



Data loss prevention efforts should focus on two areas: computer system controls and the implementation of responsible information handling practices. The tips below will assist organizations in preventing data loss and theft.

- Adopt a comprehensive privacy policy that includes responsible information-handling practices.
- Store sensitive personal data in secure (encrypted) computer systems.
- Ensure that wireless networks are protected with the proper security settings.
- Dispose of documents properly: shred paper with a cross-cut shredder, “wipe” electronic files, destroy old computer drives and CD-ROMs, etc.
- Conduct regular staff training, including new employees, temporary employees, and contractors.
- Conduct privacy “walk-throughs” and make spot checks on proper information handling. Afterward, reward employees and departments for maintaining “best practices.”
- Limit data collected to the minimum needed.
- Put limits on data display and disclosure of Social Security numbers.
- Restrict data access to staff with legitimate need to know.
- Conduct employee background checks, especially for individuals who have access to sensitive personal information.
- Limit, control and safeguard mobile devices that contain sensitive personal data.
- Notify law enforcement, customers and/or employees of computer security breaches (Note: most states have adopted security breach notice laws).
- Develop a crisis management plan for data theft or loss.
- Conduct and document regular policy and practice compliance audits.

All staff must be aware of practices and be able to ensure that personal information is handled responsibly.