Folder Locker/Unlocker™ (Demo Version)

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What does it do?

Folder Locker/Unlocker allows you to password protect folders on your disk. Once protected, the contents of a folder cannot be examined, deleted, replaced, etc. unless the folder has been unlocked using the password. This provides confidentiality for private documents and security for documents on a Macintosh™ system used by multiple persons or a system located in a common area. Each folder can have a different password.

How do I install it?

Make a copy of **Demo Folder Unlocker**. Install the copy of **Demo Folder Unlocker** by dragging it into your System Folder. If you want to configure Demo Folder Unlocker, you should run **Configure Folder Unlocker**. Do not configure your original copy of Demo Folder Unlocker in case you change your mind and wish to configure it differently at a later time.

You can configure two things:

  1) the key used to indicate that you want to specify the password and unlock a folder,

  2) whether you want to let a disk backup utility access locked folders so that the contents can be backed up without remembering to unlock the folders.

You can choose Option, Command, or Control (if your keyboard has it) as the key to indicate that you want to unlock a locked folder. The Command key is the default key unless you have a keyboard with Control in which case it is the default. If you use Option, you should be aware that Option sometimes means special things to the Finder™ with respect to folders and windows (for example, Option down and click in a window close box will close all open windows). This is not a real problem but it can be an annoyance.

Since no program can access the contents of a protected folder, this means that documents in such folders will not get backed up when you do a disk backup. Since such documents are presumably important, you need to consider your choices. For maximum security, you can just manually unlock all locked folders and then perform your disk backup. If you are a little less concerned about security you can specify the name of your disk backup program. It will then be permitted access to the contents of locked folders even though they have not been unlocked. This is slightly less secure because after the contents of a locked folder have been written to a backup device (usually a floppy) they become accessible on the backup device. However, you must weigh this risk against forgetting to backup the contents of a locked folder and maybe losing everything in a crash one day.

If you decide to permit access to a disk backup program, click the check box in the installer, locate your Disk Backup program using the standard file selection dialog, and double click on its name. The name will then be recorded in the Configure dialog.

After you are satisfied with your configuration choices, click the Configure button. The standard file selection dialog will appear. Use it to locate the copy of Demo Folder Unlocker in your System Folder. Double clicking Demo Folder Unlocker will result in it being configured as you have specified. If you have Vaccine™ installed, you will need to grant permission to change the INIT in the System Folder.

After you complete configuration you should restart your system to activate the options that you selected and to activate Folder Unlocker's protection.

How do I lock a folder?

Double click **Demo Folder Locker** to run it. You will see the standard file selection dialog. Using it, locate the folder that you want to lock. Do **not** double click the folder name — doing so will only open the folder. Instead, single click the folder name to select it and then click the **Select** button. Demo Folder Locker will then search for the folder which may take several seconds on a large hard disk with many folders. After it locates the folder, you will be prompted to enter a password for the folder. Passwords can be one to eight characters long and they are case sensitive, e.g., password "abc" is different from password "ABC". Enter your chosen password and click OK. You must then re-enter the password you have chosen to be sure that 1) you remember it and 2) you have typed it correctly. The folder is now locked using your chosen password. **Don't forget your password.** You will need it to open the folder later. If you're memory is bad, write the password down somewhere safe.

If the folder you select was previously locked, you will be prompted to enter the old password. After entering the old password, you can choose to remove password protection, enter a new password, or cancel. Removing the password eliminates password protection on the folder following the next system restart.

How do I unlock a folder?

Let's say that you are using Command as your key to indicate folder unlocking. To unlock a locked folder from the Finder, double click the locked folder while holding down the Command key. You will see a dialog box requesting your password. Enter it and press OK. Note that your password is not displayed on entry (only apple characters). This ensures privacy if someone else is looking on (the demo version does not hide the password as it is typed in). If you enter your password correctly, the folder will open and display the contents. The folder is now unlocked and will remain unlocked until you either relock it or restart your system.

If you entered the wrong password or clicked Cancel, the folder will open but it will appear empty. A locked folder also appears empty if you double click it without holding down the "unlocking" key.

If you are using the standard file dialog (what you see when you choose Open... in an application), the same method is used. Hold down the "unlocking" key, double click on the folder name, and enter the password when prompted.

How do I relock a folder?

Make sure the folder is closed. Then hold down the "unlocking" key and double click the folder. It will open and appear empty. This completes the relocking. If you wish to unlock it again, do as previously described.

Note: You can only relock a folder by restarting your system when using the demo version.

