Help! My HostGator Account Has Been Hacked. What Should I Do Now?

Anyone who owns a website should be concerned about site security. With each passing day, cyber criminals compromise thousands of unsecured websites. These hacks can sometimes be invisible yet harmful to anyone visiting the compromised page, including site owners. For instance, hackers can install malicious scripts or executable codes that record keystrokes on a computer, thus stealing log-in details for online banking or financial transactions.

It's for this reason that many web-hosting companies use state of the art data centers that have high security measures in place to secure client accounts.

HostGator is one web host that makes an effort to help website owners curb cyber-attacks. Their servers are secured with Brute Force protection, UDP flooding protocols, and robust firewall rules. They also recommend the use of strong passwords and advice customers to remove/update outdated scripts and web apps, which could otherwise compromise a hosting account.

Unfortunately, it's hard for security experts, let alone unskilled website owners, to stay on top of modern cyber threats. Much of this difficulty has to do with the fact that spammers and hackers are always working hard to invent new ways to exploit websites. So, should your website fall victim to hacking, it's important to know how to solve the situation.

I've Been Hacked! What Should I Do Now?

Well, for starters, don't panic if your web hosting account has been compromised. The good thing with having a reliable webhost like HostGator is that you'll be getting all the help available to recover the website or clean up your account. And in most cases, HostGator will actually be the one to inform you that malicious codes have been injected into your folders.

HostGator recommends the following steps to anyone who suspects hacking activity has occurred on their hosting account:

1. **Submit a Support Ticket**
   If you have reason to believe that your web hosting account has been compromised, the first step HostGator suggests you do is to raise a support ticket to alert their security department. There are security administrators on hand who will begin investigations quickly to try to resolve the issue. These security personnel will also make an effort to establish the root cause of the problem to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

   In case you've been locked out of your account and can't submit a support ticket, use the password recovery process on HostGator's website. Should that not work, you can contact HostGator via phone for further assistance.

2. **Avoid Making Changes In Your Compromised Account for the Time Being**
   It's important to avoid making any drastic changes or logging-in to your hosting account after reporting a hacking incident. HostGator's administrators depend on details such as log-in time stamps, client IP addresses, and other cyber data to pinpoint suspicious account activity in order to carry out the relevant actions to recover or correct a compromised account.

3. **Wait for Updates from HostGator's Security Admins**
   As your web hosting account is being investigated, keep checking your ticket status or email for a response. HostGator's security team will assign an account admin to look into your case and this security admin will then keep you informed once investigations have been completed or if additional information is required.

Will HostGator Charge a Fee to Recover My Hacked Account?
If you open a support ticket for a reseller or shared hosting plan with less than 100,000 inodes or 20GB disk space, HostGator can clean your account free of charge. If the root

cause is a mistake on the account holder's part, HostGator's security admins will advise you on the appropriate course of action to take.

The complementary automated account cleaning services is not available for Dedicated servers, VPS accounts, or Shared and Reseller accounts with more than 20GB disk space or 100,000+ inodes. While any accounts in the above-mentioned categories can still be cleaned upon special request, it will incur a cost. So, if you're on a tight budget, you can search around for a cheaper third party cleaning service from an approved HostGator provider. However, the best way to not even have to deal with finding a security expert to restore your site is to not get hacked in the first place – so always, always, always keep your scripts updated and your password a secret.

Since the majority of web hosting security breaches are incidents of opportunity, don't give hackers the chance to compromise your account. At the end of the day, bear in mind that no website is ever fully hack-proof. Even the White House's website has been hacked before, so what can we really expect with our more "normal" accounts? Security is our responsibility. Just like you wouldn't leave your front door unlocked and wide open, you should also not leave holes in your website for intruders to get in.

Every day, hackers are developing more sophisticated ways to compromise web hosting accounts. It's therefore important to keep up-to-date about what you can do to keep your account secure at all times.