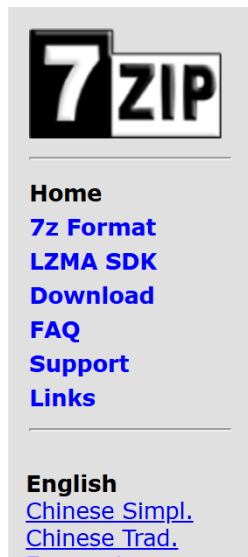


# **Password protection of documents and folders in Windows 11**

In order to password protect the contents of folders in Windows 11 it is necessary to install third-party software. The program we will use for this presentation is called 7-Zip and can be downloaded from <https://www.7-zip.org>. This is freeware and is safe to install without bringing any malware with it.

The top left of the 7-zip home page looks like this:



## 7-Zip

**7-Zip** is a file archiver with a high compression ratio.

**Download 7-Zip 25.00 (2025-07-05) for Windows x64 (64-bit):**

| Link                     | Type | Windows    | Size   |
|--------------------------|------|------------|--------|
| <a href="#">Download</a> | .exe | 64-bit x64 | 1.6 MB |

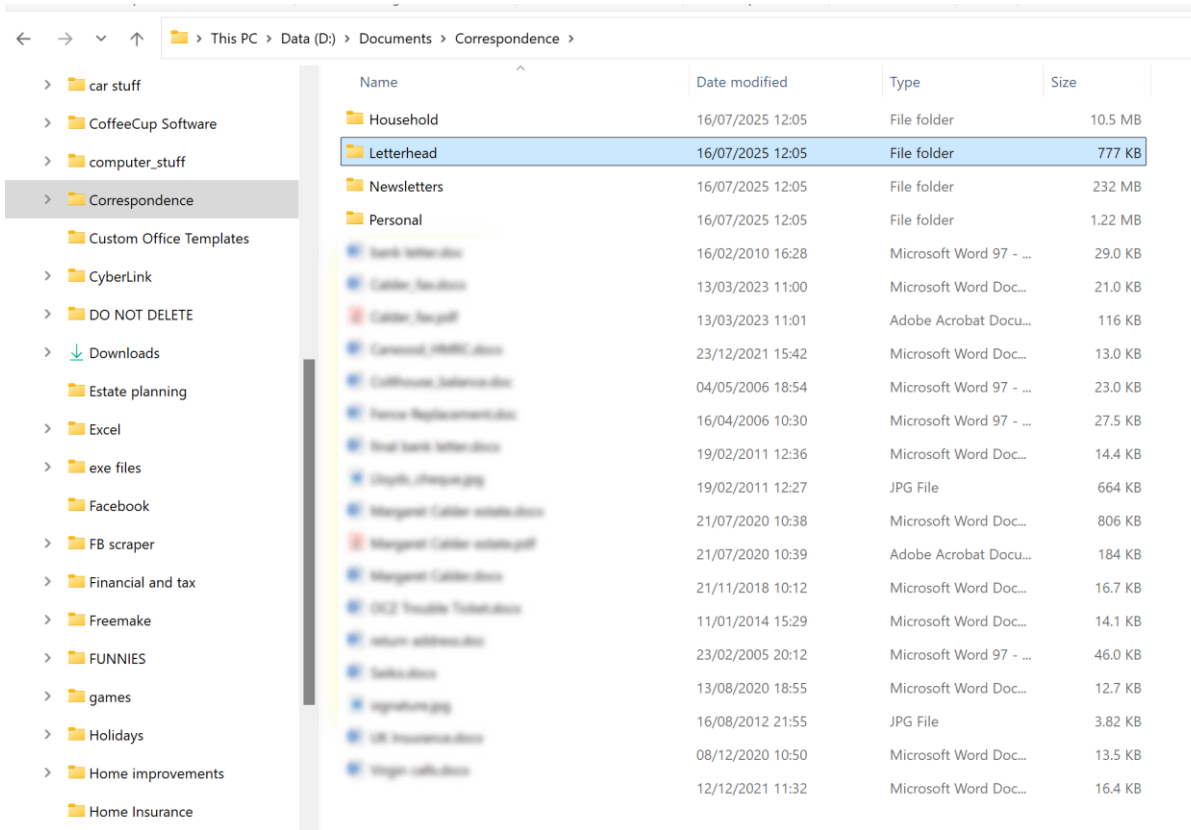
**Download 7-Zip 25.00 for another Windows platforms (32-bit x86 or ARM64):**

