lead a hotwash with participants at the end of the exercise to address any ideas or issues that emerge from the exercise discussions.



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## Module 1:

### Day 1

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) releases an alert regarding a new ransomware variant. This ransomware is being used in a campaign targeting state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments and private sector firms.

### Day 4

**<Relevant Sector>** Information Sharing and Analysis Center (**<X>**-ISAC) releases an alert on a recently observed phishing campaign. The phishing emails contain a malicious attachment that, when opened, installs malware on a user's machine without their knowledge. The phishing emails mention either required updates to critical human resources (HR) documents or an invoice that needs to be paid by your organization.

### Day 11

**<Your Third-Party Vendor>** employees receive an email from their benefits department asking them to ensure their information is correct before the new fiscal year starts. Attached to the email is a document for users to review and update, as needed. Some users report the email as suspicious while other open the email and submit the form.

### Day 16

Employees at **<Your Organization>** receive an email from **<Your Third-Party Vendor>** regarding an invoice for this month's expenses. An employee opens the email and finds the document is blank. The employee emails **<Your Third-Party Vendor>** to get clarification on the email and attachment. **<Your Third-Party Vendor>** states they have no record of sending that email and are looking into its origins.

## Discussion Questions

Discussion questions included in each module may be modified as desired. Additional questions can be found in Appendix A.

1. This scenario describes two cybersecurity alerts. Would you receive these alerts?
  - a. What sources of cybersecurity threat intelligence does your organization receive?
  - b. What cyber threat information is most useful?
  - c. Is the information you receive timely and actionable?
  - d. Who is responsible for collating information across your organization?
  - e. What actions would you take based on the cybersecurity threat intelligence presented in the scenario?
  - f. Who else do you share cybersecurity threat intelligence with?
    - i. Staff?
    - ii. Leadership?
    - iii. Third-party vendors
2. Does your department or agency provide basic cybersecurity and/or information technology (IT) security awareness training to all users (including managers and senior executives)?
  - a. What does your training cover?
  - b. Is training required to obtain network access?

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3. What training does your organization require for third-party vendors who have access to your organization's information systems?
4. Has your organization conducted a cyber risk assessment to identify organization-specific threats, vulnerabilities, and critical assets or data?
  - a. What are your most significant threats and vulnerabilities?
5. Do you have a patch management plan/program in place? If you do have a patch management plan:
  - a. Are risk assessments performed on all servers on the network?
  - b. Are processes in place to proactively evaluate each server's criticality and applicability to software patches?
  - c. Does this plan include a risk management strategy that addresses the following considerations?
    - i. The risks of not patching reported vulnerabilities?
    - ii. Extended downtime?
    - iii. Impaired functionality?
    - iv. The loss of data?
6. How do employees report suspected phishing attempts?
  - a. Are there formal policies or plans that would be followed?
  - b. What actions does your organization take when suspicious emails are reported?
  - c. Does your organization conduct phishing self-assessments?
7. Would any of the events described in this module be identified as cyber incidents or events? If so, how would they be handled?

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## Module 2:

### Day 47

Several employees call the IT help desk complaining about sluggish machines. IT works to resolve the problems, but they are unable to find the root cause of the issues. Most users are instructed to restart their machines.

### Day 50

Several employees contact IT complaining that their machines are freezing or unresponsive, while others are complaining that they are unable to access network resources and shared drives. IT begins investigating the issues but does not yet know the root cause of the problems.

### Day 51

Ransomware messages appear on computers throughout your organization, and users report that they are unable to access their files. A message is displayed stating that all files have been encrypted and demanding payment of <X> Bitcoin <per machine or entire network>, valued at approximately \$<X> for the decryption key. The message also warns that the key will expire unless payment is received within 48 hours.

### Day 52

Several media outlets begin reporting that <your organization> is experiencing a ransomware attack. You have received multiple media inquiries asking you to comment on the ransomware incident. The media stories are gaining wide attention online and within social media platforms.

### Day 53

Media reporting now indicates that <Your Third-Party Vendor> is also experiencing a ransomware attack.

## Discussion Questions

1. How would these incidents be assessed within your organization? Do you have defined cybersecurity incident severity levels and/or escalation criteria?
2. Do you have personnel tasked with incident response or a designated cyber incident response team within your organization?
  - a. If so, what threshold must be reached for the cyber incident response personnel to be activated? Does this scenario reach that threshold?
  - b. Who is responsible for activating the cyber incident response personnel and under what circumstances?
  - c. What are the cyber incident response team/personnel's roles and responsibilities?
3. What internal and external notifications (e.g., to organizational leadership, users, customers, law enforcement, government partners) would you make?
4. Does your organization have a robust data recovery plan?
  - a. Where are backups stored? Are they offline or online, stored in a secure location, or managed via a third party?
  - b. Are the backups tested to ensure they work and are not corrupted or damaged?
  - c. How far back do your backups cover?
  - d. How are backups tested and ensured to be not infected with the same malware?

