



FCC Computer Security Notice



NOVEMBER 2002

SYSTEM & DATA BACKUPS

If your hard drive crashes here at the FCC, you run the risk of losing some of your data. The Help Desk always puts forth its best effort to salvage your hard work, but it is best to protect your data by having a plan B. You are responsible for making sure that the data that you store on your hard drive is being backed up.

Backing up your data is simply making a copy of your existing data on your hard drive. In an instance when your PC becomes unstable or a critical program ceases working, a backup copy can be used to replace your lost data. Files created or modified by you, like Word documents or Excel spreadsheets, are the most important files to backups regularly.

There are several ways to save yourself from both a headache and heartburn when the unexpected strikes you.

Save Often. The first rule of thumb is to save your files *often*. When you create new files or add new software to your PC create backups. It is best to create a backup that is dated and saved in a safe place. There are some automated software packages on the market that can customize your backup or automate the process.

Scan Your Drive. Run "Scan disk", a function in Windows that check for abnormalities on your hard drive. In addition, scan disk runs automatically when Windows is not shut-down properly.

Scan disk checks the hard drive for faults and errors, fixes and problems and rearranges the data so that it may be found faster. Scan disk also has a "bad sector" notification feature, which requires immediate backups of your data.

Test Your Plan. The worst case scenario is to do a back up and discover at the crucial moment that the back up plan does not work. The only way to truly know is to check your back up by testing it. Play out a system failure and see if it is fail proof.

Keep a Boot Disk. Create a bootable disk. A boot disk can be a lifesaver if your hard drive stops working. CD-Rs and

CD-RWs are excellent for backing up data. Blank CD-Rs and CD-RWs are inexpensive and readily available. Unlike tapes and diskettes, magnets and water do not damage CD-Rs and CD-RWs. Additionally, CDs do not break easily and tend to last longer than magnetic media.

It is possible that fire or water damage could harm your system. At home, its is smart to place your backup a distance away from your PC.



The centrally-managed Commission file servers and their data are backed up nightly by our IT operations group here at the FCC. It is best to save your data in your N: drive. The N: drive is backed up daily along with the FCC servers and is the best way to protect your FCC files and information if something goes afoul with your FCC computer.

Be Proactive. There are various signs that should indicate that your hard drive is going bad. A dying hard drive will perform poorly. It will be very slow to react to changes. Bad sectors may be identified when performing your scan disk, and there may be audible noise.

There may be a noticeably loud grinding noise emerging from your hard drive. A bad drive will click, grind, or scrape. These are usually signs that your hard drive is about to crash, wiping out your information. Hard drives spin at about 5,200 – 1,500 revolutions per minute, which can do tremendous damage to your system in a short period of time.

Backups are a necessary evil in today's world of viruses and the inevitable failure of machines. The guidelines given should keep your data well protected and save the day in a crunch. It

**COMPUTER SECURITY
TIP OF THE MONTH:**

**TO ENSURE THAT A CD CONTAINING
PERSONAL INFORMATION CAN NEVER BE
READ, PUT IT IN THE MICROWAVE. NUKE
IT FOR ABOUT 10-15 SECONDS TO
VAPORIZE THE METAL WHICH HOLDS THE
DATA.**

YOU CAN REFERENCE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT COMPUTER SECURITY AT:

- The Computer Security Program Website: <http://intranet.fcc.gov/omd/itc/csg/index.html>