

## FREE COMMUNITY ASSET

# Microsoft Secure Score Benchmark & Posture Hardening Guide

Clinical telemetry framework for measuring identity, device, and data posture, resolving misconfigurations, and validating cyber insurance hygiene.

## 1.0 WHAT IS MICROSOFT SECURE SCORE?

Microsoft Secure Score is a numerical measurement (0% to 100%) of an organization's cybersecurity posture based on active configurations, user behaviors, and device hygiene. Rather than guessing vulnerabilities, Secure Score provides a live, audited telemetry dashboard that demonstrates demonstrable compliance to cyber insurers and executive leadership.

## 2.0 NAVIGATING THE TELEMETRY DASHBOARD

Access the centralized portal at <https://security.microsoft.com/securescore>. The interface categorizes exposure across three primary pillars:

- \* **Identity:** Accounts, password hygiene, conditional access, MFA coverage, role assignments.
- \* **Devices:** BitLocker encryption, OS patch velocity, Defender EDR onboarding, antivirus definitions.
- \* **Apps & Data:** Exchange mailbox forwarding rules, SharePoint external sharing links, OneDrive sensitive data permissions.

## 3.0 TOP 5 HIGH-IMPACT, ZERO-COST HARDENING REMEDIATIONS

- \* **1. Enforce MFA for All Administrative Roles (+15.2%):** Ensure 100% of Global Admins, Exchange Admins, and SharePoint Admins have registered authenticator apps.
- \* **2. Prohibit External Mail Forwarding Rules (+8.4%):** Attackers who compromise an inbox create silent inbox rules forwarding copies of all emails to an external mailbox. Block automatic forwarding in Exchange Online Admin.
- \* **3. Eliminate Password Expiration Mandates (+5.1%):** NIST 800-63b guidelines prove arbitrary 90-day password changes cause users to pick predictable patterns. Rely on length (16+ chars) and MFA.
- \* **4. Enable Self-Service Password Reset (SSPR) (+6.3%):** Reduces helpdesk impersonation vulnerabilities while enforcing multi-channel verification upon reset.
- \* **5. Audit Global Administrator Counts (+4.2%):** Restrict Global Administrators to between 2 and 4 accounts. Assign granular role-based access (User Admin, Helpdesk Admin) for routine duties.

### INSURANCE UNDERWRITING VERIFICATION

Many cyber insurance underwriters now demand a minimum Secure Score benchmark (>65%) before issuing policy binders. Export the 'History' tab as a signed PDF report to demonstrate proactive risk reduction.

## 4.0 EXECUTION & TRACKING PROTOCOL

- \* **Step 1:** Open <https://security.microsoft.com/securescore> and note your Baseline Posture Score.
- \* **Step 2:** Select the 'Recommended actions' tab. Sort by 'Impact' (Highest to Lowest).

- \* **Step 3:** Click any recommendation to view the native 'Remediation Action' button and step-by-step guidance.
- \* **Step 4:** Allow 24 to 48 hours for the Microsoft telemetry engine to recalculate points after making changes.

## 5.0 DIRECT PORTAL LINKS

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Microsoft Secure Score Portal: <https://security.microsoft.com/securescore>

Microsoft Defender Portal: <https://security.microsoft.com>

NIST SP 800-63b Identity Guidelines: <https://pages.nist.gov/800-63-3/sp800-63b.html>