| Link                     | Type | Windows      | Size   |
|--------------------------|------|--------------|--------|
| <a href="#">Download</a> | .exe | 32-bit x86   | 1.3 MB |
| <a href="#">Download</a> | .exe | 64-bit ARM64 | 1.5 MB |

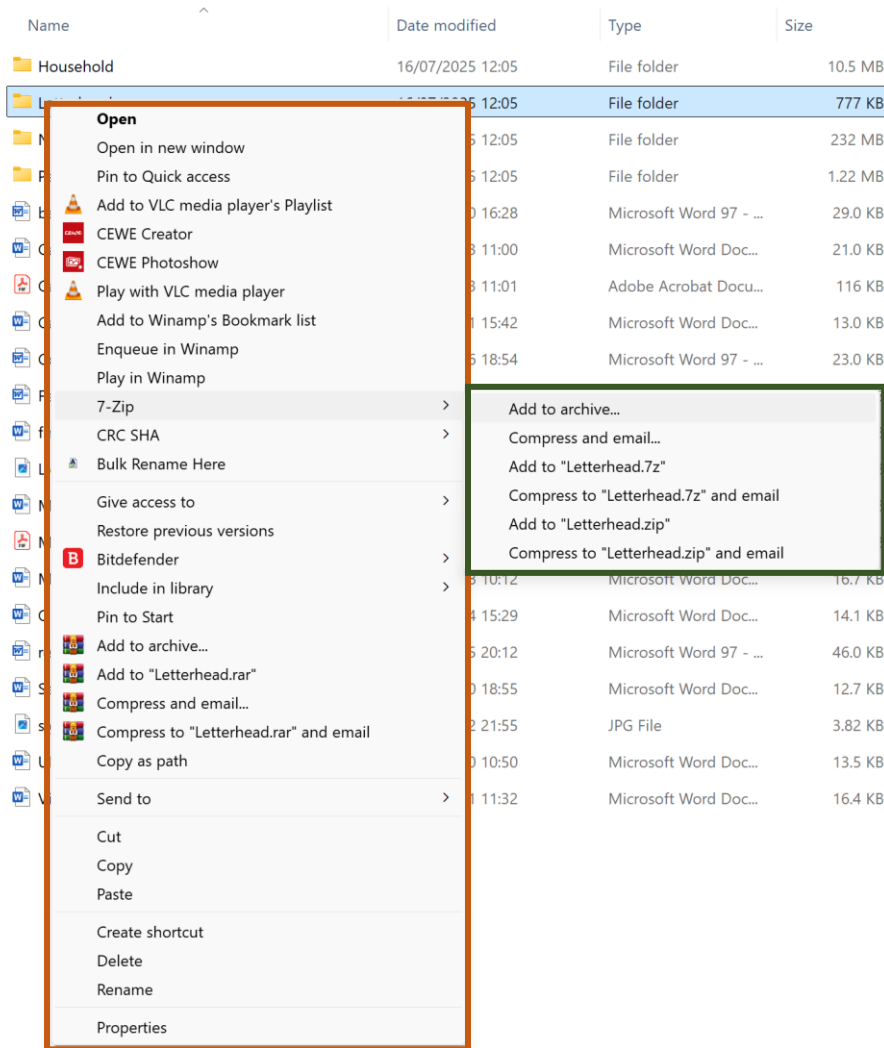
The best download link is this one.

Once you have run the installer (.exe file) it is a good idea to restart your PC to ensure the program integrates itself into right-click options.

To password-protect the contents of a folder, navigate to the level above in File Explorer so that the folder is visible in the right-hand pane.



