SHELTERED HARBOR’S MISSION

To protect public confidence in the U.S. financial system if a devastating event like a cyberattack causes an institution’s critical systems - including backups - to fail.

WHAT IS SHELTERED HARBOR?

Sheltered Harbor was created to protect customers, financial institutions, and public confidence in the financial system if a catastrophic event like a cyberattack causes critical systems - including backups - to fail. Implementing Sheltered Harbor is key to adopting a comprehensive operational resilience strategy that focuses on continuity of critical customer-facing business services.

Sheltered Harbor is not a vendor, product or service. It is a not-for-profit, industry-led initiative comprising financial institutions, core service providers, national trade associations, alliance partners, and solution providers dedicated to enhancing financial sector stability and resiliency.

INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION

- Deposit Accounts: 72%
- Retail Brokerage Client Assets: 71%

ORIGINS

Sheltered Harbor was launched in 2015 by the U.S. financial sector following the Hamilton Series of public-private cybersecurity exercises facilitated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The conclusion of the exercises was that the financial services industry — and the U.S. economy — could be vulnerable if a cyberattack disabling one or more financial institutions leads to a loss of public confidence.

In response, the industry created Sheltered Harbor to promote the stability of U.S. financial markets by protecting critical account information of market participants in order to facilitate recovery of such information.

HOW IT WORKS: CORE ELEMENTS

1. Data Vaulting
   Institutions back up critical customer account data each night in the Sheltered Harbor standard format, either managing their own vault or using their service provider. The data vault is encrypted, unchangeable, and completely separated from the institution’s infrastructure, including all backups.

2. Resiliency Planning
   Institutions prepare the business and technical processes and key decision arrangements to be activated in the case of a Sheltered Harbor event; where all other options to restore critical systems - including backups - have failed.
   
   They also designate a restoration platform so that if the Sheltered Harbor Resiliency Plan is activated, the platform can recover data from the vault to restore customer funds access as quickly as possible.

3. Certification
   Certification is a critical component of the Sheltered Harbor initiative. Participants adopt a robust set of prescribed safeguards and controls, which are independently audited for compliance with the Sheltered Harbor standard.
   
   Upon completing the requirements for Data Vaulting, the institution will be awarded Sheltered Harbor certification and an accompanying seal, communicating that their customer account data is protected.

ECOSYSTEM

From the beginning, Sheltered Harbor has enjoyed critical industry support:

- American Bankers Association (ABA)
- BITS, Bank Policy Institute (BITS/BPI)
- Credit Union National Association (CUNA)
- Financial Services Forum (FSF)
- Financial Services Information Sharing and Analysis Center (FS-ISAC)
- Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA)
- National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU)
- Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA)
- The Clearing House (TCH)

Several hundred subject matter experts and industry professionals contributed to the development of the solution and actively participate in the initiative’s workgroups to ensure Sheltered Harbor remains the gold standard in operational resiliency.

Sheltered Harbor has engaged a community of specialized trusted partners who provide the services, technology and solutions necessary to help our participants implement the Sheltered Harbor standard. The number and scope of these partnerships expands as the initiative matures.

shelteredharbor.org