

How to Protect Patent and Trade Secret Information

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Here is a non-exclusive list of best practices that are useful to preserve the secrecy of proprietary information.

- a. Include protections in employee contracts reflecting company ownership of sensitive information and inventions and prohibition against disclosure of proprietary information.
- b. Understand what information can have trade secret value.
- c. Identify proprietary information to the workforce.
- d. Restrict information to those who have a need to know.
- e. Impose physical security restricting access sensitive information.
- f. Use written confidentiality agreements religiously.
- g. Restrict usage of computer and communication assets. (i.e, Internet and email usage policies, prohibition against using file-sharing software, restrictions on material that may be exported, restriction on storing information on portable devices.)
- h. Use outgoing firewalls to snare sensitive information before leaving the company.
- i. Restrict and catalog visitors to facilities.
- j. Remind departing employees of confidentiality obligations. Look into whether employee negligently or purposefully exported information. Determine where employee may have stored sensitive information.
- k. Properly dispose of sensitive information.
1. Adopt a comprehensive information management policy.

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