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Ransomware Response Playbook

How Mid-Market Organizations Can Prepare for and Respond to a Ransomware Attack

A practical executive guide to minimizing operational disruption, financial loss, and regulatory exposure.

Ransomware is no longer an IT issue. It is a business disruption event.

Modern ransomware attacks typically include:

- System encryption
- Data theft
- Operational shutdown
- Extortion deadlines
- Regulatory exposure

Organizations without a structured response plan often lose valuable time during the first hours of an incident.

Why Organizations Struggle During Ransomware Incidents

Common Challenges:

- Unclear incident leadership
- Lack of a coordinated response plan
- Delayed decision making
- Uncertainty around insurance and legal obligations
- Unverified backup recovery processes

The first few hours of a ransomware attack often determine the scale of operational disruption.

Who Must Be Involved Immediately

Executive Response Timeline

The First 60 Minutes

What leadership teams must determine immediately after a ransomware event is detected.

0-5 Minutes

Detection and Initial Escalation

- Suspicious activity or encryption detected
- IT/security team confirms potential ransomware
- Executive leadership notified
- Incident response process activated

5-15 Minutes

Containment Begins

- Identify potentially infected systems
- Isolate affected hosts from the network
- Disable compromised credentials
- Limit lateral movement across systems

15-30 Minutes

Executive Decision Preparation

- Confirm scope of affected systems
- Determine if backups are intact
- Assess whether sensitive data may be exposed
- Engage cybersecurity incident response team

30-60 Minutes

Strategic Response Activation

- Notify cyber insurance provider
- Engage legal counsel if regulated data may be involved
- Begin forensic investigation
- Prepare internal communication plan

The Ransomware Response Framework

Every ransomware incident moves through four core phases:

01	02	03	04
Containment	**Analysis**	**Remediation**	**Recovery**
Stop the spread of the attack	Determine the attack vector and scope	Remove malicious artifacts	Restore operations and systems

Ransomware Response Flow

Ransomware Confirmed

Notify **Executive**

Notify **Legal**

Enable **Cyberincident Response Team**

Containment

Analysis

Remediation

Recovery

PHASE 1

Containment

Objective

Stop the ransomware from spreading.

Key Actions

- **Identify** infected systems
- **Isolate** affected hosts
- **Reset** compromised credentials
- **Limit** lateral movement across the network

