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## Firewall Basics

### Don't Get Burned Online

Even if you think no one would bother to attack your solitary home computer online, as soon as you connect to the Internet, your computer becomes a target for hackers, malicious code, personal data theft, and other unseen dangers. A personal firewall can be a valuable defense against these online threats, keeping your computer and your personal information safe.



### What a Firewall Can Do For You

Firewalls function like their namesake by providing a line of defense between computers that share information. The purpose of a personal firewall is to control the flow of information back and forth between your computer and your Web server. A firewall examines all traffic routed between your computer and the Internet to see if it meets certain criteria. If it does, it is allowed in. If it doesn't, it is stopped. Protecting your computer from intrusion, the firewall keeps your machine from getting burned by destructive intrusions that could result in data loss or file corruption.

A firewall can give you the tools you need to protect your private information while connected to a public network:

- You may select which information you would like to protect, such as a credit card number or password. If you attempt to send that number to an insecure site - such as one that doesn't support sufficient encryption -- the firewall will alert you.
- Firewalls can also prevent Web servers from getting access to other sensitive data, like your address, while you're browsing.
- Cookies, small text files stored on your computer by a Web server, can be useful for surfing because they help other sites remember you when you revisit, eliminating the need to enter login information with each visit and keeping your shopping basket current. But they may also raise privacy concerns since they could be used to track your web surfing unknowingly;. With Norton Personal Firewall, you can block cookies on a site-by-site basis.
- You can also block Java applets and ActiveX controls, both of which may endanger personal information and computer security.
- In addition to controlling information, firewalls can let you know if anyone has tried to access that information using intrusion detection that notifies you and analyzes the data for patterns that may point to a weak spot in your security system.

### Do You Need a Firewall?

Anyone who surfs the Web can benefit from personal firewall software whether you use dial-up or enjoy an always-on Internet connection. Many PC users believe that no one would bother breaking into their anonymous home computer. Unfortunately, this is not true. Every computer on the Internet has its own IP address, a unique string of numbers that serve as a type of identification. Hackers often program their computers to scan random IP addresses and attack whenever a vulnerable machine is found. They don't need to know your machine personally to attack it. And this intrusion could cost you many files and programs -- especially if you have to reinstall your operating system without warning.

[Norton Personal Firewall 2001](#) can provide you with the ultimate in security for your home computer, right out of the box. Because it automatically configures itself specifically to your PC, it is easy to use and provides customized security for your needs. It immediately "hides" your PC and takes other steps to guard it against common hacking techniques. You can choose basic settings quickly with easy-to-use presets, or you can adjust the security settings to your exact preferences using more detailed customizations. Anyone online can benefit from personal firewall software. Don't let hackers and other online dangers threaten your PC. Keep them safe, behind Norton Personal Firewall.

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