



ANCHOR CYBER SECURITY LLC

Linux CLI Security Hygiene

Command-line habits that prevent self-inflicted leaks — history, process visibility, and the shortcuts that make this easy to actually keep up.

```
$ cli-hygiene --history
```

Shell History Hygiene

Your shell history file is a plaintext log of everything you've typed — including anything sensitive you typed directly instead of piping in.

```
# dedupe history, and never log commands that start with a space
export HISTCONTROL=ignorespace:ignoredups

# now a leading space keeps a command out of history entirely
curl -u admin:S3cr3tP@ss https://internal.example.com

# clear history for the current session
history -c

# confirm your history file isn't readable by other local users
chmod 600 ~/.bash_history
```

Worth knowing: HISTCONTROL=ignorespace only works if you remember the leading space every time. For anything genuinely sensitive, prefer a credentials file with restricted permissions or an environment variable over typing a secret directly on the command line at all — see below.

```
$ cli-hygiene --process-list
```

Don't Leak Secrets Through the Process List

Command-line arguments aren't private — any other local user can see them.

```
# anyone on this box can read the password you just typed
mysql -u admin -pS3cr3tP@ss

# while that process runs, this reveals it to any other user
ps aux | grep mysql
```

Instead: prompt for the password interactively, read it from a restricted-permission file, or pass it via an environment variable set in a way that doesn't appear in ps output

```
$ cli-hygiene --reverse-search
```

Reverse Search & Shortcuts

The one that doesn't get covered enough: reverse-i-search. If you're retyping commands you've already run, you're wasting real time every day.

REVERSE SEARCH

- `Ctrl+R` — start reverse search, type any substring of a past command
- `Ctrl+R` again — cycle to the next older match
- `Enter` — run the matched command
- `Ctrl+G` or `Esc` — cancel and return to an empty prompt

WORTH KNOWING ALONGSIDE IT

- `!!` — re-run the last command
- `!$` — reuse the last argument of the previous command
- `Ctrl+A` / `Ctrl+E` — jump to start / end of the line
- `Ctrl+U` — clear the line before the cursor

```
$ cli-hygiene --screen
```

Safe File Viewing & Screen Hygiene

Small habits that keep sensitive output from lingering where it shouldn't.

- Use `less` instead of `cat` for sensitive files — it doesn't dump the content into your terminal's scrollback buffer
- Clear scrollback, not just the visible screen: `clear && printf '\e[3J'`
- Lock your session before stepping away — `loginctl lock-session` or your desktop environment's equivalent
- Close terminal tabs that displayed secrets rather than leaving them open indefinitely

Sources: bash/zsh documentation · Anchor practitioner notes

```
$ echo $?  
0
```