TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEMORANDUM #23-08

To: All Sheriffs and Jail Administrators
From: Brandon Wood, Executive Director
Date: July 27, 2023
RE: Cybersecurity response, outreach, and training opportunities

Cybersecurity has become increasingly more important as more of our lives take place digitally and more information is stored online. In today's digital world, we depend upon computers to carry out even the most basic of tasks, making cybersecurity more important than ever before.

Cyber threats come in many forms, including viruses, malware, phishing attacks, ransomware, and hacking attempts. Threat actors may target individuals, businesses, or even governments, depending on their end goals. Entities who are unprepared for a cyber threat are more likely to experience theft of sensitive information, financial loss, or damage to critical infrastructure related to a cyberattack.

Threat actors often target law enforcement organizations due to their sensitive data records and role in protecting critical infrastructure. All law enforcement professionals need to understand the risks, threats, and best practices associated with cybersecurity. The Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) encourages all law enforcement professionals to become familiar with the basics of proper cybersecurity hygiene by taking annual security awareness training. These trainings cover topics such as using strong passwords, being able to identify phishing emails, and how to quickly report a cybersecurity incident to their Information Technology department. There is currently a state mandate for local government staff and officials who use a computer 25% of the time to take annual security awareness training using a certified program, https://dir.texas.gov/information-security/certified-training-programs.

In addition, DIR has developed a 4-hour online asynchronous cybersecurity training called Cyber Incident Investigation Training for Law Enforcement that focuses on providing law enforcement professionals with a better understanding of cybersecurity procedures, standards, and protocols to follow, including useful points of contact. DIR provides this training at no cost to all law enforcement professionals, and participants receive Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) credit upon completion. Law enforcement professionals can access the training at the link above, or by navigating to teex.org/class/let713/.

DIR strongly encourages all Sheriffs and Jail Administrators to promote annual security awareness training and the Cyber Incident Investigation Training for Law Enforcement to their staff. By promoting these trainings, Sheriffs and Jail Administrators ensure that their staff have the knowledge needed to effectively respond when impacted by a cyberattack.

If you believe you or your law enforcement organization has been the target of a cyberattack, or if you would like more information on cybersecurity or cybersecurity training resources, you may contact DIR's Cybersecurity Incident Response Team (CIRT) via email at CIRT@dir.texas.gov or by phone at 877-347-2476. The CIRT can answer any cybersecurity questions you may have, or walk you through immediate and future actions to take if impacted by a cyber threat actor.

"The Commission on Jail Standards welcomes all suggestions and will promptly respond to all complaints directed against the agency or any facilities under its purview".
To empower local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas

RESOURCES

Cyber Incident Investigation Training for Law Enforcement
       Link to four-hour cybersecurity training for Law Enforcement.
DIR Information Security Homepage
       Link to the Information Security homepage of the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR).
State Mandated Security Awareness Training
       Training requirements
       Certified training programs
Cybersecurity Incident Management and Reporting
       Reporting guidance for cybersecurity incidents
DIR Incident Response Team Redbook
       Foundational document to develop a cybersecurity incident response plan.
How to Set Up a Successful Cybersecurity Program
       Flyer for a foundational resource guide to build a cybersecurity program.