

PASSWORD GUIDELINES

Keep it secret, Keep it safe

Choosing the right password is something that many people find difficult, there are so many things that require passwords these days that remembering them all can be a real problem. Perhaps because of this a lot of people choose their passwords very badly. The simple tips below are intended to assist you in choosing a good password.

Basics

- Use at least eight characters, the more characters the better really, but most people will find anything more than about 15 characters difficult to remember.
- Use a random mixture of characters, upper and lower case, numbers, punctuation, spaces and symbols.
- Don't use a word found in a dictionary, English or foreign.
- Never use the same password twice.
- You should change your password regularly – especially whenever you suspect that somebody knows it.

Things to avoid

- Don't just add a single digit or symbol before or after a word. e.g. "apple1"
- Don't double up a single word. e.g. "appleapple"
- Don't simply reverse a word. e.g. "elppa"
- Don't just remove the vowels. e.g. "ppl"
- Key sequences that can easily be repeated. e.g. "qwerty", "asdf" etc.

Tips

- Choose a password that you can remember so that you don't need to keep looking it up, this reduces the chance of somebody discovering where you have written it down.
- Choose a password that you can type quickly
- Use the first letter of each word from a line of a song or poem.
- Alternate between one consonant and one or two vowels to produce nonsense words. eg. "taupouti".
- Choose two short words and concatenate them together with a punctuation or symbol character between the words. eg. "seat%tree"

Protecting your password

- Whenever Windows or your internet browser prompts you to "Save password" don't.
- Don't tell **anyone** your password.
- Never send your password via email or other unsecured channel
- Yes, write your password down but don't leave the paper lying around, lock the paper away somewhere.
- Be very careful when entering your password around unknown people.

Bad Passwords

- Don't use passwords based on personal information such as: name, nickname, birthdate, wife's name, pet's name, friends name, home town, phone number, social security number, car registration number, address etc. This includes using just part of your name, or part of your birthdate.
- Don't use passwords based on things located near you. Passwords such as "computer", "monitor", "keyboard", "telephone", "printer", etc. are useless.
- Don't ever be tempted to use one of those oh so common passwords that are easy to remember but offer no security at all. e.g. "password", "letmein".
- Never use a password based on your username, account name, computer name or email address.

Bad Examples

- "fred8" – password based on the user's name, family or friend's names or any combination thereof.
- "indescribable" - Listed in a dictionary, (English or foreign), word lists, etc.
- "iNdesCribaBle" - Just adding random capitalization doesn't make it safe.