

Valencia Community College
Information Technology Resource Policies [6Hx28:04-38]
Guidelines for Selecting a Secure Password
A Supplement to
Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources
[04-38.02]

I. Overview

The guidelines below are provided to assist users of Valencia Community College information technology resources in selecting and maintaining secure passwords for the systems they access.

II. Password Guidelines

The following are examples only. They are provided to demonstrate the general traits of obscure and secure passwords.

1. When possible, passwords should contain characters from at least three of the following four classes:

Description	Examples
1. English Upper Case Letters	A, B, C, ... Z
2. English Lower Case Letters	A, b, c, ... z
3. Westernized Arabic Numerals	0, 1, 2, ... 9
4. Non-alphanumeric ("special characters"). For example, punctuation, symbols.	({}[],.<>:;'"?/\ `~!@#\$%^&*()_ - +=)

2. When possible, at a minimum, a password should be at least six characters long. For stronger security, choose longer passwords with characters from all four classes.
3. A password should not contain the user's e-mail name or any part of his/her full name.
4. A password should be changed regularly (for example, every 45 days).
5. A new password should never be the same as any of the user's last several passwords (for example, don't repeat any of the last eight passwords).
6. A password should not be a "common" word (for example, it should not be a word in the dictionary or slang in common use). A password should not contain words from any language, because numerous password-cracking programs exist that can run through millions of possible word combinations in seconds.

III. Limitations

The various systems utilized by Valencia Community College may have unique password requirements outside of the scope of the recommendations in this document. These systems may enforce frequent password expirations in addition to unique requirements on establishing a secure password (for example, length of password, characters that can be used, etc.).