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- e. How often is the data restoration process exercised?
5. Do you pay the ransom?
- a. Who decides?
  - b. What's your process for making the decision on whether to pay or not pay the ransom?
  - c. What are the advantages/disadvantages of paying?
  - d. What are the political ramifications if you decide to pay?
  - e. What outside partners/entities do you need to contact if you decide to pay?
6. What capabilities and resources are required for responding to this incident?
- a. Who would you contact if you need additional assistance?
    - i. DHS?
    - ii. FBI?
    - iii. Third-party vendor?
    - iv. Mutual assistance organization?
7. What are your public affairs concerns?
- a. Who is responsible for coordinating the public message?
  - b. Is this process a part of any established plan?
  - c. How would your organization respond to the media reports?
  - d. What information are you sharing with the public? Employees?
  - e. Are public information personnel trained to manage messaging related to cyber incidents?
  - f. Does your department have pre-drafted statements in place to respond to media outlets?

## Appendix A: Additional Discussion Questions

The following section includes supplemental discussion questions to guide exercise play. Questions are aligned to the NIST functional areas and leadership roles. Exercise planners are encouraged to select additional, applicable discussion questions to the chosen scenario to bolster participant conversation. *This instructional page, as well as undesired discussion questions, should be deleted.*

### Identify

1. Has your organization conducted a cyber risk assessment to identify organization-specific threats and vulnerabilities?
  - a. What are your most significant threats and vulnerabilities?
  - b. What are your highest cyber security risks?
2. How does your organization integrate cybersecurity into the system development life cycle (i.e., design, procurement, installation, operation, and disposal)?
3. Discuss the role of cybersecurity in contracts with third-party support vendors and crucial suppliers. Have you discussed these types of concerns and risks with them?
4. Discuss your supply chain concerns related to cybersecurity.
5. What role does organizational leadership play in cybersecurity? Does this role differ during steady-state and incident response?
6. What level of funding and/or resources are devoted to cyber preparedness? Based on your risk assessment, what is the range of potential losses from a cyber incident?
7. Discuss cyber preparedness integration with your current all-hazards preparedness efforts. Who are your cyber preparedness stakeholders (public, private, non-profit, other)?
8. What mission essential functions depend on information technology and what are the cascading effects of their disruption?
9. Have you had any external review or audit of your IT plans, policies, or procedures within the last year?
10. Discuss the current network security architecture for crucial suppliers with remote access.
11. Are background checks conducted for IT, security and key supporting personnel?
12. Is there a manager/department in charge of cybersecurity management? If yes, is this the primary function of that manager?
13. How does your organization recruit, develop, and retain cybersecurity staff?
14. Would your organization receive the information presented in the scenario?
  - a. Through what channels would this information be received and disseminated?
  - b. Are there established mechanisms to facilitate rapid information dissemination?
  - c. Are there known communication gaps? If so, who in your organization is responsible for addressing those gaps?
  - d. What actions, if any, would your organization take based on this information?
15. What other sources of cybersecurity threat intelligence does your organization receive? For example, information from Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), InfraGard, open source reporting, security service providers, others?
  - a. What cyber threat information is most useful?
  - b. Is the information you receive timely and actionable?
  - c. Who is responsible for collating information across the organization?

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16. What mechanisms and products are used to share cyber threat information within your organization and external to your organization (e.g., distribution lists, information sharing portals)?
17. Describe how variables in threat information (timeframe, credibility, and specificity) impact decision making.
18. How well-defined is cybersecurity in relation to contracts with third-party support vendors and crucial suppliers?
  - a. How often are contracts reviewed?
  - b. How well do your service level agreements address incident response?

