

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

Storing PI on Portable Devices

Question:

How do I protect personal information on storage devices?

Answer:

Many of us travel with our computers and other portable devices. We may receive email wherever we are on our Blackberry or iPhone. We may use USB drives to transport personal or work files. These devices enable us to be very connected and productive, but they can also put personal information (PI) at risk.

Here are some tips for protecting ourselves and our PI when we use portable devices:

- ✓ Always protect the device itself. Keep your laptop, PDA, and USB drives with you at all times. When traveling, keep these items in your hand luggage. Do not check them. Avoid leaving these items in hotel rooms or cars. If you want to leave your laptop in a hotel room, travel with a portable locking device.
- ✓ Make sure your devices are appropriately backed-up. If a device is damaged or stolen you will need to be able to recover your files. The back-up will also allow you to determine exactly what PI or sensitive information has been compromised.
- ✓ Make sure your laptop and devices have appropriate anti-virus software installed. If you access the Internet, make sure your laptop or device has the proper security configuration for your agency. Anti-virus software and firewalls help prevent unauthorized access to the PI and other files. If you need assistance, contact the OT Service Desk by phone at either 558-9966 or 1-877-558-9966 or send an email to servicedesk@wv.gov
- ✓ Protect your laptop and devices with strong passwords. Strong passwords contain random letters, numbers and symbols, so they cannot be easily thwarted.
- ✓ If you have sensitive information on your laptop or other portable devices, always use encryption. The OT Service Desk can help you encrypt the device or the files. Encryption ensures that the PI is secure, even if an unauthorized person gains access to your laptop.
- ✓ If you ever lose a laptop, PDA, or other device containing PI, be sure to report the loss to your manager and the OT Service Desk. They can ensure that all necessary steps are taken to mitigate any possible harm that might occur.