

Re: I need to password protect my pc at startup

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- *From:* Malke <malke@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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Kat wrote:

I'm at a very small company... we have 8 people working in the office here. I don't know that much about how to set up passwords or if using the log on password is effective enough. I do not have that set up now. I am one of 3 owners here, almost everyone in the office has keys to get in here on evenings and weekends. We are too small to have an IT person let alone a department. So we are pretty much on our own. One person here is best with pc's and does what she can to keep us up and running but doesn't seem to know if the windows log on is secure enough to prevent other people on my machine. I have several files password protected so users can not get into those. However I suspect a co-owner getting nosy and poking around on my machine.

Hopefully this has helped explain my concern. I have delicate files on my machine that this other person has admitted getting into and reading. I don't want them doing that again so I'd like to protect my machine when I am not here. This person being an owner has access to my office as well with keys so locking the door isn't going to do it.

I want to set it up with a password so that if the machine is off, they can not get into it even if they can turn it on.

Shenan has given you good advice. Physical access is everything. See my standard information about computer security below but please be aware that all of those precautions can be gotten around. You really need to address your problems with the other owner and this isn't something you can do with technology.

On the technical front, if you don't know how to set things up, hire a local computer professional to come on-site and do it for you. This is a cost of

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doing business. Don't use someone from a BigComputerStore type of place.

Any computer running any operating system can be accessed by someone with 1) physical access; 2) time; 3) skill; 4) tools. There are a few things you can do to make it a bit harder though:

1. Set a password in the BIOS that must be entered before booting the operating system. Also set the Supervisor password in the BIOS so BIOS Setup can't be entered without it.
2. From the BIOS, change the boot order to hard drive first.
3. Set strong passwords on all accounts, including the built-in Administrator account.
4. If you leave your own account logged in, use the Windows Key + L to lock the computer (and/or set the screensaver/power saving) when you step away from the computer and require a password to resume.
5. Make other users Limited accounts in XP Home, regular user accounts in XP Pro.
6. Set user permissions/restrictions:
 - a. If you have XP Pro, you can set user permissions/restrictions with Group Policy (Start>Run>gpedit.msc [enter]) but be careful. Using the Policy Editor can be tricky. Questions about Group Policy should be posted in its newsgroup: microsoft.public.windows.group_policy.
 - b. If you have XP Home, you can use MVP Doug Knox's Security Console or the MS Steady State. SteadyState also works in XP Pro if you'd rather not use Group Policy.

<http://www.dougknox.com>

Steady State –

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/sharedaccess/default.mspx>

Malke

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MS-MVP

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Don't Panic!

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