Usage Notes

A locked folder can be used as a "drop folder". You can place documents into it without unlocking it first. If you put a document into a locked folder and then open it you will still be able to remove that document. This gives you a chance to retrieve the document if you put it in the wrong place. If you leave it there and close the folder you will have to unlock it in order to retrieve the document. If you move a document into an open window of a currently locked folder and close the window, the document will be locked away and inaccessible when you reopen the window. When used as a drop folder, the Finder places the dropped documents at odd locations in the window. This should be no problem but you might have to scroll the window to find them.

Locked folders cannot be renamed or deleted (dragged to Trash Can), even if unlocked using the password. If you want to rename a locked folder or permanently dispose of it, use Demo Folder Locker to remove the password. Locked folders can be moved into or out of other folders in order to rearrange your folders.

If you remove the password from a folder you will be unable to see its contents or delete it until after you restart your system. To avoid this, unlock the folder before removing the password.

You can keep applications in a locked folder. This is handy if you want to keep an old and new version of the same application but you only want the Finder to know about one of them. A document cannot start an application residing in a currently locked folder. In fact, if you try, the Finder will decide the application does not exist and remove the information about where it thought the application was (in the locked folder). In order to make the application "document-startable" again you must "show" the Finder the location of the application. Do so by dragging the application from the locked folder (after unlocking it) to another folder and then drag it back. If you unlock the folder before opening a document that uses the application, you won't have this problem.

If you should happen to remove Demo Folder Unlocker from your System Folder or deactivate it using an INIT manager (or the Shift key during system startup), all locked folders will appear grayed out (in the demo version the locked folder will become unlocked). If you try to open a grayed out folder, the Finder will tell you that you don't have access privileges. This ensures that your documents are secure even if someone disables Folder Unlocker or bypasses it by booting from a floppy disk. You will need to restore Folder Unlocker in order to actually use your password and open one of the locked folders.

If you sit around with your finger on the "unlocking" key you may sometimes be surprised by a request to supply the password to unlock a folder. This is because the application that is currently running has (for some reason of its own) attempted to look into a locked folder. This may happen when a program is searching for one of its files or some related activity. Simply click the Cancel button and it will proceed merrily on its way just as if you had not been holding the key down.

Cautions and Caveats

Demo Folder Locker/Unlocker should not be used with AppleShare or any other file server application which provides its own folder protection mechanism.

Demo Folder Locker/Unlocker has been successfully tested with Apple Systems 6.0 through 6.0.2. It is known not to work with System 5.0 and previous.

Demo Folder Locker/Unlocker may or may not work well with alternative Finder-like programs such as Disktop™, PowerStation™ and others. At least with DiskTop, it does not work well because DiskTop attempts to open each folder immediately in order to determine the number of files/folders it contains. Once it finds that a locked folder contains no files, the "unlocking" key is no longer effective. You make it work with Disktop if you hold down the "unlocking" key prior to opening the directory level containing your locked folder. If you do this, you will be prompted for the password and can unlock the folder.

No protection system is foolproof. Any protection system can be defeated by someone with enough smarts, determination and time. This one is no different. We make no claims that it cannot be defeated but it should provide very reasonable security for most users in a very convenient manner.

If you forget your password, you are out of luck. We don't know it. We can't assist you in opening a locked folder by phone (for all we know you might be a crook).

Limitations in the demonstration version

The demonstration version is limited in the following ways:
1) You can have only one locked folder.
2) The folder can only be relocked by restarting your system.
3) The passwords file (in the System Folder) is visible.
4) Passwords in the file are not encrypted so they can easily be read.
5) If your machine is started from a floppy disk using a different System (one not containing Demo Folder Unlocker), your locked folder will no longer be locked. The contents become immediately accessible. The same is true if someone removes Demo Folder Unlocker from your System Folder and restarts your system. You cannot make Demo Folder Unlocker invisible because Apple System Software will not run INIT's whose invisible bit is set (probably a good idea in these days of viruses).
6) Password entry is not obscured so people can see your password as you enter it.
7) Removing the password from one folder and putting it on another can be done but the second folder will not become locked until after a system restart.
8) The locked folder can be deleted, while locked, provided it is empty.

These limitations will still give you a chance to experience most of the functionality of Folder Unlocker (but without all of the security).   None of these limitations apply in the full version.

How do I get the full version?

The full version of Folder Locker/Unlocker is available for $20 (US funds) from

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California residents add 6% sales tax for a total of $21.20.

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