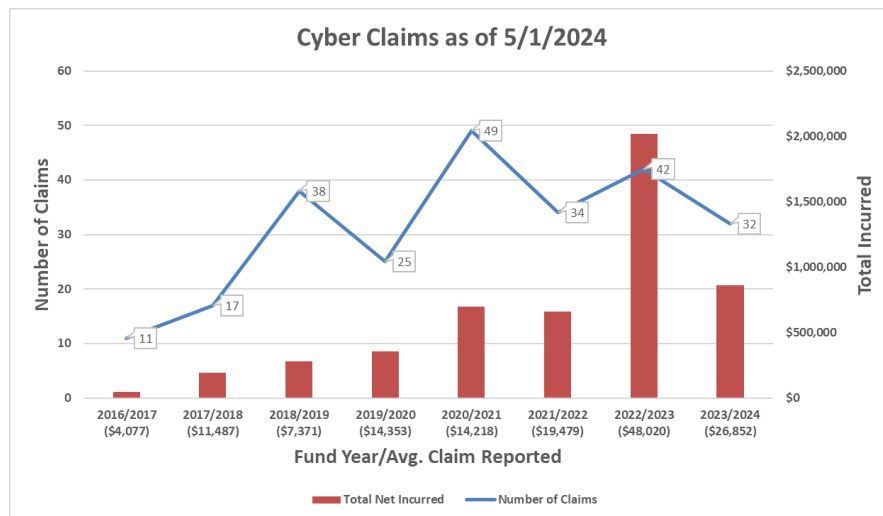




## CRITICAL ALERT: The Pool's NEW Cybersecurity Fund

### Introduction

In 2016, the Pool recognized its Members' growing cyber liability exposure. Starting that year, complimentary coverage was provided to all Members with either General Liability or Real & Personal Property Coverage. Later, as the exposure increased, the Pool began charging a minimal amount for the coverage. As shown by the chart below, cyber claims have exponentially increased in both frequency and severity since that time.



Future cybercriminal activity is impossible to predict, which means neither the Pool nor any other insurer can rely on past patterns and trends to predict future losses. That's why the Board of Trustees recently approved the Pool's formation of a new Cyber Fund and updated *Cyber Liability and Data Breach Response Coverage* ("Cyber Coverage"), effective October 1, 2024, **for those Members who opt-in and sign the Cyber Liability Interlocal Agreement**. Read on for details.

Of course, nothing can cover every possible scenario. That's why each Member *must* take steps to protect themselves, and we can help you do so (regardless of whether you choose our cyber coverage). **Most cyberattacks are preventable, and local officials should implement basic policies, train on them, and follow them.** (See the final section below on loss prevention to learn more.)

### The New Cyber Fund – Ensuring the Viability of the Pool's Cyber Coverage

Cyberattacks are becoming more common, more sophisticated, and more expensive. In fact, the Pool's cyber claims have increased exponentially since 2016. Right now, if every Member of the Pool was hit by a coordinated attack, the Pool's *total exposure is in the billions of dollars*. Thankfully, that hasn't happened. But the Pool is updating its Cyber Coverage to ensure that it never does.

The following is a brief overview of the changes:

- The Pool is creating a **separate Cyber Fund** – each Member that wants to continue coverage **must sign a new, separate interlocal agreement (contract) to join the Fund**.

- The Pool's **total annual payout** for cyber claims will be **capped at \$25 million** – should criminals execute a widespread attack, the Pool's Board of Trustees would decide how to allocate those funds.
- The limit for third party liability has been reduced to **\$500,000 or \$1,000,000**, depending on whether Core or Core+ option is selected.
- **Cyber coverage contributions (premiums) will increase** based on a Member's elected limits. The new contribution ranges from \$1,000 to \$1,850 depending on Member type and coverage level (unless a Member chooses a different coverage level, the current level will roll over). Suggestion: Coverage will be renewed at the current elected limit.

### **The Coverage: What You Get**

Some of the worst news a local official can receive is that they have fallen victim to a cyberattack. Whether criminals lock up your data and ask you for a ransom to restore it, they trick you into sending money to a fraudulent account and steal it, or whatever the form of an attack, the Pool's coverage provides, among other things:

- **Breach response**, which includes access to computer experts, public relations specialists, attorneys, negotiators, and others with experience responding to cyberattacks – these experts help you lessen the damage from an attack.
- **Network business interruption**, which can help cover the loss of income and extra expenses (for a limited period) caused by an attack.
- **Cyber extortion**, which can help with ransom payments to recover data.
- **Data recovery costs**, which can help with costs to restore data that was damaged, corrupted, and/or deleted.
- **Fraud protection**, which can help (if certain conditions are met) with costs related to – for example – when an employee is tricked into sending money to a cybercriminal.

The above provides only a very basic overview of the coverage. Every claim is unique, and reading the above isn't a substitute for carefully reviewing the terms of the new interlocal agreement and coverage document. Please refer to the enclosed outline of the coverages, limit, and sublimit.

### **What You Need to Do to Continue Coverage**

To continue coverage, look for a packet delivered via regular mail and simply review, complete and sign, and return the Cyber Fund Interlocal Agreement. (Each Member **must follow their own statutory and local policies related to contract approval prior to signing**.) To change the Core or Core+ limit selection, simply include that request with the Interlocal Agreement.

As part of this process, we encourage you to review the 2024-2025 Cyber Liability and Data Breach Response Coverage Document that is stored on the Pool's Member Portal, which you can access from the Pool's website at [www.tmlirp.org](http://www.tmlirp.org).

That's it! You'll be billed later for the costs of all your coverages, including the cyber coverage.

**REMEMBER – THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT MUST BE RETURNED BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, IN ORDER FOR COVERAGE TO CONTINUE.**

### **Risk Management and Loss Prevention**

As mentioned above, the best way to deal with a cyberattack is to avoid it altogether. The Pool has a dedicated Cyber Risk Services Manager – Ryan Burns ([rburns@tmlirp.org](mailto:rburns@tmlirp.org)) – who can assist any Member with loss prevention, including individual review of Member exposures and transfer of risk via contracts provisions, loss prevention efforts, appropriate coverage, and more.

### **Additional Resources**

The Pool provides prevention education in various ways. The easiest to access are short podcast episodes and YouTube videos. For example, any local official who wants to know just how painful a cyberattack can be should listen to Episode 9c of the "Local Officials: *Stronger, Together* Podcast."

In the eye-opening episode, Scott interviews City of Tomball Assistant City Manager Jessica Rogers. Cyber-criminals hacked Tomball at the end of 2022, and the city is still — one year later — dealing with the aftermath. In this episode — which should be required listening for every city official in Texas (and beyond) — Jessica explains exactly what it's like to have essentially every computer system go down, including 9-1-1 dispatch, utility metering and billing, permitting, and everything in between. She also describes the long road to getting everything up and running. Don't miss our chance to learn from this chill-inducing story. (To listen, go to [www.tmlirp.org](http://www.tmlirp.org), click on the “STP Podcast” link at the top of the page, and scroll down to Episode 9c.)