

## **Background**

To comply with DOE security requirements and to make our Unix and Windows password policies consistent, SLAC is changing our password expiration cycle and length requirements. This policy change will affect nearly all users of SLAC services.

Currently Windows accounts expire every 12 months and require 7 characters. Unix accounts expire every 12 months for unprivileged accounts and every 6 months for privileged accounts, and require 8 characters.

## **Policy Change**

After April 17, 2007, the following change to our policy will be put into effect:

1. All accounts will expire every 6 months i.e. subsequent to the next change of password on Windows and Unix systems (see transition plan below).
2. All accounts will require new passwords of at least 8 characters.
3. All passwords will continue to require the use of 3 out of 4 character types, which are:
  - a. upper case letters
  - b. lower case letters
  - c. numbers
  - d. special characters such as #.
4. Passwords may not be words in any dictionary, your name, your account name, or common strings such as 'abcdefgh'.

Note that hints for selecting suitable password strings can be found at <http://www2.slac.stanford.edu/computing/security/password/>

This policy change will apply to the entire SLAC complex unless a modification is requested and approved to the appropriate Cyber-Security Protection Plan (CSPP).

## **Implementation Plan**

The 6-month expiration will be implemented slightly differently on Unix and Windows:

- Windows

Users will be required to change their password six months after their last password change. Users who last changed their password between six and twelve months prior to 4/17/2007 will need to change their password before 4/17/2007. Going forward, all users will need to change their passwords every 6 months. Reminder emails will be sent to users in advance of any password change deadline. When this e-mail is received, Please change your password as soon as possible.

- Unix

The 6-month requirement will begin with a user's next password change. Users will receive email notification when their current password is about to expire (either 6 or 12-months from the last change). The new password will then have a 6-month lifetime.

If you have both a Unix and a Windows account, we suggest changing them both whenever the first of them expires, so they will be synchronized on a six month change cycle thereafter.

Password expiration notices will be sent to users at their email address of record. Users should make sure that this is an account which is regularly accessed so that notices will be seen and acted upon.

### **Password Change Instructions**

Change your password for Windows in one of two ways:

1. Press the Control, Alt and Delete keys on your keyboard at the same time while you are logged into your Windows computer. Then select the Change Password button and enter a new conforming password.
2. If you do not regularly access the Windows infrastructure via a Windows machine, go to <http://www.slac.stanford.edu/comp/win-pwd-change.html> and enter a new conforming Windows password.

Change your password for Unix in one of two ways:

1. On any centrally-managed unix machine, enter the 'password' command and enter a new conforming password.
2. SSH to password.slac.stanford.edu. This is the only method that will work after your password has expired.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

This change affects remote users that use Exchange, IMAP Mail, VPN, FTP, Citrix, remote CVS servers, and/or authenticated web servers as well. If your password has expired, you will not be able to authenticate to these services. Be sure you have changed the password corresponding to the service you are accessing, i.e., Windows for Exchange, IMAP, VPN, Citrix, and most web servers, Unix for FTP, and most CVS servers. For remote users, the second method listed in the Password Change Instructions above for both Windows and Unix is likely to be your best option.

If you have problems with your account, send your Windows account questions to [helpdesk@slac.stanford.edu](mailto:helpdesk@slac.stanford.edu) and your Unix account questions to [unix-admin@slac.stanford.edu](mailto:unix-admin@slac.stanford.edu) , or call the SCCS Help Desk at (650) 926-4357.