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Promoting a safe and legal digital world

Anti-Piracy Information



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Piracy and the Law

Many businesses, both large and small, face serious legal risks because of software piracy. Under the law, a company can be held liable for its employees' actions. If an employee is installing unauthorized software copies on company computers or acquiring illegal software through the Internet, the company can be sued for copyright infringement. This is true even if the company's management was unaware of the employee's actions.

Quite simply, to make or download unauthorized copies of software is to break the law, no matter how many copies are involved. Whether you are casually making a few copies for friends, loaning disks, distributing and/or downloading pirated software via the Internet, or buying a single software program and then installing it on 100 of your company's personal computers, you are committing a copyright infringement. It doesn't matter if you are doing it to make money or not — if you or your company is caught copying software, you may be held liable under both civil and criminal law.

If the copyright owner brings a civil action against you, the owner can seek to stop you from using its software immediately and can also request monetary damages. The copyright owner may then choose between actual damages, which includes the amount it has lost because of your infringement as well as any profits attributable to the infringement, and statutory damages, which can be as much as \$150,000 for each program copied. In addition, the government can criminally prosecute you for copyright infringement. If convicted, you can be fined up to \$250,000, or sentenced to jail for up to five years, or both.

To learn more, download a free copy of BSA's guide to [Software Piracy and the Law](#).

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