

Essential 8 Quick-Start Checklist

The Essential 8 is the Australian Signals Directorate's baseline set of cyber security strategies for mitigating the most common attack techniques. Use this checklist as a starting point to gauge where your business currently stands, then talk to BITS about a full maturity assessment.

☐ 1 Application Control

Only approved applications can run on your systems, blocking unknown or malicious executables before they start.

☐ 2 Patch Applications

Security patches for applications (browsers, PDF readers, Office) are applied within two weeks of release, or 48 hours for critical vulnerabilities.

☐ 3 Configure Microsoft Office Macro Settings

Macros are blocked from the internet and only enabled for users with a specific, verified business need.

☐ 4 User Application Hardening

Web browsers are configured to block or disable risky features like Flash, ads and unnecessary Java content.

☐ 5 Restrict Administrative Privileges

Admin accounts are only used for administrative tasks, regularly revalidated, and never used for email or web browsing.

☐ 6 Patch Operating Systems

OS security patches are applied within two weeks of release, or 48 hours for critical vulnerabilities, on internet-facing systems especially.

☐ 7 Multi-Factor Authentication

MFA is enforced for all remote access, all privileged accounts, and ideally every user login, not just email.

☐ 8 Regular Backups

Backups are performed daily, stored offline or immutably, and, critically, tested with an actual restore on a regular schedule.

What About Maturity Levels?

Each of the eight strategies is assessed against Maturity Levels Zero through Three, from not implemented, through to hardened against sophisticated, targeted attacks. Most Australian SMBs should be aiming for at least Maturity Level One as a baseline.

Want a proper gap assessment, not just a checklist?

BITS IT Support runs full Essential 8 maturity assessments for Melbourne businesses. Call 03 9067 7787 or visit businessitsupport.au/services/essential-eight-compliance.html