**Protect**

1. Does your organization have established cybersecurity governance? When was it signed?
2. How is cybersecurity integrated into both organizational and project risk assessments and management?
3. Does your organization employ a formal sanctions process for personnel failing to comply with established information security policies and procedures? If so, has this been communicated to employees?
4. Does your organization have a cybersecurity incident response plan? When was it issued? When was the incident response plan last revised? What authorities require which departments or agencies to follow the plan?
5. Does your organization utilize multi-factor authentication to mitigate the potential effects of phishing?
6. Does your IT department have a patch management plan in place? If so,
  - a. Are risk assessments performed on all servers on the network?
  - b. Are processes in place to proactively evaluate each server's criticality and applicability to software patches?
  - c. Does this plan include a risk management strategy that addresses the following considerations?
    - i. The risks of not patching reported vulnerabilities?
    - ii. Extended downtime?
    - iii. Impaired functionality?
    - iv. The loss of data?
7. What active measure(s) does your organization employ to prevent denial of service (DDoS) attacks against your websites and operational systems?
8. Do you have a method for tracking and/or identifying problematic pieces of firmware in your organization, should a vulnerability be identified?
9. What processes does your organization have in place for when an employee is terminated or resigns?
  - a. Are there any additional processes that are implemented if the employee's termination is contentious?
  - b. Does your organization retrieve all information system-related property (e.g., authentication key, system administration's handbook/manual, keys, identification cards, etc.) during the employment termination process?

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10. Do any third-party vendors have unmitigated access into your network?
  - a. What protections do you have in place to protect against malicious intent by those vendors or outside parties that have access to your network?
11. Discuss the status of cyber preparedness planning within your organization.
  - a. Have you completed a business impact analysis? Does the analysis include information technology (IT) infrastructure supporting mission essential functions identified in continuity of operations and continuity of government plans?
  - b. Is cybersecurity integrated in your business continuity plans? Does your business continuity and/or disaster recovery planning have a prioritized list of information technology infrastructure for restoration?
  - c. How have IT specific plans been coordinated with other planning efforts such as an Emergency Operations Plan or Continuity of Operations Plan?
12. What are your identified responsibilities for, and capabilities to, prevent cyber incidents?
13. Who is responsible for network and information security management?
14. Does your Emergency Operations Plan have a Cyber Incident Annex? When was it last revised? Who is responsible for maintaining the annex?
15. Can you identify key documents that support cyber preparedness at a federal, state, or local level? (Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 41: United States Cyber Incident Coordination, National Cyber Incident Response Plan (NCIRP), PPD 21: Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience, Executive Order: Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity, National Response Framework (NRF), National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework, etc.)
16. Does your organization follow a cybersecurity standard of practice (NIST Cybersecurity Framework/800 Series, ISO/IEC, etc.)? If so, which?
17. Are there flowcharts showing the high-level relationships and crisis lines of communication (i.e., who calls who) specifically for a cyber incident? Are they part of the response or continuity planning documents?
18. Does your organization have a formal or informal policy or procedures pertaining to IT account management?
  - a. Do these policies or procedures include protocols for establishing, activating, modifying, disabling, and removing accounts?
  - b. Do these policies or procedures include protocols/steps for notifying IT account managers/administrators when users are terminated?
19. Are IT and business continuity functions coordinated with physical security? Are all three then collaborating with public relations, human resources, and legal departments?
20. Do you have processes to ensure that your external dependencies (contractors, power, water, etc.) are integrated into your security and continuity planning and programs?
21. Describe the decision-making process for protective actions in a cyber incident. What options are available? Have these options been documented in plans? How are they activated?
22. What immediate protection and mitigation actions would be taken at your organization in this scenario? Who is responsible for those actions?
23. What protective actions would you take across non-impacted systems or agencies in the scenario presented? Who is responsible for protective action decision-making? How are actions coordinated across parts of the organization?

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24. Compare and contrast physical and cyber incident notifications and protective action decision-making.

### Detect

1. How do employees report suspected phishing attempts?
  - a. What actions does your department take when suspicious emails are reported?
  - b. Are there formal policies or plans that would be followed?
  - c. Does your department conduct phishing self-assessments?
2. What process does the general workforce follow to report suspected cyber incidents? Is this a formal process on which they have been trained?
3. Do you have defined cybersecurity incident escalation criteria, notifications, activations, and/or courses of action?
  - a. If so, what actions would be taken at this point? By who?
  - b. Would leadership be notified?
4. How does your organization baseline network activity? How would you be able to distinguish between normal and abnormal traffic?
5. Does the organization report cybersecurity incidents to outside organizations? If so, to whom? What, if any, mandatory reporting requirements do you have?
6. At what point would your organization begin to suspect the HVAC/Fire alarm issues might be the result of malicious cybersecurity activity?
7. If you were one of the individuals who received the email demanding bitcoin payment, who would you inform, internally? Who, if anyone would you inform externally?
8. Do detection and analysis procedures differ for loss of personally identifiable information (PII), phishing attempts, data exfiltration, data modification, or other incidents?
9. Would this be considered the most severe tier of security incident for your organization? What, if any, additional notifications or actions would this prompt?
10. Who is responsible for correlating information across different organizational-level incidents?
11. What resources and capabilities are available to analyze the intrusions:
  - a. Internally?
  - b. Externally through government partners?
  - c. Through the private sector?
12. How is information shared among your internal and external stakeholders? Through formal or informal relationships? What information sharing mechanisms are in place?
13. Discuss your organization's intrusion detection capabilities and analytics that alert you to a cyber incident.
14. What type of hardware and/or software does your organization use to detect/prevent malicious activity of unknown origin on your systems/network?

