



Online Safety Tips

Protect your personal information. It's valuable!



Learn how your personal information is going to be used, and how it will be protected, before you share it.

- Don't take the bait and respond to solicitations asking for your personal or financial information. If you believe that a company you do business with has a need for such information, contact the company directly. Never send your personal information via email – email is not a secured transmission method.
- Read website privacy policies. They should explain what personal information the website collects, how the information is used, and whether it is provided to third parties.

Protect your children.

- Keep your computer in a central and open location in your home and be aware of other computers your child may be using.
- Discuss and set guidelines for computer use with your children. Post these guidelines by the computer as a reminder.
- Use the Internet with your children. Familiarize yourself with your children's online activities and maintain a dialogue with your children about what applications they are using.
- Know who your children's online friends are and supervise their chat areas.
- Teach your children never to give out personal information to people they meet online, such as in chat rooms or on bulletin boards.

Use strong passwords or strong authentication technology to help protect your personal information.

- Use passwords that have at least eight characters and include numerals and symbols.
- Avoid common words: some hackers use programs that can try every word in the dictionary.
- Don't use your personal information for your log-in name, or include adjacent letters on the keyboard as passwords.
- Change your passwords regularly (at minimum, every 90 days).
- Use a different password for each online account you access (or at least a variety of passwords with difficulty based on the value of the information contained in each).

Anti-virus software, firewalls, and anti-spyware software help keep your computer safe and secure.

Be sure to update and review these components regularly, along with your operating system and web browser software. For more tips and practices on how to better secure your home computer, visit www.staysafeonline.org.

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