

Worksheet and Workbook Level Protection in Excel

Applies to Microsoft Excel versions 2007-2019

Protecting Your Cells and Worksheets

Protection of documents and cells can help prevent inadvertent changes to your worksheet. This can be especially helpful if you have multiple people sharing the same workbook or someone who is unfamiliar with worksheets.

Excel offers the option of protecting the entire document, individual objects, the structure of a window, and/or specific cells. You can even add a password to the file. If you want to prevent changes to sheets or cells, you need to lock the cells and then protect the sheet.

Protection Options

When you are protecting your workbook, you have two primary options:

- **Prevent data entry for select cells** Users can access the worksheet and view the information; however, access for making changes is restricted - Locking & Unlocking Cells.
- **Restrict or prevent access to the file** Users can be prevented from viewing the worksheet, or users can view the workbook but not make changes to it - File Level Protection.

Locking & Unlocking Cells

Excel can protect cells, graphics, charts, and other worksheet objects. This protection will take effect only after you turn on the Worksheet Protection option in the *Protect Sheet* dialog box. If you enable protection, no changes can be made to a cell until you unlock that cell.

Locking Cells

By default, all cells are locked. The easiest method to lock cells, is to first unlock all cells. Then lock the individual cells you want to protect. First you will unlock all cells, then you will select the cells you want locked and lock cells. See detailed instructions below.

1. First, you want to unlock all cells. Click the select all button.

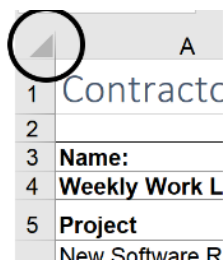


Figure 1 Select All

2. From the **Home** tab, click **FORMAT** from the *Cells* group.
3. In the *Protection* section, select **Lock Cell**.

NOTE: If the icon is highlighted, the cells are locked. Lock Cell is selected by default for all cells, so clicking it deselects it, unlocking the selected cells.

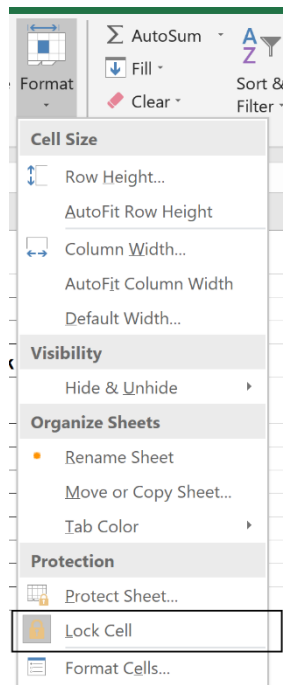


Figure 2 Lock Cell command

4. Now, select all the cell(s) to be locked. Repeat step 3.
5. The last step below lock cells will work is to protect the worksheet.
6. From the **Home** tab, click **FORMAT** from the *Cells* group. In the *Protection* section, select **Protect Sheet**

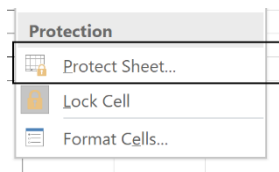


Figure 3 Protect Sheet command

7. The Protect Sheet dialog box open. You can choose a password or simply leave it blank. A password is optional.

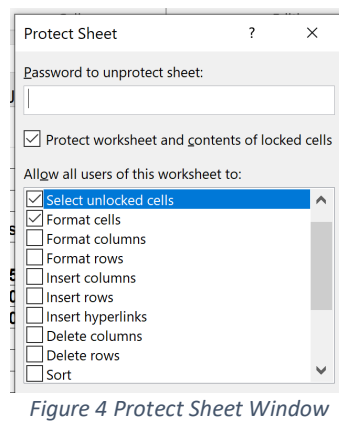


Figure 4 Protect Sheet Window

8. Click OK, and you are done.

In Figure 4, notice that under Allow all users of this worksheet to: That both Select unlocked cells and Format cells are selected.

Users will be able to do both or anything that you place a check next to. You might want to Prevent Locked Cells from Being Selected.

Turning off the Select locked cells option prevents the locked cells from being selected with either the mouse or keyboard. This means users will only be able to select the unlocked cells that they need to edit. They can quickly hit the Tab, Enter, or arrow keys to move to the next editable cell.

To make this change, you just uncheck the option that says "Select locked cells" on the Protect Sheet window.

Unlocking Cells

In order to unlock cells, sheet protection must first be turned off.

