

How to Use 7-Zip to Encrypt Files and Folders

7-Zip is an open source software used to compress or zip files secured with encryption.

When you send or transfer files that contain Personal Identifiable Information (PII) or other confidential and sensitive data, the files must be encrypted to ensure they are protected from unauthorized disclosure.

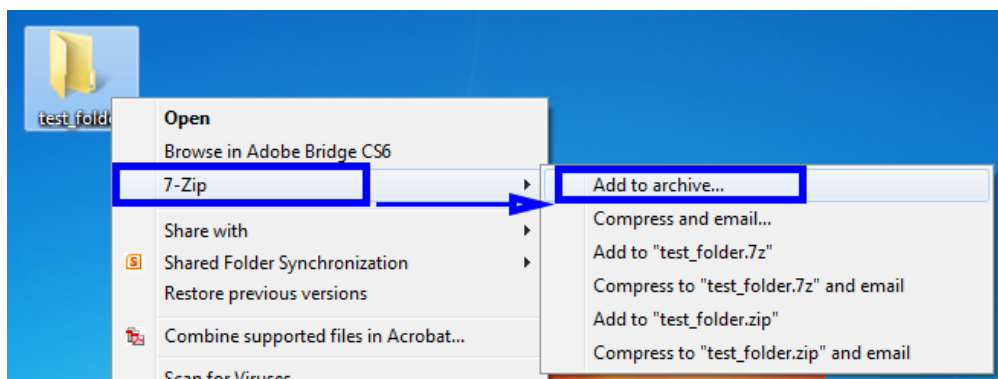
7-Zip, like WinZip, creates a container called archive that holds the files to be protected. That archive can be encrypted and protected with a password. 7-Zip is a free software that creates Zip files that can be opened with WinZip or other similar programs.

To obtain a copy of 7-Zip, please see <http://www.7-zip.org/> and select the [Download link](#). Ensure that you install the latest version (currently 18.05) and for the correct architecture for your computer. (32bit on 32bit Windows & 64bit on 64bit Windows). To find whether you are 32bit or 64bit, go into control panel & select System, "system Type" in the middle will let you know whether you are running 32 or 64bit Windows.

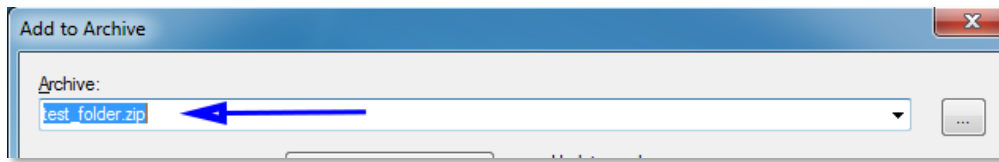
Once the software is installed, please follow these steps to encrypt a file or folder.

Step 1: Right click on the file, files (Hold down ctrl whilst clicking multiple files) or folder to be encrypted.

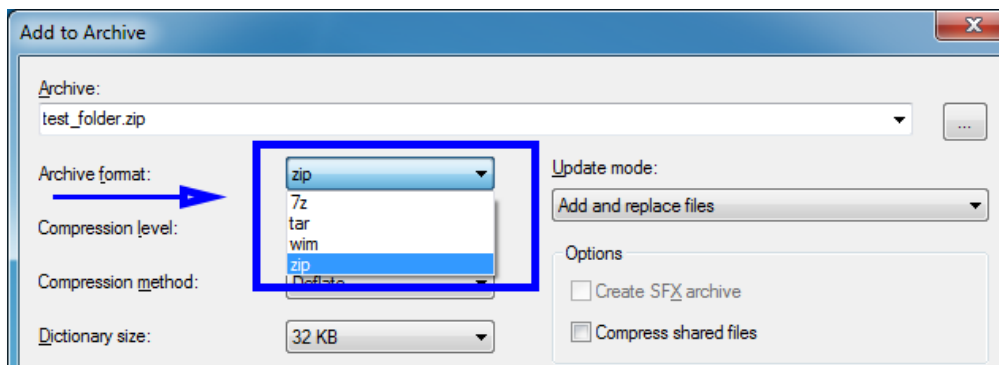
Step 2: Select "7-Zip" then "Add to archive..."



