

# WHAT IS MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION, AND WHY SHOULD YOUR HOUSING ORGANIZATION USE IT?



MFA stands for multi-factor authentication. The process, also referred to as two-factor authentication, or 2FA, enhances online security by supplementing the typical username/password required by most login procedures with additional credentials that only the user has access to. The benefit to your housing organization is that it adds a layer of protection that makes it more difficult for cyber criminals to access your computer systems and information.

“MFA is a security enhancement that requires you to present two pieces of evidence—your credentials—when logging in to an account,” explains Richard Moore, a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), and HAI Group’s virtual information security officer.

Your credentials can fall into any of three categories: 1) something you know (like a password or PIN), 2) something you have (like a smart card), or 3) something you are (like your fingerprint).



“You have probably used MFA in some form already: at the ATM, for example, when you put your bank card into the machine and it asks for your PIN.”

To enhance security, your credentials must come from two different categories. “Entering two different passwords would not be considered multi-factor,” says Moore.



## WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

As you have no doubt seen at your organization and in the housing industry in general, the pandemic is changing the way we work. Many people find themselves working remotely unexpectedly, and organizations that weren’t set up for remote work were forced to adapt quickly. Cyber criminals are taking advantage of the uncertainty by ramping up phishing and ransomware attacks, and housing organizations are not immune.

If you’re not using MFA at your organization, a [recent Tech-Beacon article](#) outlines eight reasons you should. Two of the most important, according to author David Hald:

**1. “Identity theft is an easy, low-risk, high-reward type of crime and a threat to all businesses. It is the fastest-growing type of crime and is now more profitable than drug-related crimes.**

**2. “Weak or stolen user credentials are hackers’ weapon of choice, used in 95 percent of all Web application attacks.”**

*Stopping all online crime is not a realistic goal, but simple steps can massively reduce the likelihood you’ll be the next victim.*  

— Richard Moore

## REVIEW YOUR COVERAGE

Not sure whether you’re adequately covered when it comes to cyber risk? Contact your HAI Group account representative today for a complimentary evaluation.

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