



## How Safe is Your Password?

Choosing the right passwords can be tough. These days everything appears to need a password and remembering them all can be a real problem so many people choose very bad passwords.

**Below are a few simple tips to help with passwords.**

### **The Basics:**

- Use at least 8 characters
- More than 15 characters is typically hard to remember
- Always use a mixture of characters – Uppercase, Lowercase, Numbers, Punctuation, and Symbols.
- NEVER USE THE SAME PASSWORD TWICE! I yell this because this is common, but in my opinion the most dangerous mistake. This is putting all your eggs in one basket, except instead of eggs you are putting your bank account, your 401k, your medical records, your email, your direct deposit, your Facebook, and who knows what else in one basket.
- Change your passwords regularly.
- Choose a password that you can remember without looking it up.
- Choose a password you can type quickly.

### **Avoid:**

- Don't just add a number before or after a word and think it is safe. Example "banana7"

- Don't use the same word twice. Example "bananabanana"
- Don't use common passwords. Examples: 123456, 123456789, qwerty, 12345678, 111111, 1234567890, 1234567, password, 123123, 987654321, qwertyuiop, mynoob, 123321, 666666, 18atcskd2w, 7777777, 1q2w3e4r, 654321, 555555, 3rjs1la7qe, google, 1q2w3e4r5t, 123qwe.
- Don't use passwords based on personal information. Examples: name, nickname, birthdate, spouse's name, home town, address etc.

### **Protection:**

- Don't save your passwords when prompted.
- Don't tell ANYONE your password.
- Never email your password.
- It is OK to write your passwords down, but be sure to lock them up. If it is on a PostIt note on your monitor or under your keyboard you are not safe.

### **Password Recipe:**

- Combine the following:
  - Passphrase
    - Use a phrase that you can easily remember. Example "OverTheHill"
  - Symbology
    - Change some of the letters using creative symbols. Example e = 3, i = 1, and t = 7. Giving you "Ov3r7heH1ll"
  - Padding
    - Adding a couple characters to the front and the back of your password. Example: "> Ov3r7heH1ll<"
- Assuming a Hacker was making one hundred trillion guesses per second it would take 1.41 hundred million centuries to crack this password... Unless you write it on a PostIt note under your keyboard.

### **Remember:**

