



# REPORT

# File Ownership Recovery

*v1.0.0*

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August 31, 2025



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## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	 Author	Description of Changes
v1.0.0	08/31/2025	Eldon G.	Initial draft.





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## 1.0 FILE OWNERSHIP & REGISTRY

### 1.1 Project Description

This report documents an experiment to determine whether the Windows Registry can be used to recover file ownership. The intent was to test the boundaries of Windows administration tools and to record the outcome clearly for future reference.

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**Disclaimer:** This guide is based on independent testing and research. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or representative of any institution, training provider, or employer.



## 1.2 Initial Task: Registry-Based Ownership Recovery

The starting assumption was that ownership information might be retrievable from registry keys. The task was to explore registry paths related to security identifiers. This includes (SIDs), policies, and file permissions, and then attempt to restore ownership through edits.

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## 1.3 Findings and Testing Results

Testing confirmed that NTFS (New Technology File System) file ownership is stored as metadata on the file system itself, not in the Registry. Attempts to locate ownership attributes in registry locations did not produce usable results. File recovery or reassignment of ownership must be done using supported tools such as `takeown`, `icaccls`, or PowerShell commands.

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## 1.4 Special Case Consideration

While the Registry influences global security settings and policies. It does not provide a direct way to recover file ownership. Modifying registry keys for this purpose may lead to instability and is not a recommended practice.

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## 1.5 Supporting Work

I needed to check my results. I changed who owned the files. I used Windows tools like (`takeown` and `icaccls`). This proved the right way to do it. It also showed a clear difference. Registry settings and file data (NTFS) did not match.

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## 2.0 CONCLUSION

### 2.1 Key Takeaways

- File ownership is managed by NTFS, not the Windows Registry.
  - Registry modification is not a valid method for recovering file ownership.
  - Built-in tools such as `takeown`, `icacls`, and PowerShell provide supported solutions.
  - Documenting unsuccessful methods adds value by clarifying system boundaries.
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### 2.2 Security Implications and Recommendations

System administrators should avoid using unsupported registry edits when handling file security tasks. Always use the standard, approved methods for NTFS ownership and permissions. Never guess. Checking wrong ideas can still help, though. It shows what won't fix the issue. This makes sure you stick to safe, proven steps.

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