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eAuthentication

Security Responsibilities for End Users

June 01, 2012

USDA

Objective

The purpose of this training is to provide you with a comprehensive set of security responsibilities that you must adhere to for proper use and protection of the eAuthentication system.

- The security measures described herein define security requirements for the eAuthentication system.
- Non-compliance with the required security measures and behaviors outlined in this document could pose significant risk to the eAuthentication system and USDA applications.
- Compliance with this policy, as well as all other USDA security-related policies, is mandatory for all individuals using the eAuthentication system.

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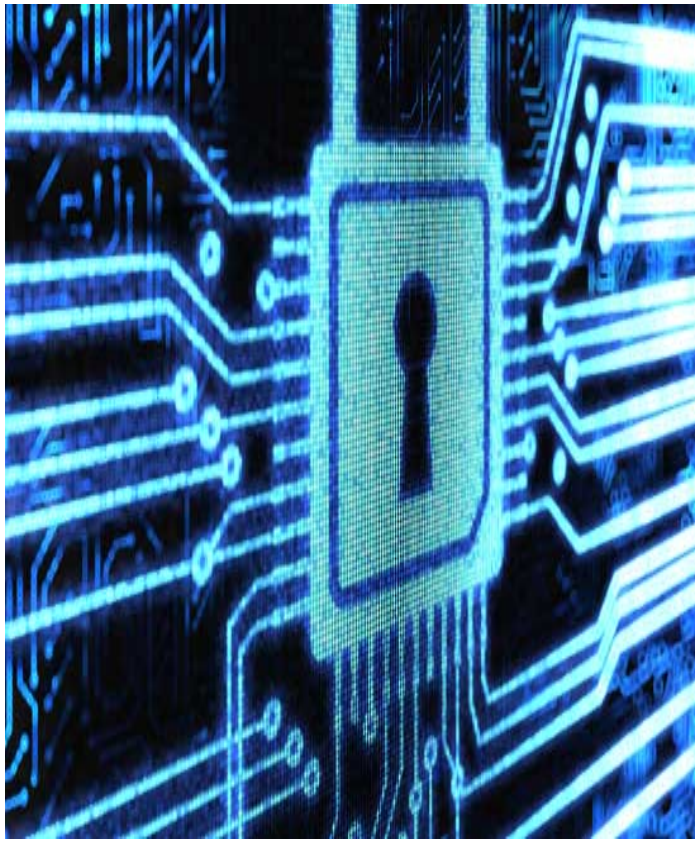

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eAuthentication Service Background

The USDA eAuthentication Service enables USDA customers to confidently share data and conduct official business transactions with USDA electronically via the Internet.

- eAuthentication is developed and managed by the USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).
- Our service provides user authentication and authorization prerequisites for web services and applications services.
- USDA customers and employees can obtain accounts as authorized users that will provide single sign-on capability to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet.

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Proper Use of the eAuthentication Account

The provision of an eAuthentication account carries with it certain security responsibilities to ensure the protection and proper use of the eAuthentication system.

- eAuthentication accounts are provided for the purpose of accessing USDA Web applications.
- Misuse of an account will result in the termination of the account.
- Follow the instructions provided in the eAuthentication website to register for an eAuthentication account and to correctly use system features such as changing and resetting your password.

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Protecting Access to eAuthentication

- Do not give unauthorized persons access to your account information.
- Do not use your account to give unauthorized persons access to USDA applications.
- Do not leave your computer for an extended period of time while you are still logged on with your eAuthentication account.
- Make sure you log out of applications and the eAuthentication system when you are not using your account.
- Abuse of access privileges will result in access removal and termination of your account.

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Protecting Your Account's Credentials

The User ID and password associated with an eAuthentication account are what enable users to access requested USDA resources. It is imperative to protect your User ID and password to prevent unauthorized access.

- Never write down or store passwords.
- Never share your password with anyone. Sharing your password allows unauthorized access to the eAuthentication system.
- Protect the entry of your password from unauthorized view.
- Change your password according to the guidelines established by NIST. You will be forced to change your password every 60 days.
- Immediately change your password if you feel that it has been compromised.

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Secure Passwords: Rules

To help protect your eAuthentication account, we have created the following rules that enforce password security. The password rules are:

- Contains 12-24 characters, including at least one of each of the following:
  - uppercase letter
  - lowercase letter
  - a number
  - optional: one or more of the following special characters

! # $ % = + : ; , ? ~ * -

Secure Passwords: Restrictions

Password Restrictions include:

- Do not use any spaces or special characters not listed above
- Dictionary words may not be used in passwords
- The previous 24 passwords may not be reused
- Profile Information: Mother's Maiden Name, Date of Birth, PIN, Your Name, Address, Phone Number, Email, etc.

Note: Your password will expire after every 60 days.

Secure Passwords: Sample Passwords

By using the method of creating a password from a long sentence or phrase, you can develop passwords that are difficult for attackers to crack.

Steps	Password
Choose a sentence	The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog's back.
Select the first letter of each word	tqbfjotldb
Add at least 1 number and special character	tqbf*1jotldb7
Change some of the letters to upper case	TqbF*1jotlDb7
Verify that your password meets our requirements	TqbF*1jotlDb7 <-- Yes, it does!

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Secure Passwords: Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Pick a password you will remember	Write your password down
Change your password on a regular basis (every 60 days for eAuthentication)	Use any personal attributes found in your eAuthentication profile
Use a mix of upper and lowercase characters, as well as numbers and special characters	Use a word contained in English or a foreign language dictionary
Use a password that you can type quickly without having to look at your keyboard	Share your password with anyone, including spouses and family members
Verify that your password meets our requirements	Use sample passwords given on various websites, including ours

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Contact Information

Please contact the ITS Service desk if you suspect any security issues with your eAuthentication account.

- 1-800-457-3642
- eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov

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