



Ontario Provincial Police
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

News Release/ Communiqué

FROM/DE: Corporate Communications

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VIRUSES, WORMS AND TROJANS – OH MY! *Attachments Contain Threats to Personal and Business Data Systems*

(ORILLIA, ON) – Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) warn of the dangers presented by emails and certain attachments as part of its ongoing *Cyber Security Awareness Month* campaign.

Reading the contents of an email should be safe if you have the latest security patches, but email attachments can be harmful. Email phishing scams can trick you into opening attachments or giving up personal information. They appear to be emails from people, organizations or companies you know or trust, but they're often the gateway to identity theft by automatically installing malware, viruses, worms, and trojans. In some instances, email attachments are disguised as letters of reference, resumes or information requests can infiltrate and affect businesses that are involved in legitimate hiring processes. Also known as "[spearphishing campaigns](#)", high-value corporate and governments have been targeted through email attachments to take advantage of previously-unknown security vulnerabilities.

Many email servers will perform virus scanning and remove potentially dangerous attachments, but you can't rely on this. The easiest way to identify whether a file is dangerous is by its file extension, which tells you the type of file it is. For example, a file with the ".exe" file extension is a Windows program and should not be opened. Many email services will block such attachments. Other file extensions that can run potentially harmful code include ".msi", ".bat", ".com", ".cmd", ".hta", ".scr", ".pif", ".reg", ".js", ".vbs", ".wsf", ".cpl", ".jar" and more.

In general, you should only open files with commonly-used attachments that you know are safe. For example, ".jpg" and ".png" are image files and should be safe. Document files extensions such as ".pdf", ".docx", ".xlsx", and ".pptx" and should also be safe — although it's important to have the latest security patches so malicious types of these files can't infect systems via security holes in Adobe Reader or Microsoft Office.

If you or a business suspects they've been a victim of 'spearfishing', contact your local police service, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, report it to the OPP online at <http://www.opp.ca/index.php?id=132> or through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) at <https://www.tipsubmit.com/start.htm>

For helpful tips and links during Cyber Security Awareness Month, follow the OPP on [Twitter](#) (@OPP_News), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and using the hashtags **#CyberSecurity**, **#CyberAware** and **#OPPTips**.

QUOTES