1. Unprotect the worksheet
2. Select the cells you want to unlock
3. From the Home tab - Cells group, click FORMAT. In the Protection section, deselect Lock.

Worksheet Level Protection

From the **Home** tab, select **FORMAT** from the *Cells* group.

In the *Protection* section, select **Protect Sheet...**The *Protect Sheet* dialog box appears.

In the *Protect Sheet* dialog box, select the appropriate options:

- **Protect worksheet and contents of locked cells** - Prevents changes to locked cells.
- **Password to unprotect sheet** - Allows only those who know the assigned password to unprotect the worksheet.
- **Allow all users of this worksheet to** - Checked boxes are aspects that any user can access.

Click **OK**. The worksheet is protected.

Unprotecting the Worksheet

1. From the **Home** tab, select **FORMAT** from the *Cells* group
2. In the *Protection* section, select **Unprotect Sheet...**The worksheet is unprotected. Users can now modify the worksheet.

NOTE: If you included a password when you turned the protection on, you must type the password in the *Password* text box to turn the protection off.

Workbook Level Protection

You can prevent a workbook from having its structure and windows modified or resized by another user.

Protecting the Workbook

1. From the **Review** tab, click **PROTECT WORKBOOK** from the *Changes* group, then select *Protect Structure and Windows*. The *Protect Workbook* dialog box appears.
2. Select the appropriate option(s):
 - **Structure** - Prevents the user from changing the order of the sheets within a workbook. This includes adding or deleting worksheets.
 - **Windows** - Prevents the user from being able to resize or move the window.
3. Click **OK**. The workbook is protected.

Unprotecting the Workbook

From the **Review** tab, click **PROTECT WORKBOOK** from the *Changes* group. The workbook is unprotected. Users can now modify the structure and windows of the workbook.

NOTE: If you included a password when you turned the protection on, you must enter the password to turn the protection off.

Password Protect the Entire Workbook

You can also password protect the entire workbook.

To do this, click on **File**, then **Save As**. When the file-save window appears, type in your file name, then select the **Tools** drop down menu. From that menu, select **General Options**.

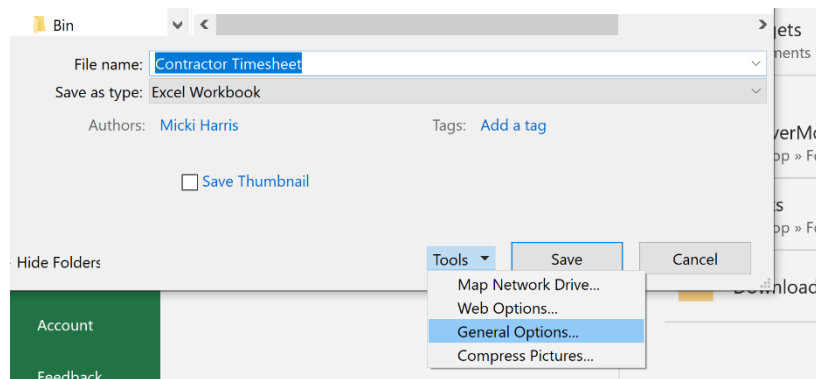


Figure 5 Tools - General Options

You have the option to enter a password to open the workbook and to modify. However, you can leave the Password to modify blank.

This will prevent anyone else from opening the workbook unless they have the password.

Note: There is no easy way to retrieve a lost Excel password, so make this one something that you will not forget.

Now, whenever you want to open that file, you will first see a screen like the one below (Figure 6), asking for your password.

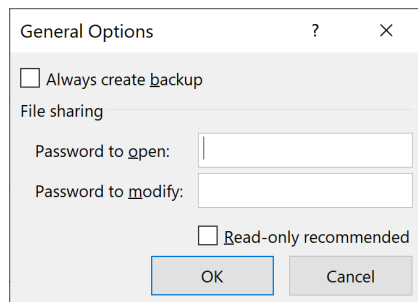


Figure 6 General Options window

Conclusion

By locking your cells and protecting your sheet, you can keep your hard work safe from tinkering by other users, and prevent mistakes. Or you having to re-do the entire spreadsheet.

Thank you for downloading and reading this training material. This training material is part of my “Filling in the Gaps Series.”

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Microsoft Office handouts on various topics -

forevermoretraining.com/resources

Training articles - forevermoretraining.com/blog

Training videos – youtube.com/c/forevermoretraining

- Micki Harris



Self-learning a topic is often like building a brick wall. You have a basic foundation. But as you start piling on more bricks, you find the wall is full of gaps.