

## Frequently Asked Questions about RIT Passwords

### **(1) Why do I need to change my password?**

Because computers are very good and very fast at "computing." One form of computing is trying all of the different combinations of letters and numbers to "crack the password." People who use password cracking tools can very quickly discover weak passwords and gain access. If your system is on the network, people who use these tools can then gain access to whatever you have access to on the network.

### **(2) Why do I need to change my password every 120 days?**

Even if you have a secure password, "password cracking tools" can eventually discover almost any password given enough time. Given the kinds of password cracking tools that are freely available, many would argue that changing passwords every 120 days is not often enough. We chose 120 days as the **\*minimum\*** standard to make it coincide with our quarter system. We can begin to educate everyone to change their password once per quarter. Those who have access to "sensitive" information should change their password more frequently to help ensure that it stays secure.

### **(3) Can my password be all numbers?**

Computers are very good and very fast at "computing." All the combinations of numbers can be tried much more quickly than all the combinations of numbers and letters, particularly if the letters are mixed between upper and lower case and the computer is case sensitive. That is the reason the **\*minimum\*** standard requires a combination of letters and numbers (upper and lower case).

### **(4) Can I substitute a number for a letter in my password, for example PAS5word?**

The password cracking tools have these kinds of letter and number combinations programmed into them, so this (and any similar combinations) would be considered a weak password.