

## Beware of phishing e-mails purportedly sent by the Law Society

The Law Society would like to alert members to an e-mail sent purportedly from the President of the Law Society requesting payment of certain expenses for an upcoming CPD event on the pretext that the sender cannot contact the Council's Treasurer. The phishing e-mail may be sent to a personal e-mail account.

The scam works in the following way. The sender poses as the "President" of an organisation and reaches out to selected members of the organization (in the Law Society's context, such members may be members of the Council or a Committee). The contact may occur via e-mail from an unusual e-mail address or an e-mail address that may be similar to the organisation's or the "President's" e-mail address. The "President" will then request the member to transfer a sum from the member's bank account to a "vendor" for an invoice allegedly due for an actual upcoming CPD event (e.g. Annual CPD Day 2024). A copy of the invoice will be enclosed, which states that it is to be billed to the Law Society together with the "vendor's" payment details. The member will be asked to pay the sum to the "vendor" first on the pretext that the "President" cannot contact the Council's Treasurer and reimbursement will be made once the Council's Treasurer is available. The phishing e-mail will be signed off by the "President".

Subsequently, the "President" may send follow-up e-mails to the member to pressure the member to pay the sum for various reasons e.g. the "vendor" is chasing for payment or that the "President" is unable to pay the sum first due to a bank upgrade issue. The "President" may also use his or her authority to demand that the member pay the sum to the "vendor" urgently. These are common social engineering tactics used by the scammer to induce the recipient to make the transfer.

Members are advised to adopt the following precautionary measures:

- a) Beware of unusual e-mails sent to you purportedly from the President or a member of the Council or the Law Society Secretariat requesting payments due to the Law Society be made to them or a personal bank account. No Council member, including the President, or the Law Society Secretariat will ask for payments due to the Law Society in this manner. Verify the contents of the e-mail directly with the Law Society by contacting the Council or Secretariat member who purportedly sent the e-mail.
- b) Be wary of suspicious e-mails sent to your personal e-mail address purportedly from the Law Society. The Law Society does not have a practice of sending e-mails to a member's personal e-mail address requesting payments.
- c) Look out for spelling errors and bad grammar in the e-mail.
- d) Be wary of urgent or threatening messages.
- e) Hover your mouse over the e-mail address of the sender in the e-mail to check if the e-mail address is genuine. Always ensure that the sender's e-mail address corresponds with the sender's name by checking for typos and/or unusual e-mail addresses. In this case, the sender's e-mail address was **tcoonan@optimum.net**, which is not a Law Society e-mail address.
- f) Scan attachments before opening or downloading them.

If you are unsure whether an e-mail that you have received from the Law Society is a phishing e-mail, please get in touch with the Law Society at 6538 2500 or submit a report to the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (<https://www.csa.gov.sg/Tips-Resource/Resources/singcert/report-a-phishing-e-mail>) or through ScamShield (<https://www.scamshield.gov.sg/submit-a-scam-report/>).

The Law Society advises all members to exercise vigilance when receiving telephone calls, e-mails, text messages, and pop-up notifications, especially from unknown or unusual sources. The Law Society also encourages members to attend the Deepavali Council Luncheon on 12 November 2024 (Tuesday) at 12.30pm at the State Courts Bar Room, where representatives from the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore will be speaking on matters relating to cybersecurity and data protection. You may also register [here](#) to join us virtually. For enquiries, please contact [membership@lawsoc.org.sg](mailto:membership@lawsoc.org.sg).