Identify affected hosts

↓

Isolate affected hosts

↓

Reset impacted user/host credentials

↓

ANALYSIS

Rapid containment can dramatically reduce operational damage

PHASE 2

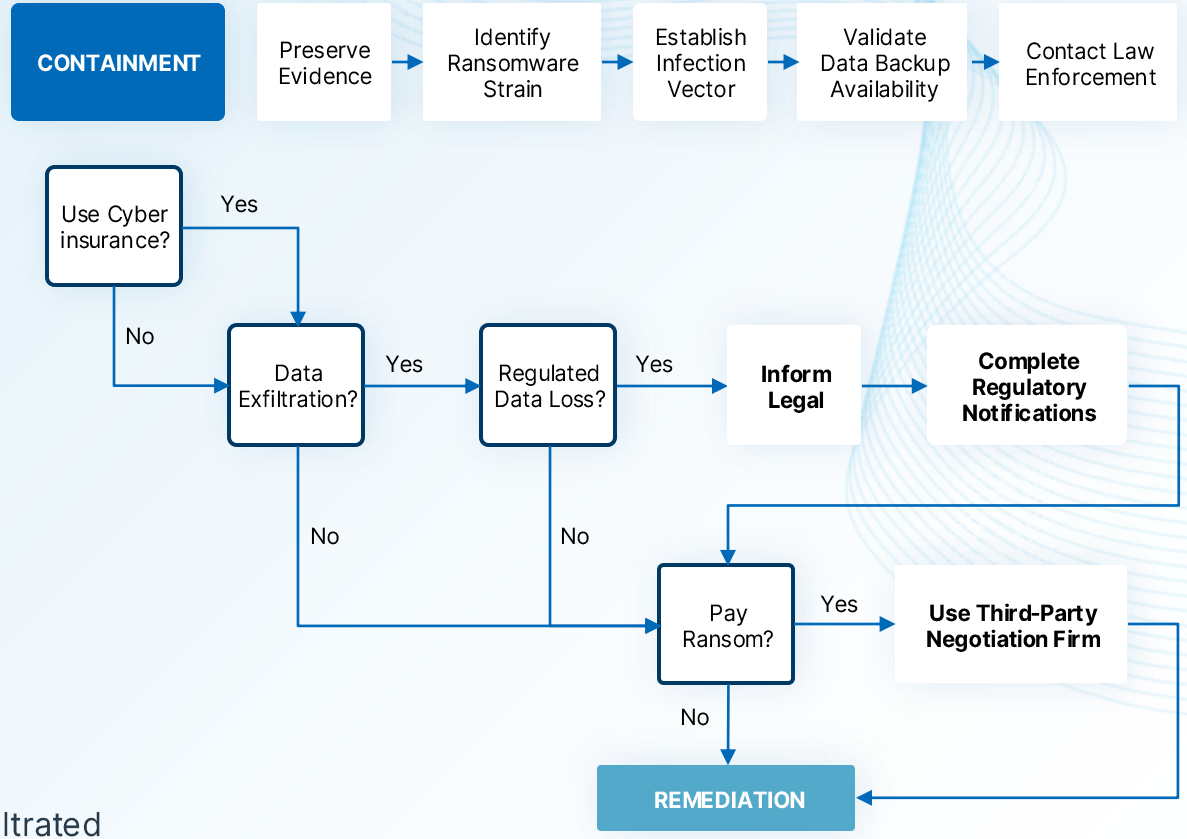
Analysis

Objective

Understand the attack.

Key Actions

- **Preserve** forensic evidence
- **Identify** ransomware strain
- **Determine** infection vector
- **Assess** scope of compromise
- **Confirm** whether data was exfiltrated



PHASE 3

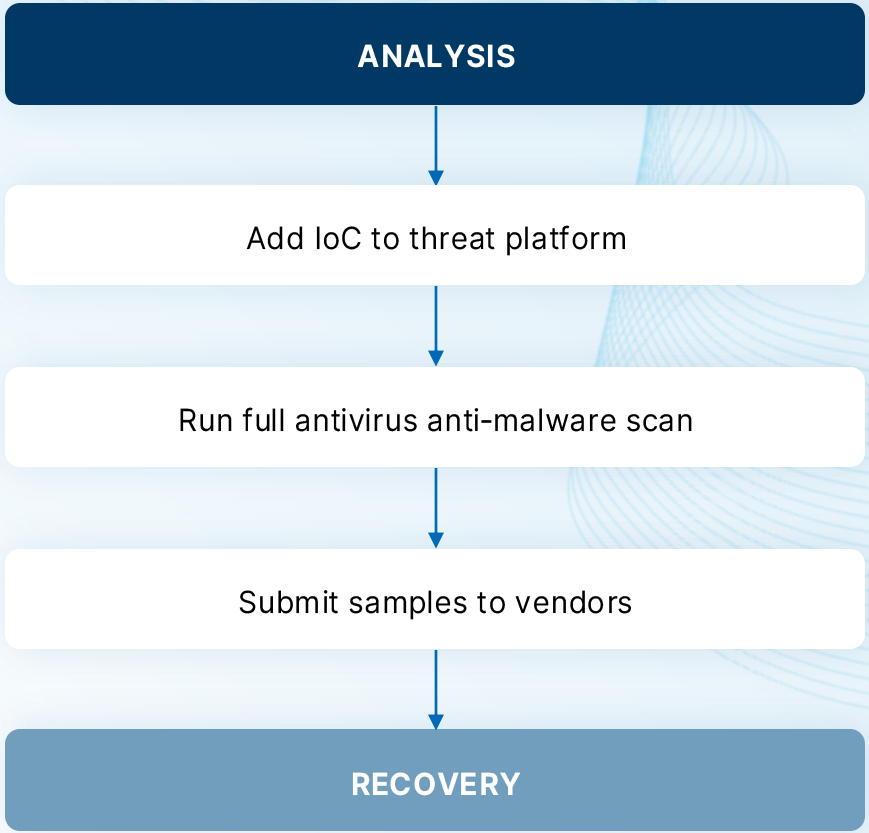
Remediation

Objective

Remove the attacker's presence.

