



Password Tips and Recommendations

A strong password helps you protect your account.

To create a strong password, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Create unique, original passwords
- Use the longest practical password
- Use a mix of upper and lower case letters
- Include one or more numbers
- Do not use repeating or adjacent characters
- Use at least one of these special characters: '!@#\$\$%^&*()...
- Avoid using software or toolbars that store your password
- Change your password regularly

Remember to avoid the following password pitfalls

- Do not choose passwords or security codes that others can easily guess
- Do not reuse passwords for multiple sites
- Never use your account numbers
- Do not use personal contact information, such as addresses or phone numbers
- Do not use personal information, such as your name, birthday, Social Security Number, passport number, or the names or information for family members or friends.
- Do not use sequences of characters such as 1234567 or abcdefg
- Do not rely on look-alike substitutions of numbers or symbols alone. Passwords like P@ssw0rd are easy to guess, but can be effective when you also change the case of the letters, the length of the words, and misspellings, or when you use multiple unrelated
- Words in a phrase.
- Do not use dictionary words.

Never give out your password to anyone

- Never give it to friends even if they're really good friends. A friend can – maybe even accidentally – pass your password along to other or even become an ex-friend and abuse it.

Create passwords that are easy to remember but hard for others to guess

- When possible, use a phrase such as "I started my 1st year of college at Michigan State in 2012" and use the initial of each word like this: ism1yocamsi2012." And make them at least a little different (by adding a couple of unique letters_ for each site. On some sites you might be able to type in the entire phrase.

Make the password at least 8 characters long

- The longer the better. Longer passwords are harder for thieves to crack.

Don't post it in plain sight

- This might seem obvious but studies have found that a lot of people post their password on their monitor with a sticky note. Bad idea. If you must write it down, hide the note somewhere where no one can find it.

Don't fall for "phishing" attacks

- Be very careful before clicking on a link (even if it appears to be from a legitimate site asking you to log in, change your password or provide any other personal information. It might be legit or it might be a "phishing" scam where the information you enter goes to a hacker. When in doubt, log on manually by typing what you know to be the site's URL into your browser window.