WHAT DO I DO IF MY EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT IS HACKED?

The FTC lists ten steps, beginning with scanning your computer and following the provider's recovery process. Then change the password, sign out of all devices, turn on two-factor authentication, check recovery settings and forwarding rules, and warn your contacts.

THE STEPS

01 Scan your computer for malware.

02 Follow the account provider's recovery process.

03 Change the password and sign out of all devices.

04 Turn on two-factor authentication.

05 Check the recovery email and phone number, and review forwarding rules.

06 Check sent and deleted folders, and check your social media accounts.

07 Warn your contacts.

08 If money or identity is involved, report it to the FTC at IdentityTheft.gov, and consider a credit freeze or fraud alert.

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Password manager or paper list kept offline
- ☐ Two-factor turned on
- ☐ Recovery email and phone current
- ☐ Credit freeze decision made

Sources: FTC, How to recover your hacked email or social media account; FTC, Credit Freezes and Fraud Alerts; CISA, Secure Our World; Ready.gov, Cybersecurity. Last reviewed November 17, 2026. General planning information, not medical, legal or financial advice.