

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Le Mridien properties included in HEI security breach

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Exterior of Le Mridien Arlington

By STAFF REPORTS

Two Le Mridien hotels are among the 20 affected properties in a payment card security incident within HEI Hotels & Resorts.

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Malicious software was installed at point-of-sale terminals in places such as dining establishments within hotels HEI operates, leaving personal information of guests vulnerable to hackers. Maintaining transparency with its clients, HEI Hotels has issued statements about its immediate actions and its plans to enhance security.

Taking action

HEI Hotels says that it was made aware of the breach by its credit card processor. An investigation found malware installed on the payment processing systems at select properties, which then rerouted information as transactions occurred.

Information that may have become available to the hackers includes names, card numbers, card expiration date and the verification code.

Incidents date as far back as March 2015. Le Mridien Arlington in Virginia was affected from Dec. 23, 2015 to April 28, 2016, while Le Mridien San Francisco had two waves, first from March 1 to June 7 in 2015 and then again from Dec. 2, 2015 to June 8, 2016.



Image courtesy of Le Mridien San Francisco

Other impacted properties include the Royal Palm in South Beach, FL, Intercontinental Tampa Bay, Equinox Golf Resort & Spa in Vermont and select Marriott, Westin and Sheraton hotels.

An outside data forensics team was brought in to help investigate and move HEI to a stand-alone credit card processing system separate from its network, containing the issue. The malware has been removed and HEI is working to reconfigure its network to make it a tougher target for hackers.

HEI Hotels & Resorts is not alone in being the victim of hackers.

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group is keeping consumers updated on the 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 will likely appreciate Mandarin Oriental's candor ([see story](#)).

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