PASSWORD AWARENESS

Technology and Communications Department JULY 2018

The Importance of a Strong Password

Cybersecurity experts recommend using strong, unique passwords. The primary reason for this is that selecting a weak password puts your account, personal information, and organizational data at risk. Every day, cybercriminals compromise networks, accounts, and equipment. They use the information gained in these attacks to illegally gain access to information and then use it in malicious ways. Strong passwords are your first line of defense to ensure you do not fall victim to cybercrime.

Password Technique

A technique to assist in building strong, unique passwords, is to choose a repeatable pattern for your password, such as choosing a sentence that incorporates something unique about the website or account and then using the first letter of each word as your password. For Example, "This is my January password for the City of Albany website." would become "TimJp4tCoAw." This password capitalizes 5 letters within the sentence, swaps the word "for" to the number "4," and adds the period to include a symbol.

Password Complexity

For a password to be considered strong, it must meet at least 3 out of the following 4 complexity rules:

1. At least 1 uppercase character (A-Z)
2. At least 1 lowercase character (a-z)
3. At least 1 digit (0-9)
4. At least 1 special character (punctuation or symbols)

Generally, the longer your password is the more secure it is considered. You should also avoid using repeating characters, and do not select passwords based on information others would know about you such as the type of car you drive or your street address.

Example of a secure password is **Wq{p1)l52hkz**

Example of an unsecured password is **password**

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