

## Don't Let Passwords Drive You Crazy

It's a pain to change your passwords, but it is oh, so necessary! It's your only protection from hackers, crackers and other baddies.

### BAD Passwords

- (blank)
- "password"
- Your name, spouse's name, pet's name, child's name, friend's name, coworker's name, favorite character's name... any name!
- Ordered numbers or letters, like 1234, abcd
- Your phone number or license plate number
- Any part of your social security number
- Anybody's birth date
- Other information about you (address, phone, town, etc)
- Your username in any form (as is, capitalized, doubled, etc.)
- Any word in the English dictionary or in a foreign dictionary
- Place names or any proper nouns
- All the same letter or number
- Simple patterns of letters on the keyboard, like asdfg
- Any of the above spelled backwards
- Any of the above followed or preceded or followed by a single digit

### GOOD Passwords

- Are at least 8 characters long
- Use a combination of numbers, capital letters, lowercase letters and symbols like: \$ . , ! % ^ \* Some symbols are not usable.

### Generating Secure Passwords

Use coded memorable phrases, maybe from a book or song you like or a famous statement, something you'll remember in association with the site you're password protecting.

- "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought..." = **4scanse**  
(the first two letters from each word to create eight characters)
- "It was a dark and stormy night..." = **iWadasn7**  
(the first letter of each word, followed by the age of your nephew)
- "My Brother's Birthday Is April 22, 1963" = **mbbi4tt19s3**  
(the first letter from most words, and substituted numbers for letters)
- "I love cats!" = **IluvKats!**  
(a phrase spelled phonetically or misspelled)

## Password Security Tips

- Don't tell anyone else your password
- Don't write your password down. If you must, put it somewhere others can't get it like a locked drawer or in your wallet. Don't post it on your computer or anywhere around your desk.
- Only use your password if you see HTTPS on the website address
- Never click a link in an email and then enter your password
- If you think someone else may know your password, change it.
- Change your password periodically anyway.
- Don't type your password while anyone is watching.
- Whenever possible, enable Security Questions.

## Password Programs

Password programs like **LastPass** (lastpass.com) and **1Password** (<https://agilebits.com/onepassword>) work by encrypting your "one" master password thousands of times before it ever reaches their server - the site never sees your actual password, and all your other passwords are stored, and safe.