

Section	IS Security Policies	05/01/2005	-Effective
Policy 3.00	Password	09/11/2018	-Revised
		Information Services	-Author

Introduction

User authentication is a means to control who has access to an Information Resource system. Controlling the access is necessary for any Information Resource. Access gained by a non-authorized entity can cause loss of information confidentiality, integrity and availability that may result in loss of revenue, liability, loss of trust, or embarrassment to the TSSWCB.

Three factors, or a combination of these factors, can be used to authenticate a user. Examples are:

- Something you know – password, Personal Identification Number (PIN)
- Something you have – Smartcard
- Something you are – fingerprint, iris scan, voice
- A combination of factors – Smartcard and a PIN

Purpose

The purpose of the TSSWCB Password Policy is to establish the rules for the creation, distribution, safeguarding, termination, and reclamation of the TSSWCB user authentication mechanisms.

Audience

The TSSWCB Password Policy applies equally to all individuals who use any TSSWCB information resource.

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Definitions

Information Resources (IR): any and all computer printouts, display devices, storage media, and all computer-related activities involving any device capable of receiving email, browsing Web sites, or otherwise capable of receiving, storing, managing, or transmitting electronic data including, but not limited to, servers, personal computers, notebook computers, mobile phones, tablets, other hand-held computers, distributed processing systems, network attached and computer controlled laboratory equipment, embedded technology, telecommunication resources, network environments, telephones, fax machines, and printers. Additionally, it is the procedures, equipment, facilities, software, and data that are designed, built, operated, and maintained to create, collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display, and transmit information.

Information Resources Manager (IRM): Responsible to the State of Texas for management of the agency's information resources. The designation of an agency information resources manager is intended to establish clear accountability for setting policy for information resources management activities, provide for greater coordination of the state agency's information activities, and ensure greater visibility of such activities within and between state agencies. The IRM has been given the authority and the accountability by the State of Texas to implement Security Policies, Procedures, Practice Standards, and Guidelines to protect the Information Resources of the agency. If an agency does not designate an IRM, the title defaults to the agency's Executive Director, and the Executive Director is responsible for adhering to the duties and requirements of an IRM.

Information Security Officer (ISO): Responsible to the executive management for administering the information security functions within the agency. The ISO is the agency's internal and external point of contact for all information security matters.

Information Services (IS): The name of the agency department responsible for computers, networking and data management.

Password: A string of characters which serves as authentication of a person's identity, which may be used to grant, or deny, access to private or shared data.

Strong Passwords: A strong password is a password that is not easily guessed. It is normally constructed of a sequence of characters, numbers, and special characters, depending on the capabilities of the operating system. Typically the longer the password the stronger it is. It should never be a name, dictionary word in any language, an acronym, a proper name, a number, or be linked to any personal information about you such as a birth date, social security number, and so on.

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Password Policy

- All passwords, including initial passwords, must be constructed and implemented according to the following TSSWCB IR rules (see Password Guidelines below):
 - It must adhere to a minimum length as established by TSSWCB IS.
 - It must be a combination of alphanumeric, and special characters.
 - It must not be anything that can easily tied back to the account owner such as: user name, social security number, nickname, relative's names, birth date, etc.
 - It must not be dictionary words or acronyms.
- User account passwords must not be divulged to anyone.
- If the security of a password is in doubt, the password must be changed immediately.
- Users cannot circumvent password entry with auto logon, application remembering, embedded scripts or hardcoded passwords in client software. Exceptions may be made for specific applications (like automated backups) with the approval of the TSSWCB ISO.
- Computing devices must not be left unattended without enabling a password protected screensaver, locking the screen or logging off of the device.
- IS help desk password change procedures must include the following:
 - Authenticate the user to the help desk before changing password.
 - Change to a strong password.
- In the event passwords are found or discovered, the following steps must be taken:
 - Report the discovery to the TSSWCB help desk.

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Password Guidelines

- Passwords must have a minimum length of 8 alphanumeric and special characters.
- Passwords must contain a mix of upper and lower case characters and have at least 1 numeric character.
- Special characters to be included are (!@#\$%^&* _+=~/~`;;,<>|\).
- Passwords must not be easy to guess.
- Passwords must not be shared with anyone
- Passwords must be treated as confidential information

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Creating a strong password

- Combine short, unrelated words with numbers or special characters. For example: eAt42peN.
- Make the password difficult to guess but easy to remember.
- Substitute numbers or special characters for letters. (But do not just substitute) For example:
 - livefish - is a bad password
 - L1veF1sh - is better but doesn't satisfy the rules, and setting a pattern of 1st letter capitalized, and i's substituted by 1's can be guessed.
 - !v3f1Sh - is far better, the capitalization and substitution of characters is not predictable.

Disciplinary Actions

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action which may include termination for employees and temporaries; a termination of employment relations in the case of contractors or consultants; dismissal for interns and volunteers; or suspension or expulsion in the case of a student. Additionally, individuals are subject to loss of TSSWCB Information Resources access privileges, civil, and criminal prosecution.

Supporting Information

This Security Policy is supported by the following Security Policy Standards

Reference #

Policy Standard detail

1

IR Security controls must not be bypassed or disabled.

2

Security awareness of personnel must be continually emphasized, reinforced, updated and validated.

3

All personnel are responsible for managing their use of IR and are accountable for their actions relating to IR security. Personnel are also equally responsible for reporting any suspected or confirmed violations of this policy to the appropriate management.

4

Passwords, Personal Identification Numbers (PIN), and other computer systems security procedures and devices shall be protected by the individual user from use by, or disclosure to, any other individual or organization. All security violations shall be reported to the custodian or owner department management.

5

Access to, change to, and use of IR must be strictly secured. Information access authority for each user must be reviewed on a regular basis, as well as each job status change such as: a transfer, promotion, demotion, or termination of service.

9

On termination of the relationship with the agency users must surrender all property and IR managed by the agency. All security policies for IR apply to and remain in force in the event of a terminated relationship until such surrender is made. Further, this policy survives the terminated relationship.

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Custodian departments must provide adequate access controls in order to monitor systems to protect data and programs from misuse in accordance with the needs defined by owner departments. Access must be properly documented, authorized and controlled.

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References

Copyright Act of 1976
 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977
 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986
 Computer Security Act of 1987
 The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
 The State of Texas Information Act
 Texas Government Code, Section 441
 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 202
 IRM Act, 2054.075(b)
 The State of Texas Penal Code, Chapters 33 and 33A
 DIR Practices for Protecting Information Resources Assets
 DIR Standards Review and Recommendations Publications