



## **Password Protection Policy**

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**Things to Consider:** *Please consult the Things to Consider FAQ for additional guidelines and suggestions for personalizing the SANS policies for your organization.*

**Last Update Status:** *Updated October, 2017*

### **1. Overview**

Passwords are an important aspect of computer security. A poorly chosen password may result in unauthorized access and/or exploitation of our resources. All staff, including contractors and vendors with access to <Company Name> systems, are responsible for taking the appropriate steps, as outlined below, to select and secure their passwords.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standard for creation of strong passwords and the protection of those passwords.

### **3. Scope**

The scope of this policy includes all personnel who have or are responsible for an account (or any form of access that supports or requires a password) on any system that resides at any <Company Name> facility, has access to the <Company Name> network, or stores any non-public <Company Name> information.

### **4. Policy**

#### **4.1 Password Creation**

4.1.1 All user-level and system-level passwords must conform to the *Password Construction Guidelines*.

4.1.2 Users must use a separate, unique password for each of their work related accounts. Users may not use any work related passwords for their own, personal accounts.

4.1.3 User accounts that have system-level privileges granted through group memberships or programs such as sudo must have a unique password from all other accounts held by that user to access system-level privileges. In addition, it is highly recommend that some form of multi-factor authentication is used for any privileged accounts

#### **4.2 Password Change**

4.2.1 Passwords should be changed only when there is reason to believe a password has been



compromised.

- 4.2.2 Password cracking or guessing may be performed on a periodic or random basis by the Infosec Team or its delegates. If a password is guessed or cracked during one of these scans, the user will be required to change it to be in compliance with the Password Construction Guidelines.

### 4.3 Password Protection

- 4.3.1 Passwords must not be shared with anyone, including supervisors and coworkers. All passwords are to be treated as sensitive, Confidential <Company Name> information. Corporate Information Security recognizes that legacy applications do not support proxy systems in place. Please refer to the technical reference for additional details.
- 4.3.2 Passwords must not be inserted into email messages, Alliance cases or other forms of electronic communication, nor revealed over the phone to anyone.
- 4.3.3 Passwords may be stored only in "password managers" authorized by the organization.
- 4.3.4 Do not use the "Remember Password" feature of applications (for example, web browsers).
- 4.3.5 Any user suspecting that his/her password may have been compromised must report the incident and change all passwords.

### 4.4 Application Development

Application developers must ensure that their programs contain the following security precautions:

- 4.4.1 Applications must support authentication of individual users, not groups.
- 4.4.2 Applications must not store passwords in clear text or in any easily reversible form.
- 4.4.3 Applications must not transmit passwords in clear text over the network.
- 4.4.4 Applications must provide for some sort of role management, such that one user can take over the functions of another without having to know the other's password.

### 4.5 Multi-Factor Authentication

- 4.5.1 Multi-factor authentication is highly encouraged and should be used whenever possible, not only for work related accounts but personal accounts also.



## 5. Policy Compliance

### 5.1 Compliance Measurement

The Infosec team will verify compliance to this policy through various methods, including but not limited to, periodic walk-thrus, video monitoring, business tool reports, internal and external audits, and feedback to the policy owner.

### 5.2 Exceptions

Any exception to the policy must be approved by the Infosec Team in advance.

### 5.3 Non-Compliance

An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## 6 Related Standards, Policies and Processes

- Password Construction Guidelines

## 7 Revision History

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Summary of Change</b>
June 2014	SANS Policy Team	Updated and converted to new format.
October, 2017	SANS Policy Team	Updated to confirm with new NIST SP800-63.3 standards.