

Training Bulletin Guidance— Having a “Clean Desk” in the Workplace

Trainer Notes

A “**clean desk**” does not expose any sensitive or confidential information to those in its proximity and has sensitive or confidential information secured in a locked area and out of sight when not being used. An enforced clean desk policy is an important tool to ensure that all sensitive/confidential materials are **removed from a workspace and locked away** when the items are not in use.

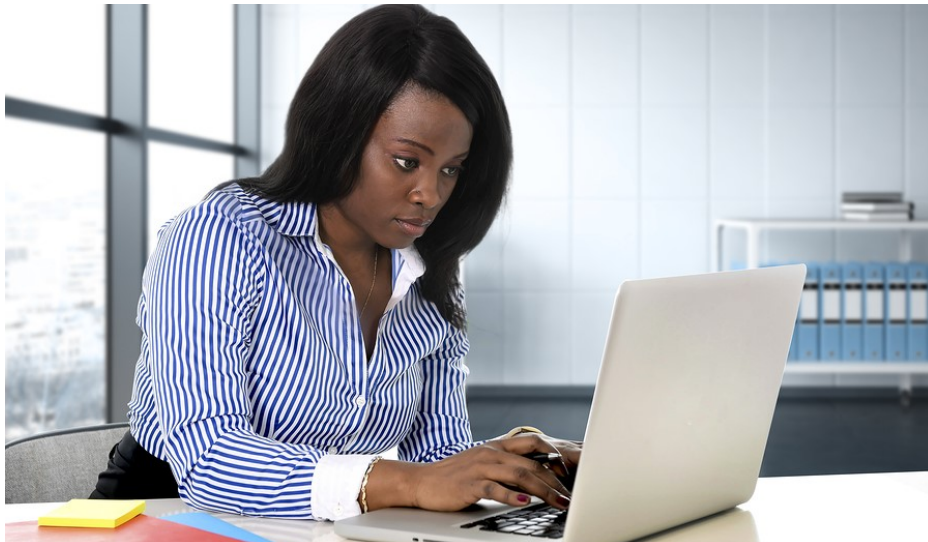
Implementing a clean desk policy will **reduce the risk of information theft, fraud, or a data breach** caused by sensitive information being visible in plain sight.

A clean desk policy should be in **writing and communicated to all employees** including during new and refresher employee training.

Consider having a manager check the office at the end of the day and confiscate or destroy any folders, papers or portable storage media an employee might have left out on their desk.

Talking Points

- Physical safeguards of sensitive information are as important as technical safeguards like passwords, multi-factor authentication and anti-virus software.
- Encouraging the use of digital versions of documents significantly reduces costs of paper, ink toner, and printer maintenance.
- Remind employees that cybersecurity is a team effort. Every employee counts, and participation is needed to maintain a good security posture.



CYBERSECURITY TRAINING BULLETIN

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A “CLEAN DESK”

What is a “clean desk”?

A “clean desk” is a workstation that does not expose any sensitive or confidential information to those in proximity and that has the information secured in a locked area and out of sight when not being used.

Why is a “clean desk” important?

Having a clean desk is important because it significantly reduces the risk of information theft, fraud, or a data breach caused by sensitive information being visible in plain view.

Best Practices

What can I do to keep a “clean desk”?

Here are several ways you can have a clean desk.

- Secure all sensitive/confidential information in hardcopy or electronic form in your work area at the end of the day and when you are expected to be gone for an extended period.
- Lock or shut down your computer when the workspace is unoccupied or at the end of the day.
- Remove any sensitive/confidential information from your desk and lock in a drawer when the desk is unoccupied and at the end of the work day.
- Don't post passwords on or under a computer or in any accessible location.
- Immediately remove printouts containing sensitive/confidential information from the printer.
- Shred documents containing sensitive/confidential information in official shredder bins or place in locked confidential disposal bins.
- Erase whiteboards containing sensitive/confidential information.
- Secure storage devices such as CDROM, DVD or USB drives in a locked drawer.