

## Notice to the profession from the Law Society of BC

### **COVID-19 update: April 15, 2020**

#### **Beware of increased cybersecurity risk during COVID-19**

Cyber-criminals often seek to take advantage of rapid change, heightened stress and confusion. In [Manitoba, two law firms had their entire computer systems infected with ransomware](#), which blocked access to their computers, client lists, emails, accounting and financial information and other digital files. The firms were asked to pay an enormous ransom to regain access to their computers, which were likely attacked when a lawyer or employee clicked on a link in an attachment or email. Ontario and elsewhere report that hackers are circulating phony, but legitimate looking, COVID-19 outbreak maps or emails purportedly from IT teams or vendors that ask recipients to click links to open attachments that are infected with malware.

With many lawyers now working remotely, the increase in virtual access to work servers requires extra vigilance. To protect yourselves and your law firm, be on alert and remind all lawyers and staff to take the following precautions:

- Always think before you click.
- Never open a link or attachment in an email or text message from anyone you do not know.
- If you receive a link or attachment that you were not expecting – even if it is from someone you know – call the sender using the telephone number you have on file (not the number listed in the message) to confirm the message is legitimate.
- If you open a link or attachment that you should have avoided, and a box opens that asks for your password or other information, stop. Close out. Immediately call your IT department to run a scan on your device(s).
- Avoid public Wi-Fi, and do not use unsecured Wi-Fi to connect to your work server, to do any banking, or to send any confidential or personal information.
- Avoid working in public spaces where third parties may view screens or printed documents.

#### **Update from the Provincial Court regarding unsworn affidavits**

The Provincial Court has issued an announcement regarding unsworn affidavits for urgent hearing applications. During the period of reduced court operations due to COVID-19, the materials filed in support of urgent family hearing requests need not be sworn or affirmed. For details, read the full [announcement](#).