### Respond

1. What is your planned cyber incident management structure?
  - a. Who (by department and position) leads incident management and why?
  - b. How are they notified?
  - c. When did they last exercise their role?
  - d. What is the length of your operational period (i.e., your "battle rhythm")?



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- e. What are the primary and contingency communication mechanisms necessary to support incident management?
2. Do you have someone within your organization who monitors the Dark Web? If so, how would you verify the security researcher's claims and confirm authenticity of the sensitive information in question?
3. What level of leadership/management would be notified at this point in the scenario? Is there a plan in place detailing the thresholds at which different notifications are made and what information is provided?
4. What is your department or agency's primary concern? Mitigation of the incident (resolving the issue) or investigation (preserving the evidence to build a criminal case)? Who would make this decision? Are these mutually exclusive?
5. What response actions would your organization have taken at this point? Are these actions driven by a plan?
6. What impact will the sale of sensitive or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) have on your response and recovery activities?
  - a. Will IT alert authorities? Have your public relations priorities changed?
  - b. Will it trigger any additional legal or regulatory notifications?
7. Whom will you notify, internally and externally, of these incidents?
  - a. Is there a process or plan in place that outlines the severity thresholds for which different notifications are made and what information is to be conveyed?
  - b. Are you keeping senior leadership updated? What information is provided and how is it communicated?
  - c. Would you make any notification to the public?
    - i. If so, how are you coordinating your messaging within your organization?
    - ii. Do you have pre-canned messaging or holding statements for such an event?
8. How are you ensuring unity of message between your organization, the public sector, and elected officials?
9. How would these events affect your organization's business operation/processes?
10. Would any of these issues be considered a cyber incident at this point?
11. Do these incidents generate any concerns that have not been addressed?
12. How would your organization respond to the discovery of a malicious, unauthorized administrator account on your systems? Who would be informed internally? Who would be informed externally (e.g. law enforcement, cybersecurity insurance partners, etc.)?
13. What resources are required for incident investigation and attribution? Are sufficient resources available in-house?
14. Would the events presented in the scenario trigger activation of your emergency operations plan cyber incident annex? If so, would that alter any roles and responsibilities?
  - a. At what point in the scenario would you contact law enforcement and/or the state Attorney General?
  - b. How would relationships with law enforcement and other partners be managed? Where is the process documented?
  - c. How does a law enforcement investigation impact containment, eradication, and recovery efforts?
15. Are processes and resources in place for evidence preservation and collection?

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16. Discuss the difference between network and host forensics. How are you equipped and staffed to address this?
17. Do you have a network operations center? Security operations center? What are their roles during a response?
18. What are your essential elements of information and key information questions necessary for operational and executive-level responses to cyber incidents?
19. What mission essential functions are impacted by the incidents described in the scenario?
20. Is there a way to maintain service availability of key assets (e.g., network connectivity, etc.)?
  - a. What capabilities and resources are required for responding to this series of incidents?
  - b. What internal resources do you depend on? Are your current resources sufficient?
  - c. Whom do you contact if you're in need of additional third-party assistance?
  - d. What resources are available within the state or locally? How do you request these resources?
  - e. Do you have personnel tasked with incident response or a designated cyber incident response team within your organization?
    - i. If so, what threshold must be reached for the cyber incident response personnel to be activated? Does this scenario reach that threshold?
    - ii. Who is responsible for activating the cyber incident response personnel and under what circumstances?
    - iii. What are the cyber incident response team/personnel's roles and responsibilities?
21. Does this exceed your organization's ability to respond?
  - a. If so, are there established procedures to request additional support?
22. What are your organization's response priorities?
  - a. Who would be notified at this point in the scenario? Is there a plan in place detailing the thresholds at which different notifications are made and what information is provided?
  - b. What response actions would the IT/IS department take at this point? Are these actions driven by a plan?
  - c. What response capabilities and resources are required to respond to these incidents?
23. What actions would be taken when the exfiltration is discovered? Does your organization have written plans that would be implemented?
24. Do you pay the ransom?
  - a. Who decides?
  - b. What's the process?
  - c. What are the advantages/disadvantages to paying?
  - d. What are the political ramifications?
  - e. What outside partners/entities do you need to contact?
25. Where do you receive cyber response technical assistance? Do you have plans, procedures or policies in place to access this assistance?
26. Have you proactively identified and established the service provider relationships needed for incident/breach response issues (e.g., credit counseling, forensic/computer security services)?
  - a. What are some challenges that are experienced by information technology and business continuity planning in terms of information sharing?
  - b. Is information flowing in both directions?
27. What processes are used to contact critical personnel at any time, day or night?

