

Using Slack in Government

Government staff are responsible for checking the applications they use are secure. This guidance will help you use Slack to communicate securely with colleagues.

Securing your account

Secure your Slack account by using:

- a password made up of 3 random words
- two-factor authentication
- a secure (HTTPS) connection and a modern browser or a Slack client app

Tell your Slack administrator if you :

- think someone may have accessed your account
- lose a device that can access your Slack account (you should also sign yourself out of all channel sessions)

Protecting your data

To protect your data when using Slack, make sure you:

- don't use Slack to store sensitive, personal, or other high value data (like commercial or financial information) that could cause harm or embarrassment if lost or exposed
- create and use private channels or direct messages when you need to control access
- restrict your Slack account to your organisation if appropriate

When using Slack, you should also be aware that content, including older messages you can no longer see, can be:

- disclosed publicly under the Freedom of Information Act
- exported and viewed by administrators in paid Slack accounts, including direct messages and private channels
- exported and viewed by administrators in free Slack accounts, except for direct messages and private channels
- subject to legal requests to shared data by courts, government agencies, or parties involved in litigation in the US

As any Slack content can be subject to the Freedom of Information Act you should:

- communicate as you would in internal email
- choose good channel names

Using Slack for social or personal use must:

- not create exposure to legal liability or embarrassment

- not affect your performance or disrupt others
- follow the [Civil Service Code](#)

Slack have signed up to the [EU-US Privacy Shield](#) which requires them to follow European data protection requirements for personal data for their European customers. [You own the data](#) you put in Slack, and their technical security is similar to other popular public cloud services.

Your Slack team name is visible to anyone that knows your team's Slack URL, even if they're unable to sign in.

Managing information

Sometimes you may need to refer back to information shared in Slack channels. As a civil servant you must [keep accurate records](#) of work. Make sure you don't lose content by:

- creating a permanent record of shared information at regular intervals or at the end of a piece of work
- using your document storage or email service to capture important discussions or decisions (name the data so it can be found later)

You can export data from Slack by:

- copying and pasting the text (while noting the date)
- taking a screenshot
- asking your administrator for an export

Limit channels to:

- work and discussion
- networks and clubs
- noticeboards

Name channels clearly with the team, community, product, network, club, or group so it is obvious what is being discussed. Avoid creating channels without an obvious work or community purpose.

Getting started

Ensure your account looks official and similar to other government Slack accounts by:

- setting your username to first_last_organisation (for example alex_black_moj)
- use a recognisable profile photo
- add your role to the 'What I do' section

You don't have to share your phone number or Skype account if you don't want to.

You can alert others to content you have shared on Slack by typing @channel, @here, or @everyone. This can trigger notifications on their computer or phone. You can read the Slack guidance on '

Making an announcement to understand how these alerts work and the meaning of these alerts.

You should avoid disruption to others when using these alerts by:

- only using the #announcement channel for things that are urgent, important and affect a lot of people
- avoiding use of @channel; @here and @everyone in #announcements
- using @here over @channel or @everyone unless you need to

Getting help

For help using Slack, you can:

- access the Slack help centre for guides and videos
- find your team owners or administrators (by looking in your account settings under Team Settings)

Slack also have a live status page.

You may also access further support from:

- a service level agreement if you have a paid Slack account
- your internal IT team (if you have agreed a support arrangement with them)