



# HOW TO CHECK THE SECURITY PULSE OF YOUR MICROSOFT 365 IN UNDER 10 MINUTES





## Introduction

Cyber threats have never been more prevalent or sophisticated. For Australian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), maintaining robust cybersecurity can feel overwhelming. Fortunately, if you're using Microsoft 365, there's an accessible and powerful tool already at your fingertips: Microsoft Secure Score. This free tool gives a quick snapshot of your cybersecurity posture, shedding light on vulnerabilities and providing concrete action steps for improvement.

If you're a business owner, you're in the right place, this guide explains how you can effectively assess your security posture using Microsoft Secure Score in less than ten minutes, no matter your level of technical knowledge.

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## Understanding Microsoft Secure Score

Microsoft Secure Score is a cybersecurity evaluation tool embedded within Microsoft 365. By comparing your organisation's existing security configurations against established industry standards and Microsoft's recommended best practices, the tool identifies potential vulnerabilities and generates a Secure Score between 0 and 100 percent, reflecting your organisation's overall cybersecurity health.

Higher Secure Scores indicate fewer vulnerabilities and enhanced resilience against cyber threats. Your score also provides immediate visibility into your cybersecurity posture, highlighting strengths and pinpointing specific areas needing improvement. The Secure Score service is continuously updated to reflect the latest cybersecurity threats and industry standards, meaning your organisation will always have access to relevant and timely security insights.

Secure Score evaluates several security domains, including identity protection, device security, data protection, email security, and access management. Each domain is

scored independently, helping you precisely understand your organisation's weak spots so you can plan how to address them effectively.

Below the numerical score, the Secure Score dashboard offers detailed insights into each security domain's specific configurations and settings. This includes actionable recommendations prioritised by their potential impact on security, ease of implementation, and expected improvements to the Secure Score. Each recommendation comes with step-by-step guidance, estimated implementation times, and practical tips. Typically, they address critical areas such as multi-factor authentication, password policies, software updates, and email security enhancements.

There's also Secure Score's continuous monitoring feature, which you can use to track your organisation's progress over time and stay ahead of new cyber threats. As you make security improvements, the Secure Score updates automatically to give you real-time feedback.

## Why Microsoft Secure Score Matters

Microsoft Secure Score is a vital tool for businesses to efficiently manage the cybersecurity posture of their Microsoft 365 environment. By facilitating more informed decisions and continuous improvement, it brings the following benefits for business resilience and continuity:



### Enhanced Visibility and Awareness

Secure Score provides immediate, clear insights into your business's cybersecurity status today, showing you vulnerabilities that may otherwise remain undetected. By visualising security gaps clearly and concisely, it helps you quickly grasp your cybersecurity landscape, understand potential threats, and prioritise areas requiring urgent attention.



### Actionable and Prioritised Guidance

Secure Score doesn't just identify security weaknesses—it also delivers concrete, practical steps your organisation can take to address these issues effectively. Recommendations are prioritised based on their ease of implementation and their potential to improve security. Even better, each recommendation comes with detailed, step-by-step instructions.



### Continuous and Proactive Monitoring

Cybersecurity is not a one-time effort but an ongoing responsibility. Secure Score supports continuous monitoring by automatically updating as security improvements are implemented, providing real-time feedback. This continuous cycle of assessment and enhancement fosters a culture of proactive security management, empowering your organisation to stay ahead of emerging threats and continually maintain a strong cybersecurity posture.



### Reduced Risk of Cyber Incidents

According to data from Microsoft, businesses that regularly review and act upon their Secure Score insights significantly mitigate the risk of data breaches, ransomware attacks, and other cyber threats, thus protecting their reputation, operational continuity, and financial stability.

By providing enhanced visibility, actionable guidance, continuous monitoring, benchmarking capabilities, and reduced cyber risk, Microsoft Secure Score emerges as an indispensable tool for businesses committed to robust cybersecurity management.

# Step-by-Step Guide: Checking Your Microsoft Secure Score

## Step 1: Access Secure Score

- Sign in to your Microsoft 365 Admin Centre with an administrator account.
- From the main menu, navigate to the “Security” or “Compliance” centre.
- Select “Secure Score” under “Exposure Management” from the sidebar.

## Step 2: Review Your Current Secure Score

- Your Secure Score dashboard will prominently display your current Secure Score percentage.
- Review the detailed breakdown of your organisation's security strengths and vulnerabilities across different security domains, including how they compare to recommended best practices.

## Step 3: Analyse Recommendations

- Underneath your score, you'll find prioritised recommendations for improving your security.
- Evaluate each recommendation based on its potential impact, ease of implementation, and how much it will improve your Secure Score.

## Step 4: Implement Security Improvements

- Prioritise recommendations based on organisational needs, available resources, and potential impact.
- Click on each recommendation to access detailed, step-by-step implementation instructions.
- Follow practical guidance, utilise provided resources, and monitor the expected timeframes for implementation to manage the process effectively.

## Step 5: Monitor Progress and Review

- As you implement the recommendations, your Secure Score will automatically update, providing immediate feedback on your security improvements.
- Regularly revisit your Secure Score dashboard to monitor progress, identify new recommendations, and ensure continuous security enhancement.
- Establish a routine for regularly reviewing and managing your Secure Score as part of your ongoing cybersecurity strategy.

# Maximising the Benefits of Microsoft Secure Score

To get all the capabilities and advantages that Microsoft Secure Score has to offer, we recommend adopting a structured and proactive approach including several key strategies:

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### Clearly Defined Responsibilities

- Assign specific individuals or teams to regularly review and manage your Secure Score.
- Establish clear accountability to ensure recommendations are systematically implemented and monitored. This will create ownership and consistency in your organisation's security management.

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### Regular Review and Monitoring

- Set up a fixed schedule, monthly or quarterly, to review your Secure Score dashboard.
- Regularly revisiting the dashboard ensures new recommendations are promptly identified, and existing measures remain relevant and effective against emerging threats.

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### Integration with Governance and Compliance

- Incorporate Secure Score insights and updates into your broader governance, risk, and compliance processes.
- Include Secure Score findings in regular cybersecurity briefings to senior management, board members, or stakeholders to ensure transparency and strategic alignment.

## Wrapping It Up

Microsoft Secure Score is an accessible yet powerful way for your business to assess and enhance its cybersecurity posture. With an investment of just ten minutes on a regular basis, you can significantly reduce your cyber risk even as new threats continue to appear.

Organisations that embrace Secure Score safeguard their cybersecurity, and with it, their continuity, financial health, and reputation. Regularly reviewing your Secure Score forms an essential part of any effective cybersecurity strategy, empowering you to go from surviving to thriving in our world's challenging security landscape.



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