

How to Protect a PDF File from Copying

This wikiHow will teach you how to protect your PDF file. You can create a PDF and then protect it from editing and copying within Adobe Acrobat. Open your document in Acrobat. You can either open your file inside Adobe Acrobat by going to...

Method 1 of 2:

Encrypting with a Certificate

1. **Open your document in Acrobat.** You can either open your file inside Adobe Acrobat by going to **File > Open** or you can right-click the file in your file browser and click **Open with > Adobe Acrobat**.
 1. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat, you can get a 7-day free trial <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/free-trial-download.html>.
2. Click **Tools**. You'll see this towards the upper right or left corner of the software window.
 1. A pane will drop down.
3. Click **Protection**. Another menu drops down.
4. Click **Encrypt**. This is usually the first option in the menu.
5. Click **Encrypt with Certificate**. If you know who you're sending the PDF to already and their email addresses, click "Encrypt with Certificate." If you're having trouble sharing your PDF with certificate encryption, try changing to encrypting with a password.
 1. Make sure you add your own name to the list or you'll be unable to open your PDF.
 2. You can also set the permissions for each individual who has access to the file if you use the certificate encryption by clicking to select their name from the list, and clicking **Permissions**.
6. **Save the document.** Press **Ctrl + S** (Windows) or **Cmd + S** (Mac) to save your changes.^[1]

Method 2 of 2:

Encrypting with a Password

1. **Open your document in Acrobat.** You can open your file within Adobe Acrobat by going to **File > Open** or you can right-click the file in your file browser and click **Open with > Adobe Acrobat**.
 1. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat, you can get a 7-day free trial <https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/free-trial-download.html>.
2. Click **Tools**. You'll see this towards the upper right or left corner of the software window.
 1. A pane will drop down.
3. Click **Protection**. Another menu drops down.
4. Click **Encrypt**. This is usually the first option in the menu.
5. Click **Encrypt with Password**. If you don't know who you're sending your PDF to or don't have their email addresses, click "Encrypt with Password" so anyone with the password has access to it. Encrypting with a password is more common and more widely accepted than certificates.

1. If you're using either the certificate or password encryption, uncheck the box next to "Enable copying or editing of text, images, and other content" to prevent anyone from making copies of the file.
2. If you choose to encrypt with a password, you can create a password that allows people to open and view your PDF, but not allow them to edit. You can also create a password for editing so they can make changes. You can also choose from the drop-downs if you want to allow printing and changes.
6. **Save the document.** Press **Ctrl + S** (Windows) or **Cmd + S** (Mac) to save your changes.^[2]

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