

# 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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## Before You Start

Before following the steps outlined in this article, ensure you have access to the following items:

- A device running Windows OS or macOS
- A [subscription to Microsoft Word](#)

## 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 OS

Follow these steps to encrypt a Microsoft Word document on a Windows OS device:

1. Open a Microsoft Word document.
2. Click **File** at the upper-left corner of the document.

3. On the **Info** tab, click **Protect Document** and select **Encrypt with Password** (Figure 1).

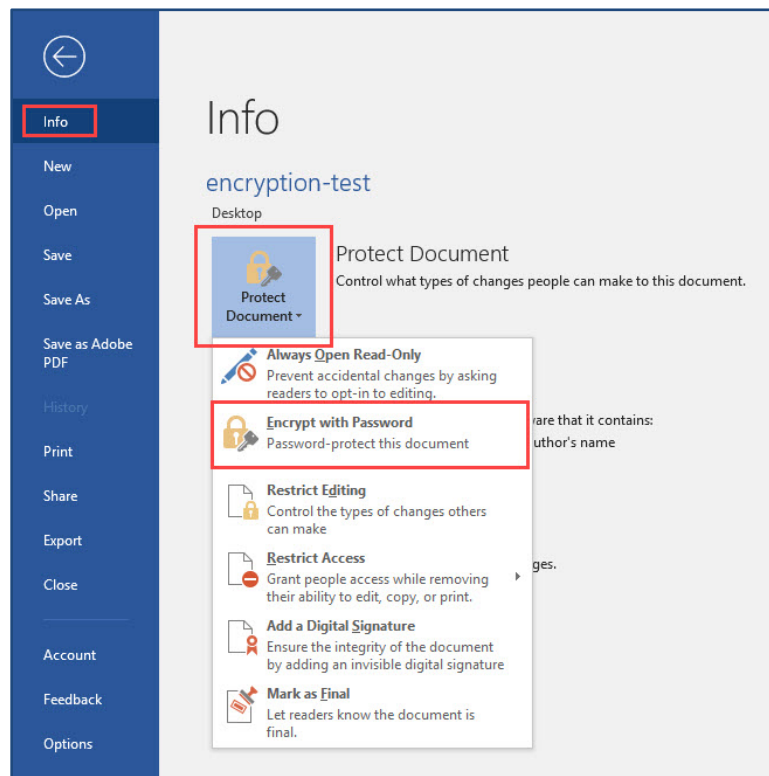


Figure 1

4. On the **Encrypt Password** window, enter the password recipients must provide to open the document, and then click **OK**.
5. When prompted, enter the password again. Then click **OK**. The **Info** tab will display a message stating "A password is required to open this document." (Figure 2).

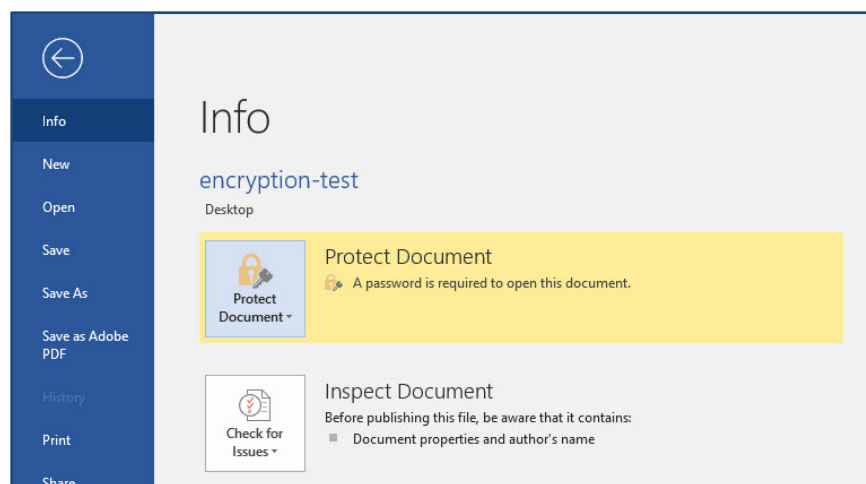


Figure 2

6. Save the Microsoft Word document.

## macOS

Follow these steps to encrypt a Microsoft Word document on a macOS device:

1. Open a Microsoft Word document.
2. Select **Review** in the ribbon along the top of the document (Figure 3).

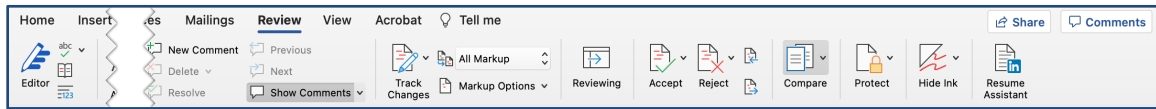


Figure 3

3. On the **Review** tab, click **Protect**, and then select **Protect Document**.
4. In the **Security** section of the **Password Protect** window (Figure 4), enter a password to open the document, modify the document, or both.

