

From: DHS PUBLIC-AFFAIRS
To: PUBLIC-AFFAIRS, DHS
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Subject: Playing CDs, DVDs on workstations banned

Please do not reply to this message. If you have questions or comments, please contact Kyle Miller, (503) 945-6394; email dhsinfo.security@state.or.us

Nov. 18, 2005

To: All DHS employees

From: Kyle E. Miller, DHS information security officer

Effective today, until further notice, use of DHS computer workstations to play CDs or DVDs is not allowed. Please read this entire message for an explanation.

Playing Music CDs and DVDs on your computer

Until today, Department of Human Services staff, volunteers and partners have been allowed to play music CDs and DVDs on their DHS workstation, because it posed a minimal risk to the department's data. However, last week it was announced that some music CD and DVD manufacturers have included copy protection software on music CDs. This software automatically installs when the disc is first played, loading damaging software onto your workstation.

A "workstation" is defined as an electronic computing device; for example a laptop or desktop computer (or any other device that performs similar functions) and electronic media stored in its immediate environment.

How does this happen?

The copy-protection software uses a "rootkit." Unfortunately, these rootkits allow writers to hide malicious software. This becomes invisible to users and can then turn off the workstation's firewall and take control of the machine.

Why is this important?

The rootkit allows malicious users to take control of DHS workstations, which elevates the risk to DHS data and systems to unacceptable levels. Removing the rootkit is difficult, time consuming, and has been shown to cause stabilization problems in some workstations.

So can I play any music CDs and DVDs?

Not at this time. The use of DHS workstations to play music CDs and DVDs must be discontinued until further notice. This includes any music CDs and DVDs that have been purchased, copied or "homemade." Please remember, your workstation is considered state property.

What if I had been granted an OIS exception or received permission from my

supervisor?

This supercedes any perceived permission to use IT equipment to listen to or store MP3 files through policies such as the "Acceptable Use of Information Related Technology" policy. Regarding any personal use, the policy says: "Must not adversely impact the capacity of or cause a security risk to information-related technology systems."

Will I ever be able to play music on my system?

Technology antivirus providers such as McAfee and Symantec are working on a solution to this problem. DHS will allow this practice to resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

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