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IREM President's message: Safeguard tenant data with proactive cybersecurity measures

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The cybersecurity threats just keep on coming, ranging from ransomware attacks and cloud security issues, to supply chain vulnerabilities and the emerging danger of AI-powered attacks. Ensuring the security of tenant data has never been more critical and the challenges are only expected to intensify.

Property owners and managers already have a full plate of responsibility between rising operational costs, regulatory changes, and cash flow issues – just to name a few – but the measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of cyberattacks and protect tenants' data have the potential to be worth their weight in gold.

There are numerous software solutions available prevent security breaches, but the first line of defense against vulnerabilities begins with educating and involving both staff and tenants.

Conduct regular training sessions to keep staff updated on the latest cybersecurity threats. Use interactive methods, such as workshops and phishing simulations, to make the training more engaging and effective. Property managers can also organize drills to practice responding to cybersecurity incidents. Additionally, conducting regular audits helps assess the effectiveness of training and identify areas for improvement.

Best practice strategies should also be made available to tenants. Host workshops on basic cybersecurity practices, such as creating strong passwords, recognizing phishing attempts, and securing personal devices. Educate tenants on the importance of using secure Wi-Fi networks and avoiding public Wi-Fi for sensitive transactions, like banking. Go the extra mile by establishing clear mechanisms for tenants to report suspicious activities or potential security breaches.

The ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity threats demands proactive measures from property owners and managers. By prioritizing the education of both staff and residents, and implementing robust software solutions, the risk of cyberattacks can be significantly reduced.

The investment in cybersecurity not only protects tenant data but also fortifies the overall integrity and reputation of the property management industry. As the digital world continues to advance, staying vigilant and prepared is the key to safeguarding against potential threats and ensuring a secure environment for all.

PropertyCon was a resounding success! Held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on April 23-24 the first-of-its-kind event combined immersive learning with exceptional networking opportunities. Those attending engaged in dynamic sessions led by industry experts, covering a wide range of essential topics shaping the property management profession.

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