Accellion cyber incident – Australian credit licence applicants

Frequently asked questions

What happened and when?

On 28 December 2020, an unidentified threat actor accessed an ASIC server containing attachments to Australian credit licence applications submitted to ASIC between 1 July 2020 and 28 December 2020.

How did the incident occur?

The cyber incident occurred due to a vulnerability in a file transfer appliance (FTA) provided by California-based Accellion and used by ASIC to receive attachments to Australian credit licence applications.

When did ASIC become aware of the incident?

On 15 January 2021, Accellion advised ASIC that there had been unauthorised access to ASIC's Accellion server.

After becoming aware of the vulnerability identified by Accellion, ASIC applied the recommended patch and sought a review of the server access logs from Accellion.

What information was accessed?

ASIC has determined that the credit licence application forms held within the server were not accessed. Analysis by ASIC's independent forensic investigators shows no evidence that attachments were opened or downloaded.

However, the filenames of attachments for credit licence applications that were submitted to ASIC between 1 July 2020 and 28 December 2020 may have been viewed by the threat actor. For example, the credit licence applicant's name or the name of an individual responsible manager, if these were used in the filename of the attachment (e.g. police check, CV) may have been viewed by the threat actor.

What is ASIC doing to address the cyber incident?

In response to the incident, ASIC has:

- disabled the relevant server;
- ascertained that no other ASIC information technology (IT) infrastructure is impacted;

- taken steps to amend the credit licence application instructions to provide alternative arrangements for submitting their attachments (see below);
- written to all identified credit licence applicants (via the contact email address nominated by the applicant) to inform them of the incident;
- advised applicants impacted to be careful about approaches from parties purporting to have their confidential information and what to do if they are approach;
- commenced an assessment of the unauthorised access in accordance with our obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*;
- informed relevant authorities; and
- engaged independent cybersecurity experts to complete a forensic investigation.

Are any of ASIC's other data systems impacted?

ASIC's forensic investigators reviewed the evidence and determined that there is no evidence of impact to other ASIC IT systems from the Accellion vulnerability.

Who has ASIC notified about the incident?

ASIC has contacted impacted credit licence applicants (via the contact email address nominated by the applicant) to notify them of the incident. The incident relates only to attachments to applications submitted to ASIC between 1 July 2020 and 28 December 2020.

ASIC has notified relevant authorities, including the Australian Cyber Security Centre. We are working with Accellion and we engaged external cyber security experts to complete forensic investigations.

My application was impacted by the incident. What should I do now?

We have all the attachments you submitted previously. If ASIC's assessment of your application is still pending, you do not need to do anything further unless we contact you.

ASIC has, to date, not received reports of any attacks (attempted or actual) against any Australian credit licence applicants as a result of the incident.

ASIC recommends vigilance in relation to phishing emails and other scam communications.

We also recommend that credit licence applicants potentially impacted not respond to any email, telephone or social media communications that they

consider suspicious, and if unsure, to verify their legitimacy before providing any confidential information.

We ask that credit licence applicants (who submitted an application between 1 July 2020 and 28 December 2020) contact ASIC at contactus@asic.gov.au and also the Australian Cyber Security Centre if they encounter any suspicious inquiries relating to their credit licence application, or threats are made regarding the disclosure of any confidential information by a third party.

How can I contact ASIC about the incident?

ASIC has set up a dedicated email address for all enquiries regarding the incident: contactus@asic.gov.au

I want to lodge a credit licence application. How do I do that now?

Forms

Form submission has not changed. Applicants are to complete and submit an application (ASIC forms CL01 and CL03) via https://www.edge.asic.gov.au/011/acrportal/get/ServicesLogin

Attachments

We have disabled ASIC's Accellion file transfer application server previously used to submit attachments with your credit licence application.

Going forward, when credit licence applicants submit CL01 or CL03 application forms, please contact us at licensing.credit@asic.gov.au. We will then provide details on how to securely submit the accompanying attachments.

We are currently updating our forms and procedures and expect these alternative arrangements to be available by Friday 12 February 2021.