



Ensure your smart devices are safe from hackers

The rise of smart devices brings with it the opportunity to make a variety of tasks more efficient. However, just as with many internet-connected devices, they also use and store personal data, which makes them prime targets for hackers. That's why it's critical to secure your smart home hardware properly.¹

Here are some tips to help make your home network and smart devices more secure:

Protect your network

- Name your router and give it a strong password. Do not use the name and password set by the manufacturer.
- Choose a strong encryption method, such as WPA2, you set up Wi-Fi networks. This will help keep your network and communications secure.²
- Use a firewall designed to protect smart devices.³
- Keep your router's firmware up to date.⁴

Add a secondary network

- Many routers allow you to create multiple networks, each with its own name and password. Creating a secondary network allows you to separate smart devices and your personal devices, such as your laptop or phone.
- When guests need to use your Wi-Fi, it is more secure to give them access to the secondary network.⁵

Buy smart devices from trusted brands

- Established brands tend to employ better security measures when designing their products and are more likely to release software patches and fixes if vulnerabilities are discovered.⁶
- Check the certification. The “Works with Alexa” and “Works with Apple HomeKit” badges show that the device meets certain standards in responsiveness, reliability and functionality.²
- Read reviews to see what others say about the device’s security before making a purchase.

Secure your smart devices

- Always read the privacy policy and make sure you understand what data the device collects, where it is stored and how it is used or shared.⁴
- Regularly update the software to keep it protected from malware and viruses. This may require registering the device with the manufacturer. Also remember to update corresponding apps.⁷
- Look for devices that have built-in security measures, such as Z-Wave, which implements a high level of encryption to safeguard against hacking.⁵

- Review the default privacy and security settings and change them as necessary, because some default settings could benefit the manufacturer more than they benefit you.²
- Pay close attention to security devices such as cameras and smart locks to make sure they have all the proper safeguards in place.³
- Stay in control of your smart hub devices by learning how to disable their microphones when you need more privacy.³

Discard with care

- Before you sell, donate or recycle smart devices, follow the manufacturer’s instructions to remove all of your data.
- Conduct a factory reset.⁷ Some devices require a button-press, while others allow you to do it from the app.
- Make sure that the device is no longer available through the app and then remove the app from your phone if it’s no longer needed.⁶

While there’s no such thing (yet) as being hack-proof, you can take steps to help protect your devices and your personal information. Contact your Nationwide Private Client agent to learn more about protecting what’s important to you.

If you have any questions, please contact your agent or a Nationwide Private Client Risk Solutions professional. For more information on how you can help prevent losses, visit [Nationwide.com/solutionseries](https://www.nationwide.com/solutionseries).



¹ “Smart Furniture for Any Living Room,” mansionglobal.com/articles/smart-furniture-for-any-living-room-109467 (Sept. 25, 2018).

² “12 tips to help secure your smart home and IoT devices,” us.norton.com/internetsecurity-iot-smart-home-security-core.html (accessed Oct. 14, 2018).

³ “How to Secure Your Smart Home against Hackers,” homeselfe.com/how-to-secure-your-smart-home-against-hackers (accessed Oct. 10, 2019).

⁴ “How to Build a Smart Home That’s Actually Secure,” gizmodo.com/how-to-build-a-smart-home-that-s-actually-secure-1822942112 (Feb. 15, 2018).

⁵ “Smart home security: 10 hacks to protect your home from hackers,” techradar.com/news/smart-home-security-10-hacks-to-protect-your-home-from-hackers (March 13, 2019).

⁶ “How to Protect Your Smart Home From Hackers,” thewirecutter.com/blog/how-to-protect-your-smart-home-from-hackers (March 19, 2019).

⁷ “Why Hackers Target Smart Homes & 7 Tips to Protect Yours,” safety.com/how-to-protect-smart-home-from-hackers (Oct. 4, 2019).