Encrypting a Microsoft Word Document and Opening an Encrypted Document

In some cases, you may need to send files or emails using encryption, also known as password protection. This secure format requires recipients of your shared file or email to enter a password to view the shared content.

This article describes how to encrypt a Microsoft Word document on a Windows® and macOS® device. It also provides best practices for sharing the password for an encrypted document and describes how recipients of an encrypted document can open it.

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Encrypting a Microsoft Word Document

Warning: Before encrypting a Microsoft Word document, save a copy of the document as a backup. If you encrypt a document and forget the password you created for it, you will not be able to open the document.

Windows

1. Open a Microsoft Word document.
2. Click **File** at the upper-left corner of the document. The **Info** screen will be displayed.
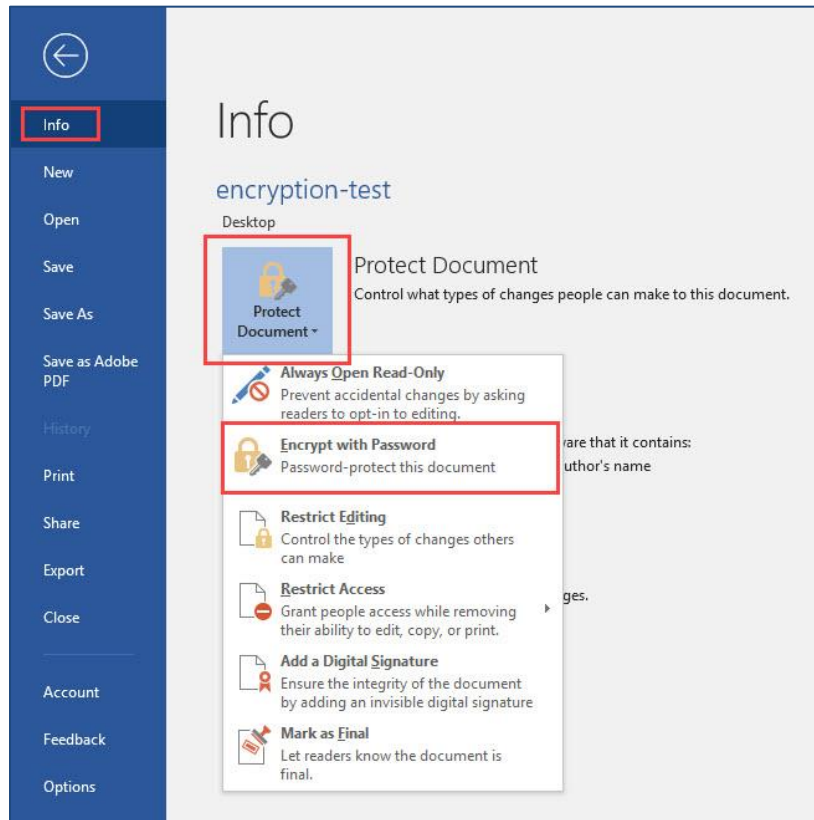3. Click **Protect Document** and select **Encrypt with Password** (Figure 1).

Figure 1

4. On the **Encrypt Password** window, enter the password recipients will need to provide to open the document and click **OK**.

5. Enter the password again and click **OK**. A message stating "A password is required to open this document." will be displayed on the **Info** screen (Figure 2).
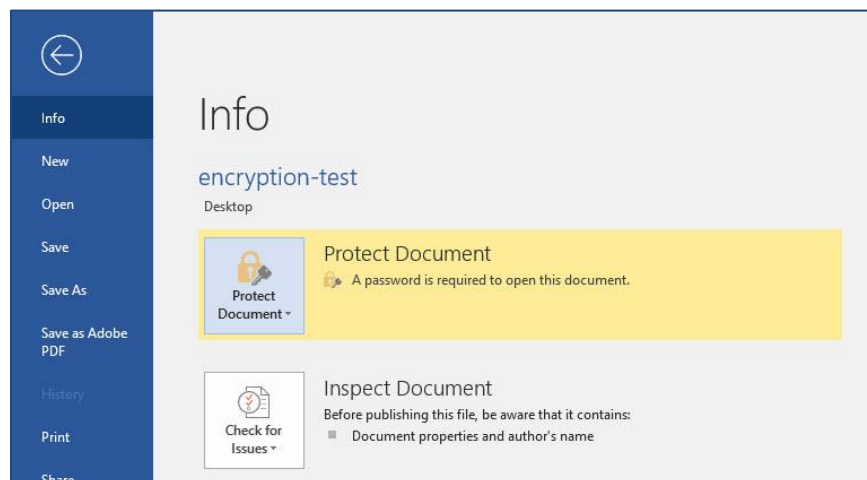