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- a. How do you proceed if critical personnel are unreachable or unavailable?

## Recover

1. When does your organization determine a cyber incident is closed?
  - a. Who makes this decision?
  - b. Would your organization engage in any post-incident activities?
2. What actions would your organization take if your IT/incident response staff could not confirm the integrity of your systems/data?
  - a. Would senior leaders consider re-activating critical business processes and systems? What is the risk associated with doing so?
  - b. Would your organization consider a complete rebuild of these systems? How long and costly would that process be?
  - c. What factors do you consider when making these decisions?
3. What formal policies and procedures does your organization use to decide when and how to restore backed-up data, including measures for ensuring the integrity of backed-up data before restoration?
4. Does your organization have back-ups of vital records in a location that is separated from your primary working copies of your files?
  - a. How long do you keep any copies of archived files backed up?
  - b. How long of a downtime would exist between your primary files and the restoration of files via your back-up?
5. Are redundant systems in place if the impacted system(s) is compromised?
6. Describe your role in post-incident activity.
7. How would you work with critical infrastructure providers to determine the incident is over?
8. How does post incident-activity differ when critical infrastructure is involved?
9. Does your organization have a continuity of operations plan (COOP) for conducting its functions at a location other than your main building?
  - a. If so, how would a suspected cyber incursion impact your organization's ability to activate its COOP Plan?
10. Are alternative systems or manual processes in place to continue operations if a critical system is unavailable for a significant period of time?
  - a. Who can authorize use of alternate systems or procedures?

## Training and Exercises

1. Does your organization provide basic cybersecurity and/or IT security awareness training to all users (including managers and senior executives)?
  - a. How often is training provided? Does it cover:
    - i. Review of department and/or agency acceptable use and IT policies,
    - ii. Prominent cyber threat awareness,
    - iii. Password procedures, and
    - iv. Whom to contact and how to report suspicious activities?
  - b. Is training required to obtain network access?
  - c. What security-related training does your department or agency provide to, or contractually require of, IT personnel and vendors with access to your city's or county's information systems? How often do they receive the training?

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2. Do your cybersecurity incident response team members undergo any special training to detect, analyze, and report this activity? If so, can you describe this training?
  - a. Is your staff sufficiently trained to read and analyze your intrusion detection system logs?
3. What training do you provide in support of your Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan, Business Continuity Plan, Emergency Operations Plan Cyber Incident Annex, or other related plans?
  - a. Do employees know what constitutes suspicious cybersecurity activities or incidents?
  - b. Do they know what actions to take when one arises?
4. If you have a cyber incident response plan, how often does your organization exercise the plan?
  - a. Who is responsible for the exercise planning?
  - b. What agencies are involved in the exercise?
  - c. What level of the organization is required to participate?
  - d. What actions follow the exercise?
5. How do your organization's annual Training and Exercise Planning Workshop and Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan address cybersecurity?
6. What are your cybersecurity incident response team's exercise requirements?
7. Do your organization's exercise efforts include both physical and cyber risks?
8. Have senior or elected officials participated in a cybersecurity exercise?
9. Are there additional training and/or exercising requirements for your organization?

