

Minimum Security Standards

Virginia Tech is committed to protecting the privacy of its students, alumni, faculty, and current and former employees, as well as protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information important to the university's mission.

These standards are intended to reflect the minimum level of care necessary for Virginia Tech's sensitive data. They do not relieve Virginia Tech or its employees, partners, consultants, or vendors of further obligations that may be imposed by law, regulation or contract.

Virginia Tech expects all partners, consultants and vendors to abide by Virginia Tech's information security policies. If nonpublic information is to be accessed or shared with these third parties, they should be bound by contract to abide by Virginia Tech's information security policies.

You are encouraged to begin adopting these standards, prioritizing your systems by *risk level*. As cybersecurity is a rapidly evolving field that continuously presents us with new challenges, these standards will be revised and updated accordingly.

Minimum Security Standards: Endpoints

An endpoint is defined as any laptop, desktop, or mobile device.

Determine the risk level by reviewing the data, server, and application risk classification examples and selecting the highest applicable risk designation across all. For example, an endpoint storing Low Risk Data, but utilized to manage/configure a High Risk application is designated as High Risk.

Follow the minimum security standards in the table below to safeguard your endpoints.

STANDARDS	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Patching	Apply security patches within 30 days of publish. BigFix ¹ is recommended. Use a supported OS version.	✓	✓	✓
Whole Disk Encryption	Use FileVault2 for Mac. Use BitLocker for Windows. Consider using Veracrypt if applicable.	✓	✓	✓
Malware Protection	Install antivirus (e.g., Windows Defender) and configure to automatically update and run scheduled scans.	✓	✓	✓

¹ https://vt4help.service-now.com/sp?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=13556b7b0ffed240d3254b9ce1050ed0

STANDARDS	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Backup	Backup user data at least weekly. Consider using Network Backup Service ² .	✓	✓	✓
Inventory	Register your endpoint with departmental inventory system.	✓	✓	✓
Equipment Disposal	All university-owned equipment must go through Surplus Property for disposal.	✓	✓	✓
Credentials and Access Control	Configure workstations and laptops to prohibit anonymous access. Enforce password age, length, and complexity. Require password-protected screen savers, with a recommended 15-minute time for inactivity.	✓	✓	✓
Configuration Management	Install BigFix or equivalent (Kaseya)			✓
Regulated Data Security Controls	Implement PCI DSS, FISMA, or export controls as applicable.			✓
Centralized Logging	Forward logs to a remote log server. The university's centralized log server is recommended.			✓

Minimum Security Standards: Servers

A server is defined as a host that provides a network accessible service.

Determine the risk level by reviewing the data, server, and application risk classification examples and selecting the highest applicable risk designation across all. For example, a server running a low risk application, but storing high risk data is designated as High Risk.

Follow the minimum security standards in the table below to safeguard your servers.

STANDARD	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Patching	Based on National Vulnerability Database, apply critical and high severity security patches within seven days of publish and all other security patches within 90 days. Use a supported OS.	✓	✓	✓

² https://vt4help.service-now.com/sp?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=c13d337a0fd30a00005de498b1050efe

STANDARD	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Inventory	Register your server with departmental inventory system. Send the ITSO a list of department's high risk servers.	✓	✓	✓
Firewall	Enable host-based firewall in default deny mode and permit only the minimum necessary services.	✓	✓	✓
Credentials and Access Control	Review existing accounts and privileges at least annually. Enforce password age, length, and complexity. Configure servers to prohibit anonymous access. Require password-protected screen savers, with a recommended 15-minute time for inactivity.	✓	✓	✓
Two-Factor Authentication	Require two-factor authentication for interactive user and administrator logins.	✓	✓	✓
Equipment Disposal	All university-owned machines must go through Surplus Property ³ for disposal.	✓	✓	✓
Sysadmin Training	Attend at least one security training course annually.		✓	✓
Malware Protection	Review alerts as they are received.		✓	✓
Intrusion Detection	Use OSSEC or equivalent. Review alerts as they are received.		✓	✓
Physical Protection	Place system hardware in a data center or controlled access environment.		✓	✓
Centralized Logging	Forward logs to a remote log server. The university's centralized log service is recommended.		✓	✓
Security Review	Request a security review and implement recommendations prior to deployment.		✓	✓
Vulnerability Management	ITSO or owner shall perform a monthly scan. Remediate critical and high vulnerabilities within seven days.			✓
Regulated Data Security Controls	Implement PCI DSS, FISMA, or export controls as applicable.			✓

³ <https://security.vt.edu/resources/surplus.html>

Minimum Security Standards: Applications

An application is defined as software running on a server that is remotely accessible, including mobile applications.

Determine the risk level by reviewing the data, server, and application risk classification examples and selecting the highest applicable risk designation across all. For example, an application providing access to low risk data, but running on a high risk server is designated as high risk.

Follow the minimum security standards in the table below to safeguard your applications.

STANDARD	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Patching	Based on National Vulnerability Database, apply critical and high severity security patches within seven days of publish and all other security patches within 90 days. Use a supported version of the application.	✓	✓	✓
Inventory	Maintain a list of applications and the associated risk classification and data volume estimates. Review and update records quarterly. Send the ITSO a list of department's high risk applications and their URLs.	✓	✓	✓
Firewall	Permit the minimum necessary services through the application firewall.	✓	✓	✓
Credentials and Access Control	Review existing accounts and privileges at least annually. Enforce password age, length, and complexity.	✓	✓	✓
Two-Factor Authentication	Require two-factor authentication for interactive user and administrator logins.	✓	✓	✓
Backups	For high risk applications, back up application data at least daily. For moderate and low applications, back up data weekly. Encrypt backup data in transit and at rest.	✓	✓	✓
Developer Training	Attend at least one security training course annually.		✓	✓
Secure Software Development	Include security as a design requirement. Review all code and correct identified security flaws prior to deployment. Use of static code analysis tools recommended.		✓	✓

STANDARD	WHAT TO DO	L	M	H
Centralized Logging	Forward logs to a remote log server. The university's centralized log service is recommended.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Security Review	Request a security review and implement recommendations prior to deployment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerability Management	Perform a monthly application scan. Remediate critical and high vulnerabilities within seven days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Regulated Data Security Controls	Implement PCI DSS, FISMA, or export controls as applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The Information Technology Security Office is responsible for this IT Standard. Questions may be directed to marchany@vt.edu.