

**West Virginia Executive Branch  
Privacy Policy: Security Safeguards**

**Security Starts with a Strong Password!**

**Question:**

**What is a “strong” password?**

**Answer:**

Do you have access to a computer? If so, the only thing protecting the sensitive information on that computer may be your password!

If you don't have a strong password, the sensitive information and personal information (PI) on that computer is unprotected. This is why it is vital that you choose a strong password and keep that password secret. Here are some tips for choosing and protecting your passwords:

- ✓ Don't use passwords that are based on your own PI. For example, passwords that use numbers from your birthday, anniversary, and children's birthdays are very easy to guess. Don't use a name of your pet or child. Don't use your phone number or any part of your Social Security number.
- ✓ Don't use words that can be found in a dictionary.
- ✓ Use a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters (such as \$ or %), as well as upper and lower case letters.
- ✓ If you are worried about remembering your password, make up a little rhyme or story that can help you.
- ✓ Be careful with password reminder questions. Think about how many people know the answer to the question you select. Your high school and favorite ice cream are common knowledge!
- ✓ Be careful with websites and programs that let you store your passwords. The security on these sites can vary. If you use password keepers, be sure to use different passwords for each site. This way if one password is compromised you will have limited exposure.