### Senior Leaders and Elected Officials

1. What is your cybersecurity culture? As a leader in your organization, what cybersecurity goals have you set? How have they been communicated?
2. As it relates to your jurisdiction, what cybersecurity information do you request? What do you receive?
3. What are your cybersecurity risks?
4. Who develops your jurisdiction's cybersecurity risk profile? What are their reporting requirements? Are they directed to, required by statute, or other? How often do they report?
5. Is your cybersecurity risk integrated with physical risk for an integrated jurisdictional risk assessment?
6. What is your jurisdiction's greatest cybersecurity concern? Why do you rate this concern as your greatest concern? Who reports to you on cyber threats?
7. What, if any, infrastructure does your jurisdiction own, operate, and/or regulate?
8. What relationships do you have with critical infrastructure owners and operators?
9. What priorities have you set related to the cybersecurity of critical infrastructure?
10. What is your most important critical infrastructure?
11. What are your regulatory requirements related to critical infrastructure, if any?
12. What is the greatest threat facing your critical infrastructure? What, if anything, is your jurisdiction able to do to mitigate it?
13. When did you last receive a cyber threat briefing for your jurisdiction?
14. How has your jurisdiction prepared for a cyber incident?
  - a. Does your jurisdiction have cybersecurity plans in place? How many information security officers do you have?
  - b. Does the plan indicate how they will work together?
15. Have your information security officers and emergency managers jointly planned for cybersecurity incidents?

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16. What are your cybersecurity workforce gaps? How does your jurisdiction recruit, develop, and retain cybersecurity staff?
17. What cybersecurity training do you have planned for cybersecurity staff, managers, and general workforce?
18. What magnitude of incident would require your notification? How does that notification process work? Is it planned?
19. What requirements or agreements, if any, exist for critical infrastructure to notify you of a cyber incident?
20. Who advises you on cyber threats? What are your essential elements of information or critical information requirements?
21. What is your planned role in protective action decision-making?
22. What is your planned cyber incident management structure? What parts of the government need to be engaged?
23. Would your jurisdiction's Emergency Operations Center be activated in a cyber incident? How? Why?
24. What is your role in a cyber incident?
25. How does a law enforcement investigation impact your response?
26. What is your role in communicating to the public?
27. How are costs of the response calculated?
28. What information do you need to support your decision-making process?
29. Who is your jurisdiction's cybersecurity liaison to privately-owned and operated critical infrastructure?
30. What are your expectations of the State and Federal Government?
31. Describe your role in post-incident activity.
32. What is your role in restoring and/or maintaining public confidence?

## Media

1. What are your public affairs concerns? Who is responsible for coordinating the public message? Is this process a part of any established plan?
  - a. How would your department respond to the local media reports?
  - b. What information are you sharing with citizens? Employees?
  - c. Are public information personnel trained to manage messaging related to cyber incidents?
  - d. Does your department have pre-drafted statements in place to respond to media outlets?
  - e. Are they trained to manage your social media presence?
  - f. Are all personnel trained to report any contact with the media to appropriate public information personnel?
2. What information would your organization communicate to the public?
3. Who is responsible for public information related to the incident? What training or preparation have they received?

## Legal

1. What are the legal issues you must address?
2. What policies should your organization have? Does it exercise these policies? If so, how often?
3. What legal documents should your organization have in place (for example with third-party vendors)?

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4. What is the role of the legal department in this scenario?
5. Does your state have security breach notification laws? If so, what do they include?

## Appendix B: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAR	After-Action Report
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
DDoS	Distributed Denial of Service
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
HR	Human Resources
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
IS	Information Systems
IT	Information Technology
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
SLTT	State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial
TLP	Traffic Light Protocol

## Appendix C: Case Studies

The following section includes background and example information related to cybersecurity threats and attacks, as well as relevant doctrine. Planners are encouraged to fill in highlighted fields with exercise specific information and include additional information as desired.

### Ransomware Overview

Ransomware is a type of malware that denies access to victims' data or systems through encryption with a key only known by the malicious actor who deployed the malware. Once encrypted, the ransomware directs the victim to pay the attacker, typically in the form of cryptocurrency, so the victim can receive a decryption key. Ransomware typically spreads through phishing emails or by unknowingly visiting an infected website. Recovery can be a difficult process and there is no guarantee the victim will receive access to their data or systems if the ransom is paid.

For more information on best practices to protect users from the threat of ransomware, as well as recent CISA Alerts on specific ransomware threats, see Appendix E.

### Ransomware: Attacks and Facts

#### ***WannaCry: Worldwide Ransomware Attack (2017)***

On May 12, 2018, one of the most notorious ransomware attacks began affecting systems across the globe. Experts estimate more than 300,000 systems have been affected by the variant known as WannaCry across the globe. A common way for this ransomware to spread is through standard file sharing technology, i.e. through vulnerabilities in Microsoft Windows Server Message Block (SMB). The vulnerability used in this attack was exploited to drop a file on the vulnerable system and then executed as a service, encrypting files (commonly used by Microsoft Office, databases, file archives, multimedia files, and various programming languages) with the .WNCRY extension.