Figure 2

6. Save the Microsoft Word document.

macOS

1. Open a Microsoft Word document.
2. Click **Review** in the ribbon along the top of the document. The **Review** tab will be displayed (Figure 3).
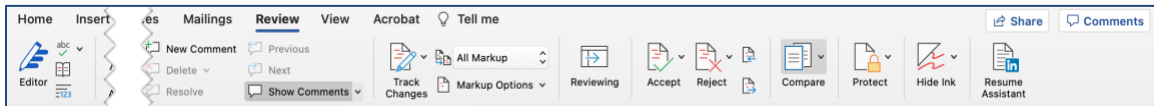

<p style="text-align:center">Figure 3</p>

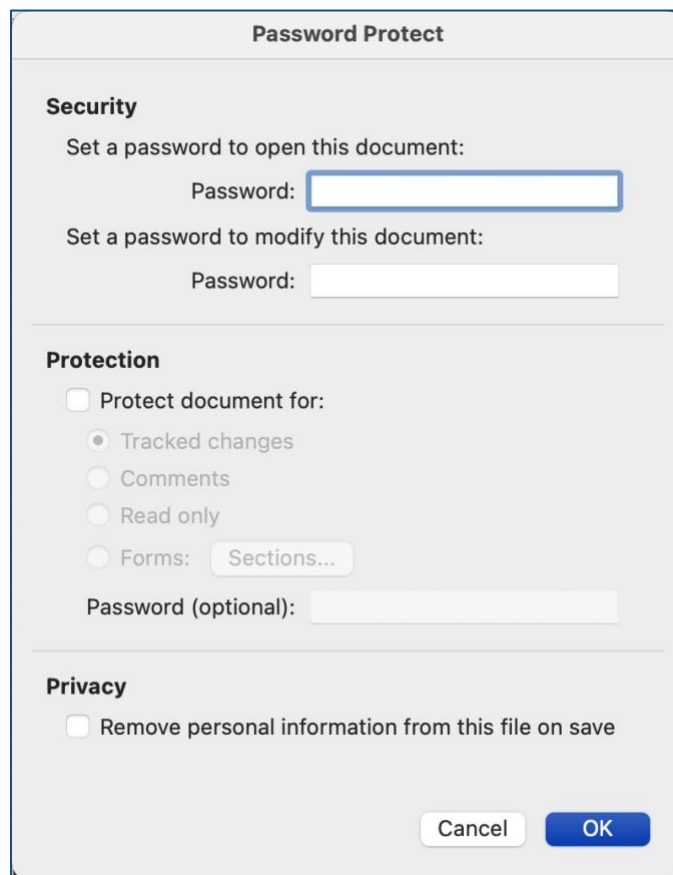3. Click **Protect** and select **Protect Document**. The **Password Protect** window will be displayed (Figure 4).

