

FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (CAT) – 2015

The FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool helps U.S. financial institutions assess cybersecurity preparedness and manage cyber risk.



What it is

The FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (CAT) is a risk assessment framework that enables financial institutions to evaluate their cybersecurity preparedness and manage cyber risks effectively. It provides a structured approach for identifying cybersecurity maturity and aligning security controls with organizational risk profiles.

Developed and published by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC), the CAT is intended primarily for banks, credit unions, and other regulated financial services organizations in the United States. The tool covers key areas including cybersecurity risk management, threat intelligence, incident response, third-party risk, and oversight of security controls.

At a glance

PUBLISHER Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC)	TYPE Assessment / Maturity Model	VERSION FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (2015)
EFFECTIVE June 2015	DOMAIN Cybersecurity	FAMILY Other
REGION United States	INDUSTRY Financial Services	ADOPTION MODEL Regulatory Compliance
IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY High		

Source: <https://www.ffiec.gov/resources/cybersecurity-awareness>

Why it matters

- **Strengthen cybersecurity governance** Enable organizations to systematically evaluate security policies and oversight, supporting informed risk management decisions at the leadership level.
- **Enhance regulatory alignment** Facilitate the alignment of cybersecurity controls with supervisory expectations to streamline compliance with U.S. financial regulations.
- **Improve risk identification and response** Support early identification of cyber risks and empower organizations to address threats promptly before material impacts occur.
- **Increase audit and reporting readiness** Provide a clear framework for documenting cybersecurity posture, making it easier to prepare for regulatory audits and board updates.

How SmartSuite supports FFIEC CAT

Governance and Examiner Readiness Hub Centralize policies, oversight roles, and recurring reporting for exams.	Risk Assessments and Control Mapping Track cyber risk assessments and link them to required controls and evidence.	Third-Party Risk Oversight Manage vendor inventories, due diligence, contract requirements, and monitoring.
Control Testing and Evidence Cadence Schedule access reviews, patching proof, monitoring checks, and testing artifacts.	Incident and Resilience Workflows Run incident response and resilience exercises with documented outcomes.	Executive Reporting Dashboards Provide board-ready reporting on posture, gaps, and remediation status.

Common framework mappings

CIS Controls v8.1

EU DORA

ISO 27001:2022

NIST CSF 2.0

NIST 800-53 Rev.5

PCI DSS 4.0.1

SOC 2

SWIFT CSCF

Official resources

FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool Overview Provides an official guide to assess cybersecurity preparedness in financial institutions. ffiec.gov/cyberassessmenttool.htm	FFIEC Management Handbook Describes risk management guidelines for financial institutions to implement cybersecurity controls. ithandbook.ffiec.gov/it-booklets/management.aspx
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Frequently asked questions

- What is the FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (CAT) used for?**

The FFIEC CAT is designed to help financial institutions assess their cybersecurity risks and determine their level of preparedness. It provides a structured, repeatable methodology to identify maturity gaps and strengthen controls aligned to regulatory expectations.
- Is the FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (CAT) mandatory or certifiable?**

The FFIEC CAT is not a certification program and is not formally required by regulation, but examiners strongly encourage its use as a best practice. Many regulators expect banks and credit unions to use the CAT or a comparable framework to demonstrate effective cybersecurity risk management.
- Who should use the FFIEC CAT, and what is its scope?**

The FFIEC CAT is intended for U.S. financial institutions such as banks, savings associations, and credit unions, as well as service providers regulated by federal banking agencies. Its scope covers enterprise-wide cybersecurity risk across multiple business lines and operational areas.
- What are the key components of the FFIEC CAT?**

The CAT consists of two main components: the Inherent Risk Profile, which gauges the institution's risk exposure, and the Cybersecurity Maturity component, which assesses controls and practices across five domains ranging from risk management to incident response.
- How do organizations implement the FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool?**

To implement the CAT, institutions complete the Inherent Risk Profile, assess their maturity in each domain, and analyze gaps. Mitigation actions are prioritized, controls are mapped to existing policies, and evidence is documented for oversight and examination purposes.

How does the FFIEC CAT align with other cybersecurity frameworks?

The FFIEC CAT is complementary to frameworks like NIST CSF and ISO 27001, often used in parallel to meet supervisory requirements and strengthen internal risk assessments. It focuses specifically on the banking sector's regulatory expectations in the U.S.

What ongoing compliance requirements exist with the FFIEC CAT?

Institutions should conduct periodic reassessments, document improvements, and maintain evidence of controls and remediation activities. Regular reporting to executive management and the board, as well as readiness for regulatory reviews, are essential for ongoing compliance.

How would SmartSuite support FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (CAT)?

SmartSuite enables financial organizations to operationalize the FFIEC CAT by importing control libraries, managing risk registers, mapping and tracking controls, and collecting evidence. Automated workflows facilitate remediation, support audit readiness, and provide dashboards for ongoing monitoring and board-level reporting, ensuring continuous compliance management.

License included / downloadable: Yes The FFIEC Cybersecurity Assessment Tool is publicly available through official FFIEC resources.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/ffiec-cybersecurity-assessment-tool-cat-2015