# Public Wi-Fi Safety 101

## Overview

There are security risks involved in using public Wi-Fi networks, such as the hotspots found in many airports, hotels and cafés. While the convenience is a blessing, it can also be a curse. The following seven rules will assist you to stay safe.

## Public Wi-Fi Safety Rules

1. Turn Wi-Fi off when you're not using it

   *If you're not actively using the Internet, simply turn Wi-Fi off.*

2. Don't assume public Wi-Fi is secure

   *Most public Wi-Fi hotspots don't encrypt information and are not secure. Better take a safety-first attitude and protect yourself and your device before disaster strikes.*

3. Beware of phony public Wi-Fi hotspots

   *Ask a staffer at the café/airport/hotel if there is, in fact, a public Wi-Fi available, and what its name is. Only connect to that network.*

4. Watch out for 'shoulder surfers'

   *'Shoulder surfers' simply need to peer over your shoulder as you type to steal your passwords and information. So make sure no one seems to be paying too close attention when there are in your immediate vicinity.*

5. Make use of a firewall

   *You may already be using a firewall, but just in case, make sure that it is turned on. Your firewall is not an end-all, be-all protector, but it's always a good idea.*

6. Turn sharing and network discovery off

   *When you're on a public Wi-Fi network, you'll want to turn all sharing off in addition to network discovery. This will prevent others from even seeing your device on the network, meaning you're less likely to be targeted.*

7. Make use of encrypted sites and/or a Virtual Private Network (VPN)

   *Regular web sites exchange lots of plain text over the network you're connected to. Using HTTPS (for visiting web sites) or enabling SSL (when using applications that access the Internet, such as a mail client) encrypts this text. This may be extended by connecting to a VPN server or service that encrypts not only this text, but also all of your Internet traffic, keeping it away from prying eyes.*

## Need more info?

We are very willing to help you meet your cyber safety needs. Please let us know what your needs are and we'll do our best to assist.

Contact the Cyber Security research unit at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University directly:



cyberaware@nmmu.ac.za

Or email the South African Cyber Security Academic Alliance:



info@cyberaware.org.za

## Our Website

For more information visit www.cyberaware.org.za