

LEGAL/PRIVACY

## Starwood beefs up security measures after malware detection

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*St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort*

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By STAFF REPORTS

Starwood Hotels & Resorts has announced that a small number of its North American properties were infected with malware.

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With its point of sale systems compromised by the malware, unauthorized parties had access to credit card data of some of Starwood's guests. Data infringements unfortunately have become common, but a timely response from brands victimized by these actions can quell consumers' concerns.

### Data dilemma

Once the issue was detected, Starwood contacted a third-party of forensic experts to investigate the data breach. Acting quickly will likely reassure consumer that were victims themselves or stayed at the properties in question that Starwood cares about their wellbeing.

Starwood's investigation showed that malware had been detected at restaurant, gift shops and point of sale systems at its properties. As of press time, Starwood noted that there were no indication of the malware gaining access to guest reservation or Starwood Preferred Guest membership systems.

The report also found that the malware was designed to collect payment information such as cardholder name, credit number, security code and expiration date. But, there is no evidence that pin numbers were visible to the malware.

Starwood properties that were found to have malware were mostly Sheraton Hotels, but the software was also seen at St. Regis Bal Harbour, FL. The resort was the only property within Starwood's luxury portfolio to be affected.



### *St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort*

"Protecting our customers' information is critically important to Starwood and we take this issue extremely seriously," said Sergio Rivera, president of Starwood, The Americas, in a statement. "Quickly after we became aware of the possible issue, we took prompt action to determine the facts.

"We have been working closely with law enforcement authorities and have been coordinating our efforts with the payment card organizations," he said. "We want to assure our customers that we have implemented additional security measures to help prevent this type of crime from reoccurring."

Over the summer, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group kept its consumers updated on its recent data breach that resulted in hackers stealing credit card information from hotel guests.

For the first time since the breach Mandarin Oriental is releasing the names of specific hotels that were targeted in the cyber attack. While this new information runs the risk of discouraging guests from visiting the hotels listed, consumers likely appreciated Mandarin Oriental's candor ([see story](#)).

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