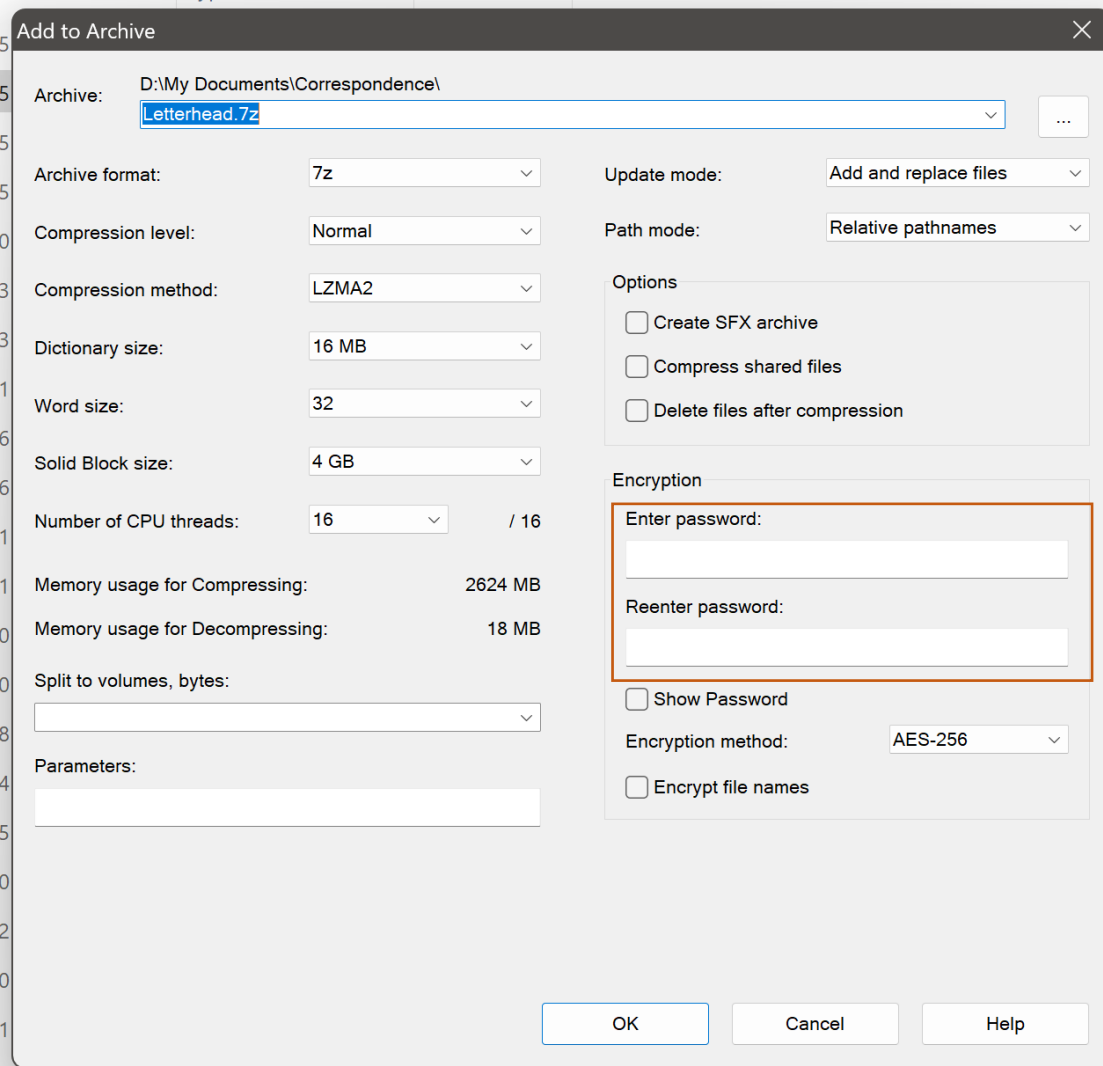
For the purposes of this exercise we are going to password-protect the contents of the “Letterhead” folder, a sub-folder of the “Correspondence” folder, as shown on the left.



