

Note that qpdf does not obey encryption restrictions already imposed on the file. Doing so would be meaningless since qpdf can be used to remove encryption from the file entirely. This functionality is not intended to be used for bypassing copyright restrictions or other restrictions placed on files by their producers.

Prior to 8.4.0, in the case of passwords that contain characters that fall outside of 7-bit US-ASCII, qpdf left the burden of supplying properly encoded encryption and decryption passwords to the user. Starting in qpdf 8.4.0, qpdf does this automatically in most cases. For an in-depth discussion, please see [Section 3.10, “Unicode Passwords”, page 20](#). Previous versions of this manual described workarounds using the **iconv** command. Such workarounds are no longer required or recommended with qpdf 8.4.0. However, for backward compatibility, qpdf attempts to detect those workarounds and do the right thing in most cases.

3.4. Encryption Options

To change the encryption parameters of a file, use the **--encrypt** flag. The syntax is

```
--encrypt user-password owner-password key-length [ restrictions ] --
```

Note that “--” terminates parsing of encryption flags and must be present even if no restrictions are present.

Either or both of the user password and the owner password may be empty strings.

The value for **key-length** may be 40, 128, or 256. The restriction flags are dependent upon key length. When no additional restrictions are given, the default is to be fully permissive.

If **key-length** is 40, the following restriction options are available:

--print=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow printing.

--modify=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow document modification.

--extract=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow text/image extraction.

--annotate=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow comments and form fill-in and signing.

If **key-length** is 128, the following restriction options are available:

--accessibility=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow accessibility to visually impaired. The qpdf library disregards this field when AES is used or when 256-bit encryption is used. You should really never disable accessibility, but qpdf lets you do it in case you need to configure a file this way for testing purposes. The PDF spec says that conforming readers should disregard this permission and always allow accessibility.

--extract=[yn]

Determines whether or not to allow text/graphic extraction.

--assemble=[yn]

Determines whether document assembly (rotation and reordering of pages) is allowed.