

How to Create a Strong Password

A strong password is a password that is difficult for others to determine by guessing or by using automated programs. Use these guidelines to create strong passwords for any account you use to access confidential information.

Strong Password Checklist

Strong passwords should

- be *at least* eight (8) characters in length
- appear to be a random string of characters
- be easy for you to remember and type, but difficult for others to guess

Do *not* use

- Your login name
- Your children's/spouse's/pet's name(s)
- Your birthday
- Your phone number
- Other common information about yourself or your family that could be easily known or guessed
- Dictionary-based words (in any language) because hackers use sophisticated tools that can rapidly guess passwords that are based on words in the dictionary, in a variety of languages, and even words spelled backwards. (*Note: Do not use common words or names even if they are not found in a dictionary.*)
- Dictionary-based words or common words/names with numbers (before and/or after)
- Sequential repeating combinations, such as "12345678," "555555," "abcdefg," "QWERTY," etc.
- Common words with letters replaced by numbers or symbols, such as "M1cr0\$oft," "P@ssw0rd," etc.

Passwords for DCCCD Systems

Use the following information when creating strong passwords for these DCCCD applications/systems:

Application/System	Special Requirements	Password Length (Min-Max)	Case Sensitive?
Colleague/Wintegrate/UI	at least one number and one letter	8	yes
eConnect	at least one number and one letter	8-9	yes
Windows	uppercase letters should not be used	8-15	lowercase
Outlook e-mail	none	8-15	yes

Special Characters Allowed (for all four of these applications)

.	period	-	hyphen	\$	dollar sign
#	number sign	_	underscore	%	percentage sign
^	circumflex	'	single quote)	right parenthesis
(left parenthesis	`	accent mark	!	exclamation point

Six Easy Steps for Creating a Strong Password From a Sentence

Steps	Examples
1 Think of a unique and unusual sentence that you can remember and that contains the same number of words as the desired password length.	My dog Spot is eight years old now (eight words)
2 Substitute numbers for any applicable words.	My dog Spot is 8 years old now "8" substituted for "eight" <i>Note: other common substitutions: "4" for "for," "2" for "to," etc.</i>
3 Use the first letter of each remaining word in the sentence to create a new lowercase "word."	m d s i 8 y o n
4 Modify this by substituting upper and lower case letters.	M d s i 8 y o N uppercase "M" and "N" substituted for lowercase letters
5 Substitute some special characters that "look like" or remind you of letters to make this password even stronger.	M d \$! 8 y o N dollar sign (\$) substituted for the letter "s"; an exclamation point (!) substituted for the letter "i" the number zero (0) substituted for the letter "o" <i>Note: other common substitutions: left parenthesis [(] substituted for the letter "c"; a percentage sign (%) substituted for the letter "p"</i>
6 Finally, check to make sure the resulting password meets all of the criteria from the strong password checklist above.	M d \$! 8 y o N