If we now right-click the “Letterheads” folder we should see the secondary window (outlined in orange for clarity), and hovering over “7-Zip” in this window will open the extra window (outlined in green for clarity).

*Note: depending on your PC's settings the "7-Zip" option may not be in the secondary window, in which case you will need to click on "More options" to find it.*

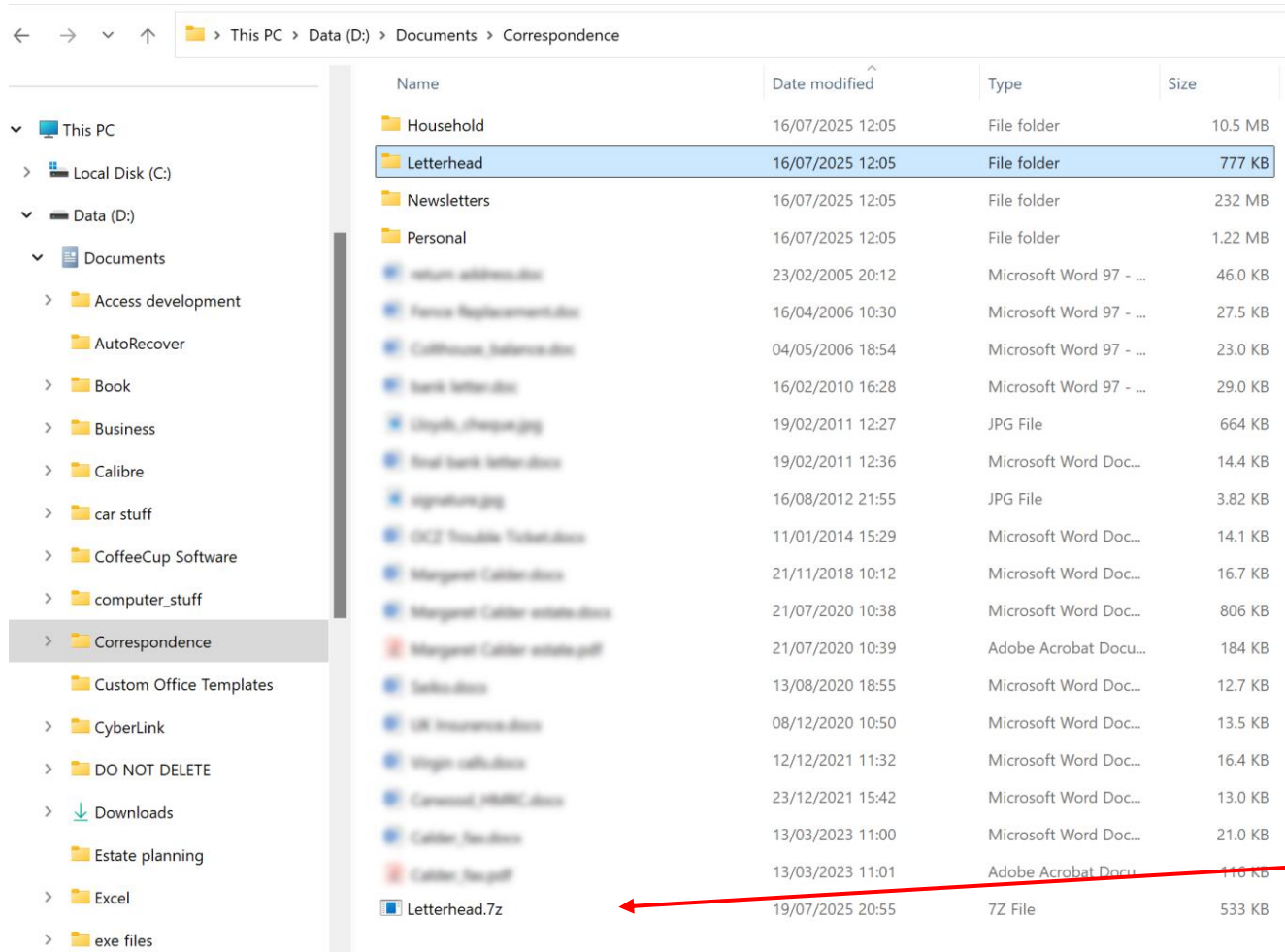
Once you have opened the window showing the options for 7-Zip, click on the top item “Add to archive...”.



