

Password Security

It is important to have a strong password for your computer, mobile device and any other media which is used to store important and/or personal data. A strong password is at least 8 characters in length that uses a mix of upper and lower case letters as well as numeric and special characters.

Each device should have its own password so that if one is compromised, the other devices will remain secure.

Passwords are simply secret words or phrases. They can be compromised in many ways:

- Users may write them down or share them, so that they are no longer really secret.
- Passwords can be guessed, either by a person or a program designed to try many possibilities in rapid succession.
- Passwords may be stored on a workstation, server or backup media in plaintext or encoded in a way which can be readily converted back to plaintext.
- Passwords may be transmitted over a network either in plaintext or encoded in a way which can be readily converted back to plaintext.

Creating a secure password

1. Don't use Personal Identifiable Information (PII) in your password such as:

Name	User name	Child's name
Birthday	Pet's name	Address

2. Don't use any word that can be found in the dictionary as your password

3. Don't use the same password for online banking that you use for social networking or email

4. Don't give your password to someone over the phone

5. Try to use special characters such as non-alphabetic characters

6. Try to create passwords at with at least eight characters

7. Try to use a password vault application such to protect and help manage your many passwords

8. Try to change your most critical passwords on a regular basis

- **Create a password for each category.** Your Social Networking, Public Email, Online banking, Business (CABQ email or remote access) should each have unique password. This control limits the impact if one of the passwords is compromised.
- **Choosing a password string:** Get creative when thinking of passwords.

Here are some possible strategies for creating your passwords:

Think of a phrase, quote, or song verse and select the first character of each word to create a password.

"All good things must come to an end" translates to "Agtmctae"

Passwords are often case sensitive and here we've used a capital "A" just like the start of the sentence.

- Letters can be replaced with numbers or symbols to add entropy
"Agtmctae" translates to "A9tmct^@."

Social engineering is on the increase, so be careful never to give out your password or any personal details to anyone who calls you or contacts you out of the blue. And certainly, don't send security information by email.

