

# File Management: Access and Security

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## **Who can access my electronic files without my permission?**

Typically, information technology administrators have access to your computer but should view it only when troubleshooting technical problems or if university policies or contractual obligations are violated. If violations occur, you also can expect your supervisors and their superiors to have access to your files.

While not a public record, work-related files are subject to discovery in legal actions against the university.

## **Is there a university policy on using my work computer for creating and/or storing personal documents?**

MSU has an acceptable use policy for computer usage. In general, this states that individuals should keep personal usage of university computing resources to a minimum. Please see the [MSU policy](#).

## **What are the university policies regarding computers and privacy?**

[Libraries, Computing, & Technology](#) maintains guidelines and policies on the Web.

## **What should I know about keeping potentially sensitive or confidential records on my computer's hard drive or network space?**

The ultimate privacy of your files cannot be ensured. You should be cautious when storing sensitive or confidential files, such as student grades or personnel files, on your computer or network space.

## **What happens if a public records request is made of my office for an electronic record?**

The university evaluates all requests for information submitted by the public. Consult the Office of the General Counsel for guidance if you receive such a request.

## **Is my computer "backed up"? How often and how long are those copies kept?**

Your department information technology administrator can provide information regarding your department's policies on backup. In general, most departments do backups of files on the network server on a systematic basis.

You often are responsible for backing up any files you choose to keep on your local drives. If you use a laptop, you especially may be conscientious about backing up your files due to the increased possibility of loss with a mobile computer.

## **I'm concerned about viruses and spyware. Where can I learn more?**

For common virus information, visit <http://techbase.msu.edu/article.asp?id=176&service=>.