The 7-Zip window will now open as shown to the left. At the top is a line showing where the zip file will be created, normally the same folder as the uncompressed folder, and the name it proposes to give the zip file: this can be changed if you want.

Lower on the right is where you can enter a password (twice) to protect the zip file. Any combination of characters will work.

When you are ready **and have made a note of the password**, click “OK”.

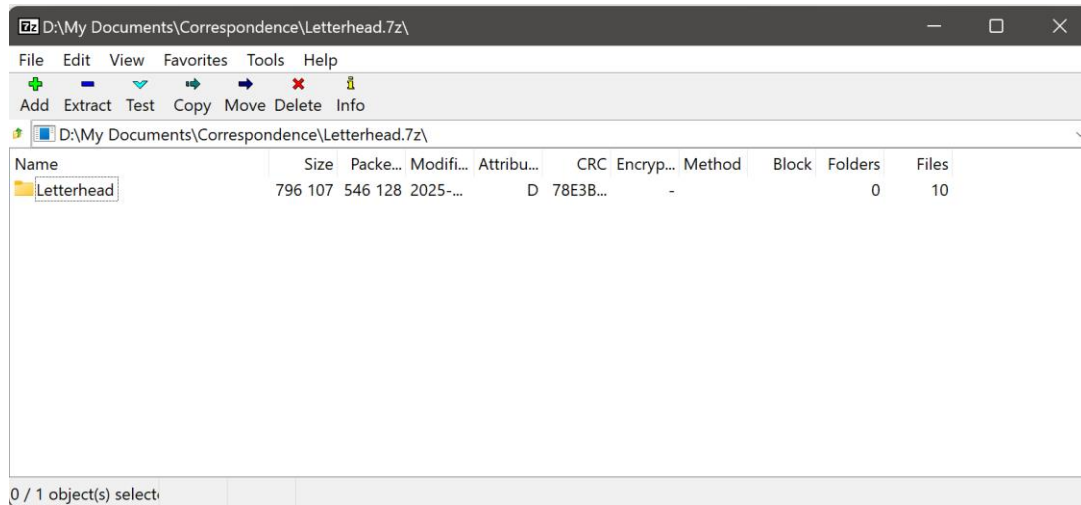


The 7-Zip window will disappear and you should see File Explorer again. Among the files and folders will be the new 7-Zip file containing the password-protected contents of the source folder.

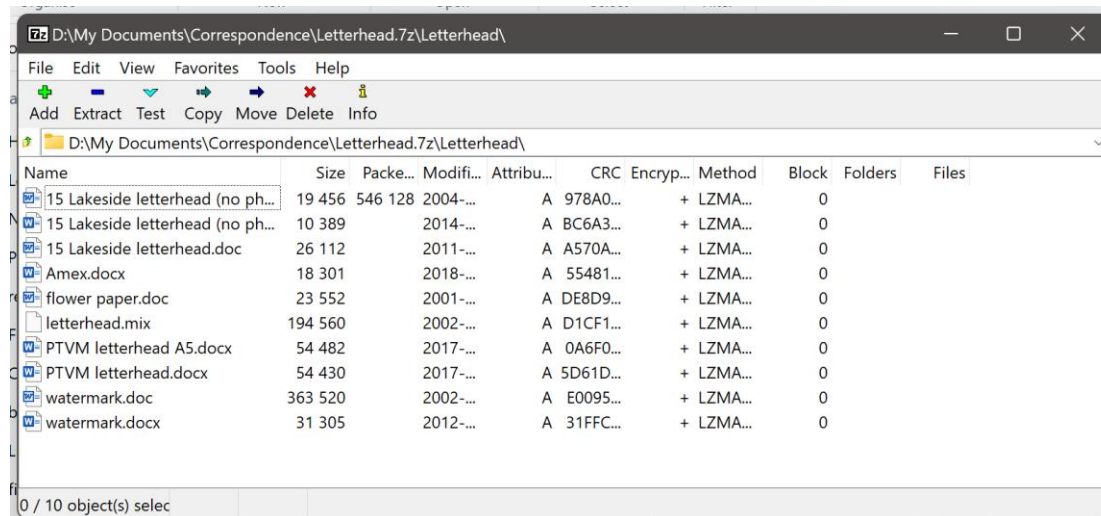
Here you can see the new file with the 7z suffix.

