



Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) Awareness and Education

**Federal Information System Security
Education Association**

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Security Awareness for All Employees

- Internal Revenue Service managers are required to provide annual security awareness reminders and have employees certify they understand their security responsibilities.
- Mission Assurance and Security Services:
 - Provides security awareness articles in IRS newsletters
 - Has an annual security awareness week



Security Awareness Audit Results

- Employees:
 - Abused their Internet privileges
 - Abused their email privileges
 - Did not follow encryption requirements for protecting data on laptops
 - Have established unauthorized wireless access points (few)
- Managers not reviewing security reports to detect employee browsing



Conclusion: Security Awareness

- Security awareness is needed but is usually not effective by itself.
- Awareness presentations sometimes are construed as a list of do's and don'ts but could be improved by explaining the risks to employees.
- Disciplinary actions are needed to enforce security policies and procedures.



Training for Employees with Key Security Responsibilities

- System Administrators, Database Administrators, etc. have tremendous responsibilities and authorities

Audit Results

- Employees:
 - Not aware of standard configurations
 - Do not fully understand risks associated with some of their actions
 - Use practices that are exploitable and well-known by hackers (LOU information)



Conclusion: Training for Employees with Key Security Responsibilities

- Training has not been sufficient. Past audits have shown that few of these employees received any training during a given year.
- Training that has been provided is limited.
- No guidelines on minimum training required given by OMB or NIST.

Overall Conclusion

- We continue to try to influence the IRS by addressing these issues in our audits and FISMA evaluation.
- IRS has taken action by developing minimum requirements for employees with key responsibilities in the last year.