



SECURE YOUR HOME NETWORK TO PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE INTERNET

When you buy a wireless router it is not secure and its default configuration will allow unwanted users that are in the vicinity of your router to connect to the Internet and “steal” your wireless router Internet connection. They could also gain access to your PC and steal files and folders of data. Manufacturers leave the configuration “open” so that the user can easily set up the router and get it up and running quickly. However, there is a risk if the router is not secure.

First you must gain access to your router you will have to open a web browser and type either: `http://192.168.1.1` or `http://192.168.2.1`

Step 1 Change the Admin password. Most wireless routers ship with a blank password. It is essential that this is changed else a potential hacker could get into your router configuration and lock you out of your own hardware. The password should be at least 8 characters and contain capital letters, lowercase letters, numbers and characters.

Step 2 Change The Network Name (otherwise known as the SSID). The default network name is usually made up of the name/model of your wireless router. This information gives a head start for a hacker and makes it easier for them to break into your network. Don't rename it to something like your surname or house name as this unnecessarily exposes personal information. Rename it to an alpha-numeric string - this can be up to 32 characters long.

Step 3 Turn off SSID broadcasting. By default, a wireless router's SSID is broadcast so anyone in the vicinity of your wireless router can see that it. SSID broadcasting can be turned off thus making your wireless router virtually invisible.

Step 4 Enabling Encryption. This is switched off by default. There is a choice of WEP, WPA and WPA2. Currently the latest encryption method is WPA2 so use this where possible. Both your wireless router and wireless PC adaptor must be configured to use the same encryption. An encryption password that is completely random is much more secure than words that can be found in a dictionary.

Step 5 Mac Address Control. All hardware has a unique MAC address associated with it, including your PC adaptor card. This MAC address can be added to access control list in the wireless router. Only devices added to the router's access control list are allowed to be connected. To get your MAC address, Go to the start Menu, and select Run. You can also press the Windows key and the R key at the same time. In the Run command type `cmd` and press ENTER. You will now be in a command prompt. Type `ipconfig /all` and press ENTER. Your machine's MAC address will be labeled as the Physical Address. Make sure you get the Physical Address for your wireless card and not wired card.

Every system is a little different. To find out how to perform the steps again you will need to get the user manual for your brand and model of router. To do this go to the manufactures website:

Belkin Routers – www.belkin.com/support/

Linksys Routers – www.kinksysbycisco.com/US/en/support

Netgear Routers – kb.netgear.com/apps/products/list/p3/164/eol/1