| Name                      | Date modified    | Type                    | Size    |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Household                 | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 10.5 MB |
| <b>Open</b>               | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 777 KB  |
| Edit with Notepad++       | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 232 MB  |
| Add to Favourites         | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 1.22 MB |
| Open with Code            | 23/02/2005 20:12 | Microsoft Word 97 - ... | 46.0 KB |
| Extract All...            |                  |                         |         |
| 7-Zip                     |                  |                         | 27.5 KB |
| CRC SHA                   |                  |                         | 23.0 KB |
| Bulk Rename Here          |                  |                         | 29.0 KB |
| Open with                 |                  |                         | 664 KB  |
| Open with WinRAR          |                  |                         | 14.4 KB |
| Extract files...          |                  |                         | 3.82 KB |
| Extract Here              |                  |                         | 14.1 KB |
| Extract to "Letterhead\"  |                  |                         | 16.7 KB |
| Bitdefender               |                  |                         | 806 KB  |
| Copy as path              |                  |                         | 184 KB  |
| Share                     |                  |                         |         |
| Restore previous versions |                  |                         |         |
| Send to                   |                  |                         |         |
| Cut                       |                  |                         |         |
| Copy                      |                  |                         |         |
| Create shortcut           |                  |                         |         |
| Delete                    |                  |                         |         |
| Rename                    |                  |                         |         |
| Properties                |                  |                         |         |
| Letterhead.7z             | 19/07/2025 20:55 | 7Z File                 | 533 KB  |

If you now right-click the 7z file you will see the secondary windows here. You should click on the top entry in the smaller 7-Zip menu called "Open archive", not the second option which itself leads to more options.

