

## Laptop Security

Securing your laptop at all times is extremely critical, and it requires comprehensive measures regarding its physical security, while also protecting all electronic data residing on it. From travelling for meetings to connecting to open public wireless access points, your laptop is a constant source of target, so beware. Take the following precautions for securing what's arguably one of your most important possessions:

- **Use Encryption.** The use of full-disk encryption ensures that safety and security of data (i.e., user files, swap files, system files, hidden files, etc.) residing on your laptop, especially if it's stolen, lost, or misplaced.
- **Use Anti-virus.** It's one of the most fundamentally important – and often not used – security software, so make sure your laptop has anti-virus running at all times, along with its scanning at regular intervals for viruses, and that the software is current.
- **Turn on your firewall.** Blocking suspicious traffic is essential for laptop security, so turn on and “enable” your default personal firewall or an approved personal firewall software appliance, for which there are many available
- **Use strong passwords.** When turning on your laptop, your initial password should be extremely strong, with a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols used. Once your initial password is compromised, the contents of your entire laptop (especially if you're not using full-disk encryption) can be compromised. Don't use terms and phrases for which somebody might find an association with you, such as favorite football team, home address, middle name, etc.
- **It's your laptop.** Therefore, don't let other individuals use it, especially if it's somebody you don't know. When situations arise that require it to be used by someone other than you, create a guest account for their use.
- **Secure it physically.** A good investment is a security cable with a lock for securing your laptop at a workstation or any other location that requires such. They're relatively inexpensive and a great deterrent to any thief.
- **Keep a watchful eye.** Don't ever leave your laptop unattended in any public venue or location not considered safe. That means not using the coffee house phrase “can you watch my laptop for a minute as I go to the restroom”, or any other similar thought process. Being vigilant and watchful at all times is a must for the safety and security of your laptop, so remember – do not leave it unattended – plain and simple. If you have to leave in your hotel room or some other location, then remove it from sight and place under a pillow, in a closet, or some other location. The best safety measure is to carry it with you at all times.
- **Place your contact information somewhere visible.** Because most people are honest and trustworthy, should your laptop be stolen, misplaced or lost – and then subsequently found by a Good Samaritan – you'll clearly want your name, phone number, address, and/or email visible on it. Put a sticker on the cover or back of your laptop with all your relevant contact information.