Key Actions

- **Run** full malware scans
- **Remove** malicious artifacts
- **Patch** exploited vulnerabilities
- **Update** threat detection systems
- **Add** indicators of compromise to detection platforms



PHASE 4

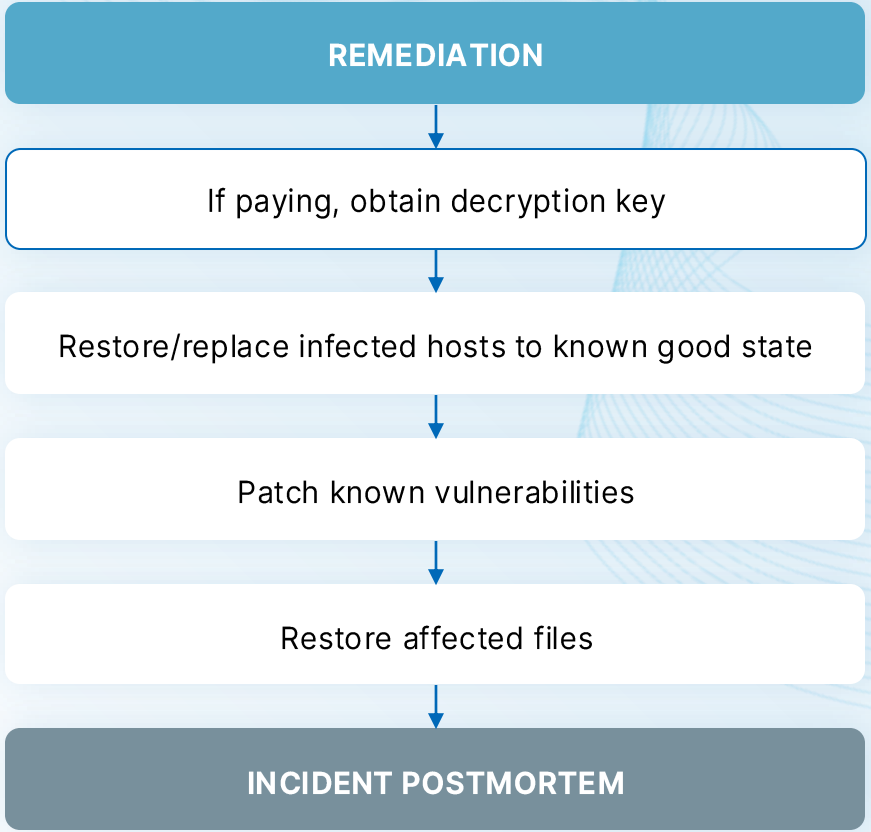
Recovery

Objective

Restore operations safely.

Key Actions

- **Restore** systems from known good backups
- **Rebuild** compromised infrastructure
- **Apply** security patches
- **Validate** restored systems
- **Prioritize** restoration of critical business systems



How a Typical Ransomware Attack Unfolds

Initial Compromise

Lateral Movement

Data Exfiltration

Encryption Event

Ransom Demand

Operational Recovery

Critical Decision Points During an Attack

Key leadership decisions:

- Engage cyber insurance
- Notify law enforcement
- Determine scope of data exposure
- Assess regulatory notification requirements
- Decide whether to negotiate ransom

Many of these decisions must occur within hours of detection.

The Business Cost of Ransomware

Industry statistics averages:

$1M

Ransomware Recovery Cost

21+ days

Operational downtime

$200K

Ransom Demand

3–6 weeks

Recovery Time

Ransomware Readiness Checklist

Organizations should ensure they have:

- [ ] Documented incident response plan
- [ ] Defined cybersecurity response team
- [ ] Verified backup strategy
- [ ] Endpoint detection and monitoring
- [ ] Legal and cyber insurance contacts
- [ ] Defined executive decision process

The Most Common Preparedness Gaps

Many mid-market organizations discover gaps only after an incident.

Typical gaps include:

- Unverified backups
- Incomplete incident response plans
- Unclear decision authority
- Limited threat monitoring
- Delayed executive communication

How Prepared Is Your Organization?

Many companies assume they are ready for ransomware until they test their response process.

A ransomware readiness review evaluates:

Incident response planning

Security monitoring

Backup recovery capabilities

Regulatory preparedness

Schedule a Ransomware Readiness Assessment

Our security specialists will help evaluate:

- Ransomware response preparedness
- Backup and recovery capabilities
- Incident response planning
- Cybersecurity monitoring

Schedule Your Strategy Session

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About Entech

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- Managed Cybersecurity
- Compliance and Risk Management
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