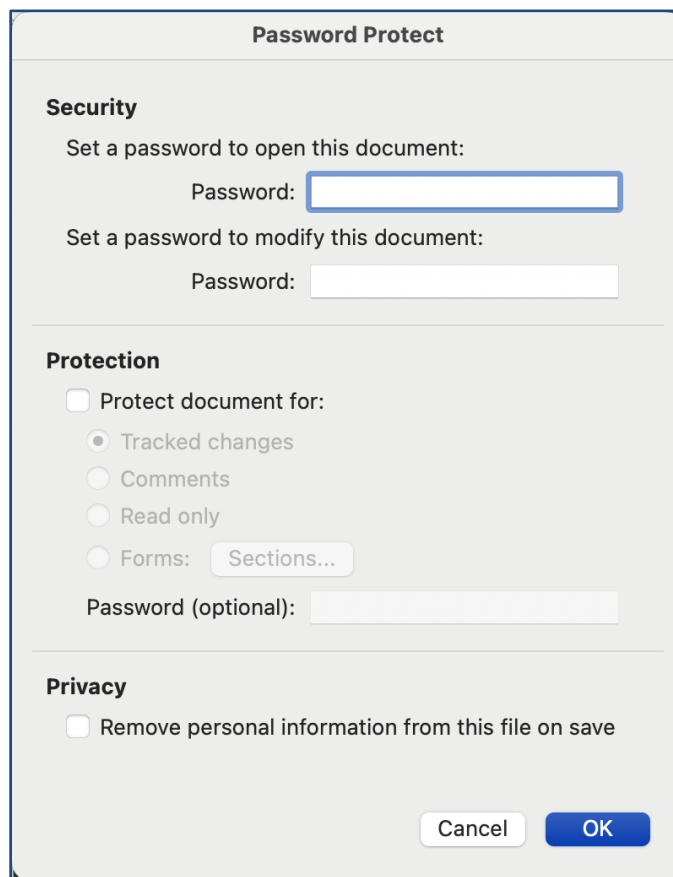
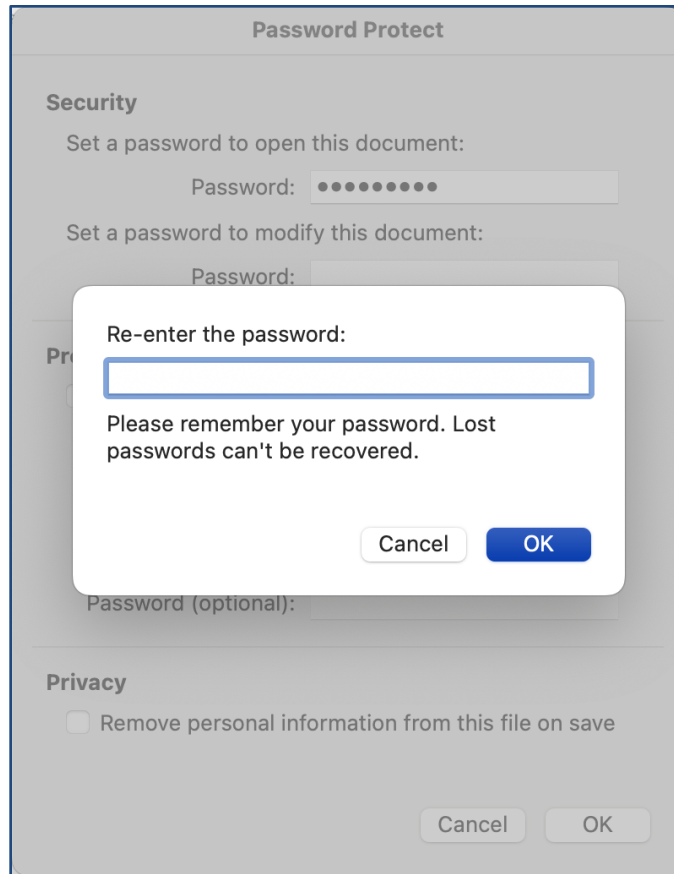
A screenshot of the 'Password Protect' dialog box in Microsoft Word. The dialog has a title bar 'Password Protect'. It is divided into three sections: 'Security', 'Protection', and 'Privacy'. In the 'Security' section, there are two password fields: 'Set a password to open this document: Password:' and 'Set a password to modify this document: Password:'. The 'Protection' section has a checkbox 'Protect document for:' which is checked, and four radio button options: 'Tracked changes' (selected), 'Comments', 'Read only', and 'Forms: Sections...'. There is also an optional password field 'Password (optional):'. The 'Privacy' section has a checkbox 'Remove personal information from this file on save' which is unchecked. At the bottom right are 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons.

Figure 4

5. When prompted, enter the password again. Then 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.

**Important:** Do not share the password for an encrypted document via email.

## Opening an Encrypted Microsoft Word Document

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

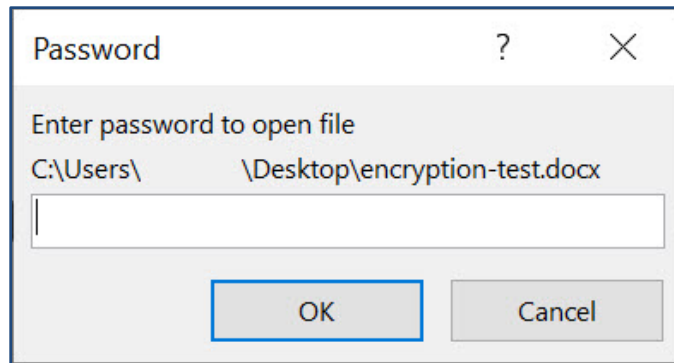


Figure 6

**Note:** If the password you entered is incorrect, an error message stating that Word cannot open the document will be displayed.

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