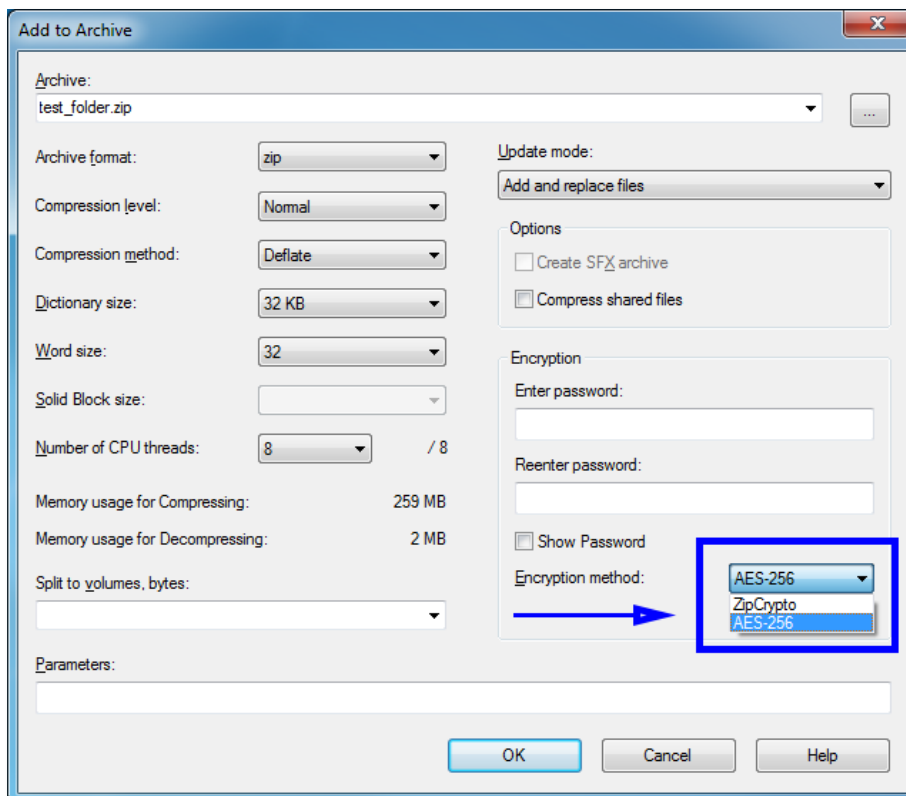
Step 3: In the Add to Archive window change the name of the archive you wish to create.



Step 4: Change the Archive format to "Zip".



Step 5: Change the Encryption Method to "AES-256".

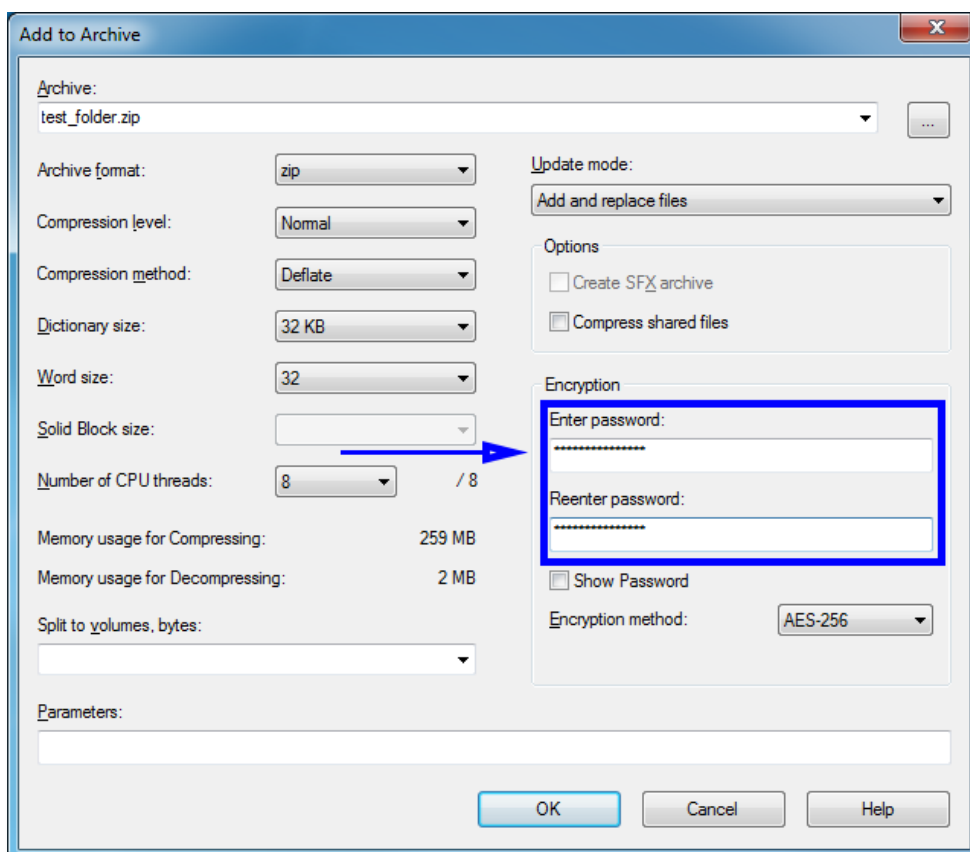


There is a trade-off between using AES-256 and ZipCrypto. AES-256 is proven much more secure than ZipCrypto, but if you select AES-256 the recipient of the zip file may have to install 7-zip or another zip program to read the file contents. Selecting ZipCrypto may allow users to open the zip file in Windows without a zip program, but it does not provide adequate protection against attackers with modern cracking tools.

AES-256 Encryption needs to be opened by right clicking on the encrypted zip file and choosing 7zip – Open Archive. It CANNOT be opened using Windows extraction. Only ZipCrypto will allow this

It is strongly recommended to use AES-256 to protect sensitive and confidential data.

Step 6: Enter a Password. Use a strong password with at least 8 characters containing upper and lowercase letters, and a minimum of one number.



Step 7: Select "Ok" to create the encrypted archive file. The new archive file will be located in the same folder as the original.

Best security practices recommend that you do not email the password with the Zip file as it could be intercepted in transit. It is better to call the recipient of the Zip file and convey the password over the phone.

Should you require 7-Zip to be installed on multiple computers on a network, please ask your DL Solutions ICT Support Technician who will be able to deploy for you.