In 2019, WannaCry is still affecting many organizations, particularly in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors. According to a research report from internet of things security company, Armis, WannaCry continues to be an active threat. Armis claims WannaCry was "reportedly responsible for 30% of all ransomware attacks worldwide in Q3 2018, and over 145,000 devices worldwide are still compromised".<sup>1</sup>

#### ***City of Atlanta: SamSam Ransomware Attack (2018)***

In March 2018, the city of Atlanta, GA was hit by SamSam ransomware which infected the city's networks and encrypted at least one-third of its applications – including some which were customer-facing. The attackers demanded \$52,000 in Bitcoin to restore the systems. Atlanta chose not to pay the ransom but instead spent money on improving cyber defenses. According to the latest 2019 data, Atlanta has spent over \$2.6 million dollars on recovery efforts.

The SamSam ransomware variant has existed in various forms since 2015. Unlike most ransomware attacks which can be opportunistic in nature, SamSam's attackers often target specific organizations and use tools to scan victim's networks for vulnerability, including weak or easily guessed administrative passwords on common web servers, network equipment, and other internet-facing

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<sup>1</sup> ("Wannacry Two Years Later: How Did We Get The Data?", 2019); (Seri, n.d.)



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hardware and software. SamSam attackers typically do not rely on social engineering to access their targets.

According to a recent case study, “The SamSam ransomware encrypts files on both servers and workstations. In a typical attack, the ransomware message demands a certain payment in Bitcoin for each computer, or a larger amount to restore all of an organization’s computers...”<sup>2</sup>

***City of Baltimore – Robbinhood Ransomware Attack (2019)***

On May 7, 2019, the city of Baltimore, MD was crippled by the Robbinhood ransomware – a file-locking variant - which encrypted hard drive data of city computers to prevent access to data. Although emergency services remained available, many systems, such as the city’s water billing system, were dependent on inefficient manual workarounds. The attackers demanded around \$75,000 to restore files. The FBI advised the city to not pay the ransom. Current estimates state that Baltimore will spend \$10 million dollars on recovery efforts and will have lost \$8 million dollars in payments the city could not process.

It appears the Robbinhood ransomware variant is new, though the way it works is not. Like SamSam ransomware, Robbinhood has targeted specific organizations. Recently the Baltimore Sun stated that, [according to cybersecurity researchers], ...”RobbinHood could not have spread from machine to machine across a network on its own. Rather, the attackers would have needed to obtain access that would make them appear to be legitimate administrators, and then target individual victim computers.”<sup>3</sup> Analysis is still ongoing, but it’s believed that Robbinhood is not connected to WannaCry’s original Eternal Blue exploit.<sup>4</sup>

**Resources**

- CISA Ransomware (<https://www.us-cert.gov/Ransomware>)
- Protecting Against Ransomware (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST19-001>)
- Indicators Associated With WannaCry Ransomware (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/alerts/TA17-132A>)
- Incident trends report (Ransomware) (<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/report/incident-trends-report#ransomware>)

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<sup>2</sup> (Rutenberg, 2018)

<sup>3</sup> (Duncan & Zhang, 2019)

<sup>4</sup> (Krebs, 2019)

## Appendix D: Attacks and Facts

### Distributed Denial of Service

Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks overload bandwidth and connection limits of hosts or networking equipment, specifically through a network of computers making excessive connection requests. DDoS attacks unfold in stages. First, a malicious actor infects a computer with malware that spreads across a network. This infected computer is known as the “master” because it controls any subsequent computers that become infected. The other infected computers carry out the actual attack and are known as “daemons.” The attack begins when the master computer sends a command to the daemons, which includes the address of the target. Large numbers of data packets are sent to this address, where extremely high volumes (floods) of data slow down web server performance and prevent acceptance of legitimate network traffic. The cost of a DDoS attack can pose severe loss of revenue or reputation to the victim.

More information on DDoS attack possibilities within each layer of the OSI Model, as well as traffic types and mitigation strategies, can be found in the resource list below.

#### Additional Resources

- Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-015>)
- DDoS Quick Guide (<https://www.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/publications/DDoS%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>)
- Guide to DDoS Attacks (<https://www.cisecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Guide-to-DDoS-Attacks-November-2017.pdf>)

### Social Engineering

One of the most prominent tactics attackers use to exploit network and system vulnerabilities is social engineering—the manipulation of users through human interaction and the formation of trust and confidence to compromise proprietary information. Techniques for uncovering this information largely involve the use of phishing, i.e. email or malicious websites that solicit personal information by posing as a trustworthy source. Social engineering is effective for breaching networks, evading intrusion detection systems without leaving a log trail, and is completely operating system platform dependent. While technical exploits aim to bypass security software, social engineering exploits are more difficult to guard against due to the human factor. Organizations should take steps towards strengthening employee cybersecurity awareness training, to include training personnel to be cautious of suspicious emails, know where to forward them and keeping software and systems up-to-date.