<p style="text-align:center">Figure 4</p>

4. In the **Security** section of the **Password Protect** window, enter a password to open the document, modify the document, or both.
5. Enter the password again in the **Re-enter the password:** window and click **OK** (Figure 5).
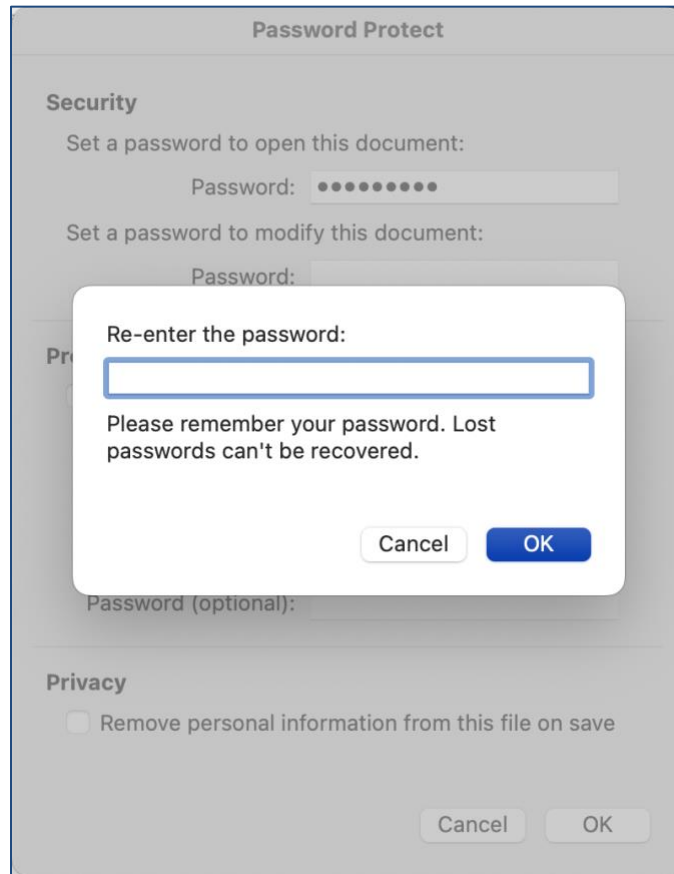
Figure 5

6. Click **OK** on the **Password Protect** window.
7. Save the Microsoft Word document.

Sharing the Password for an Encrypted Document

Use one of the following methods to share the password needed to open an encrypted Microsoft Word document:

- **In-person**: Share the password verbally with the recipient.
- **Telephone or video call**: Call the recipient and provide the password verbally.
- **Text message**: Send the recipient the password via a text message.

Opening an Encrypted Microsoft Word Document

When you try to open an encrypted Microsoft Word document, a **Password** window will be displayed, prompting you to enter a password (Figure 6). Enter the password created by the document's owner and click **OK** to open the file.
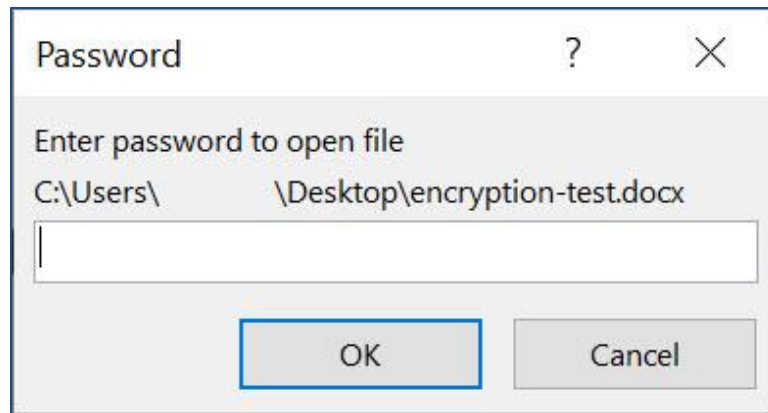
Figure 6

If the password you entered is incorrect, an error message stating that Word cannot open the document will be displayed (Figure 7).
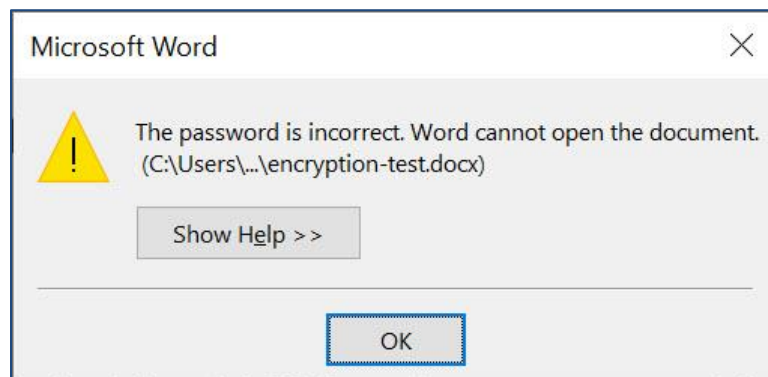

Figure 7

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