#### Additional Resources

- Avoiding Social Engineering and Phishing Attacks (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST04-014>)
- The Most Common Social Engineering Attacks (<https://resources.infosecinstitute.com/common-social-engineering-attacks/>)

## Appendix E: Doctrine and Resources

### Laws

- National Cybersecurity Protection Act of 2014 (Dec 2014)  
<https://www.congress.gov/113/plaws/publ282/PLAW-113publ282.pdf>
- Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (Dec 2014) <https://www.dhs.gov/fisma>
- OMB Memorandum: M-15-01, Fiscal Year 2014-2015: Guidance on Improving Federal Information Security and Privacy Management Practices (Oct 2014)  
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2015/m-15-01.pdf>

### Presidential Directives

- Executive Order 13800: [Strengthening the Cybersecurity of Federal Networks and Critical Infrastructure](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-executive-order-strengthening-cybersecurity-federal-networks-critical-infrastructure/) (May 2017) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-executive-order-strengthening-cybersecurity-federal-networks-critical-infrastructure/>
- Presidential Policy Directive-41: United States Cyber Incident Coordination (Jul 2016)  
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/26/presidential-policy-directive-united-states-cyber-incident>
- Annex to Presidential Policy Directive-41: Annex to the Directive on United States Cyber Incident Coordination (Jul 2016) <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=797545>
- Presidential Policy Directive-8: National Preparedness (Mar 2011), (Updated Sep 2015)  
<https://www.dhs.gov/presidential-policy-directive-8-national-preparedness>
- Presidential Policy Directive 21: Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (Feb 2013)  
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/presidential-policy-directive-critical-infrastructure-security-and-resil>
- Executive Order 13636: Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (Feb 2013)  
<https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=731040>

### Strategies and Frameworks

- National Cyber Incident Response Plan (Dec 2016) <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncirp>
- National Cyber Strategy of the United States of America (Sep 2018)  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/National-Cyber-Strategy.pdf>
- U.S Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity Strategy (May 2018)  
<https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=810462>
- Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity (Apr 2018)  
<https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/CSWP/NIST.CSWP.04162018.pdf>
- National Protection Framework, Second Edition (Jun 2016) [https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1466017309052-85051ed62fe595d4ad026edf4d85541e/National\\_Protection\\_Framework2nd.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1466017309052-85051ed62fe595d4ad026edf4d85541e/National_Protection_Framework2nd.pdf)
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum: M-16-04, Cybersecurity Strategy and Implementation Plan (CSIP) for the Federal Civilian Government (Oct 2015)  
<http://www.thecre.com/forum4/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/OMB-Cybersecurity-Implementation-Plan.pdf>

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## Key Points of Contact

- Department of Homeland Security/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) (contact: [central@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:central@cisa.dhs.gov))
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
  - Field Office Cyber Task Forces (contact: <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices>)
  - Internet Crime Complain Center (IC3) (contact: <http://www.ic3.gov>)
- National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force (NCIJTF) CyWatch 24/7 Command Center (contact: [cywatch@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:cywatch@ic.fbi.gov); (855) 292-3937)
- United States Secret Service Field Offices and Electronic Crimes Task Force (ECTFs) (contact: <https://www.secretservice.gov/contact/field-offices/>)

## Other Available Resources

- Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) (contact: [info@msisac.org](mailto:info@msisac.org); (518) 266-3460)
- Cybersecurity and the States (National Association of State Chief Information Officers [NASCIO]) (<http://www.nascio.org/Advocacy/Cybersecurity>)
- National Governors Association (NGA) (<https://www.nga.org/>)
- DHS Cybersecurity Fusion Centers (<https://www.dhs.gov/state-and-major-urban-area-fusion-centers>)
- InfraGard (<https://www.infragard.org/>)
- Internet Security Alliance (<http://www.isalliance.org/>)
- Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) and Information Sharing and Analysis Organizations (ISAOs) (<https://www.isao.org/information-sharing-groups/>)
- International Association of Certified ISAOs (<http://www.certifiedisao.org>; contact: [operations@certifiedisao.org](mailto:operations@certifiedisao.org))
- National Council of ISACs (<https://www.nationalisacs.org/>)

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<https://www.symantec.com/blogs/threat-intelligence/wannacry-ransomware-attack>