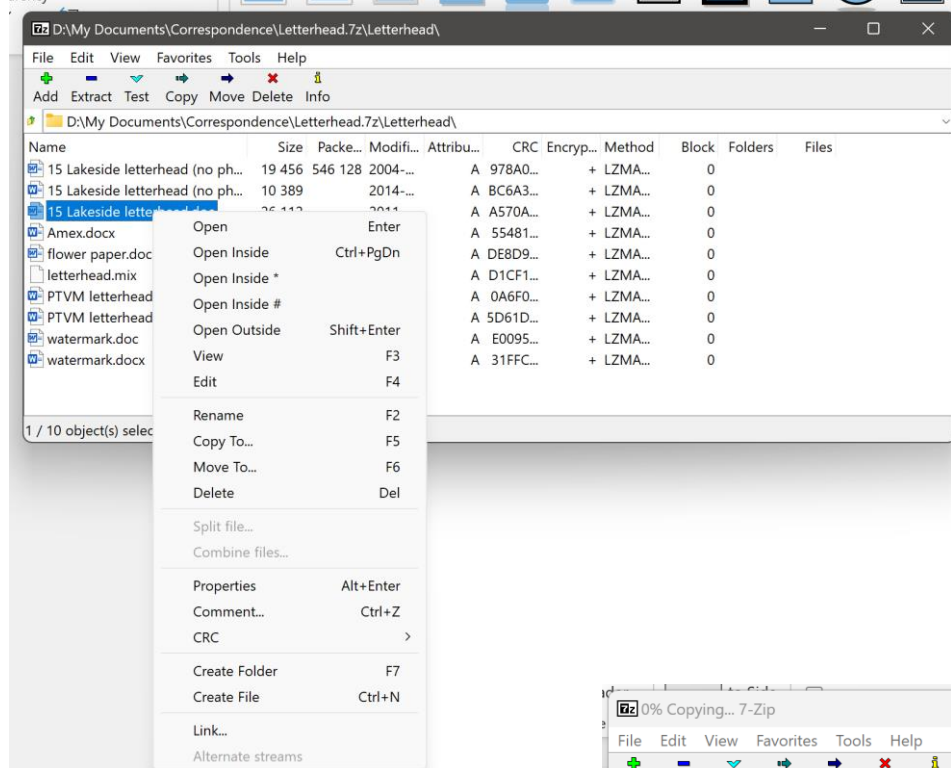


The 7-Zip window will open showing that the newly-created 7z file contains a folder with the same name as the source folder.



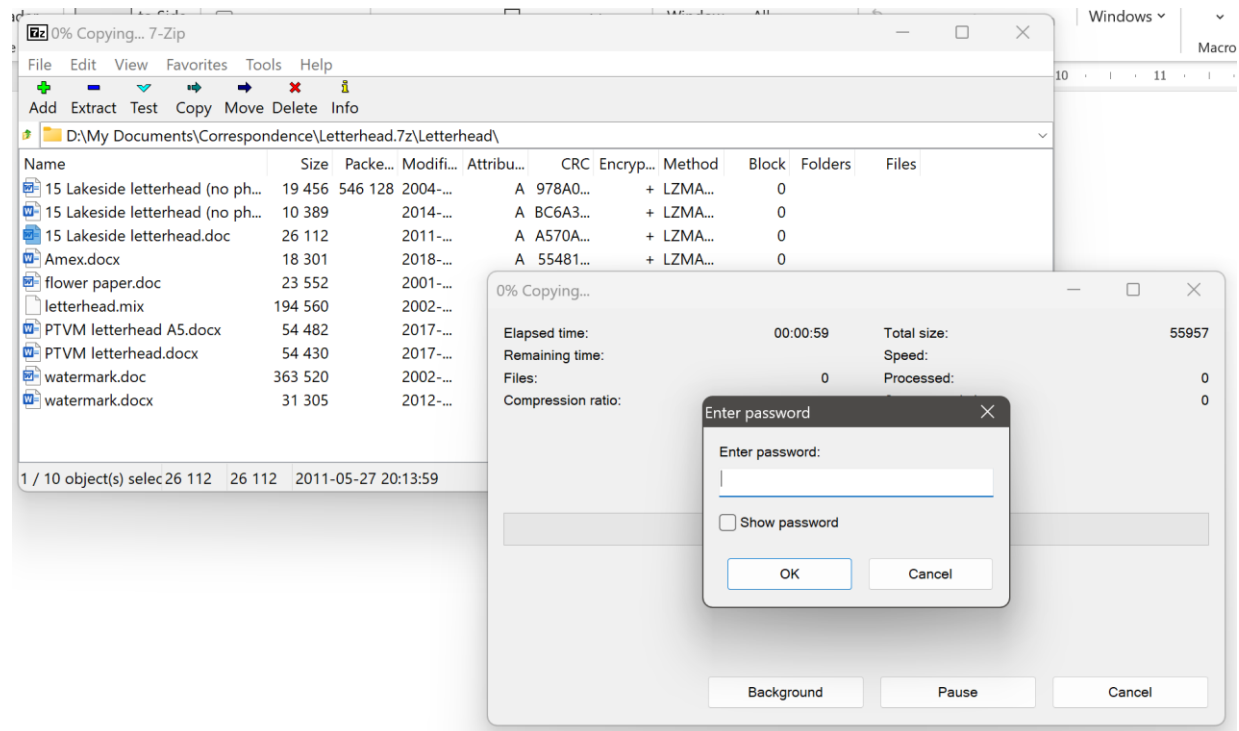
Double-clicking the folder will open it to show that it contains all the same files as the source folder.

On the next slide we will see how to open individual files.

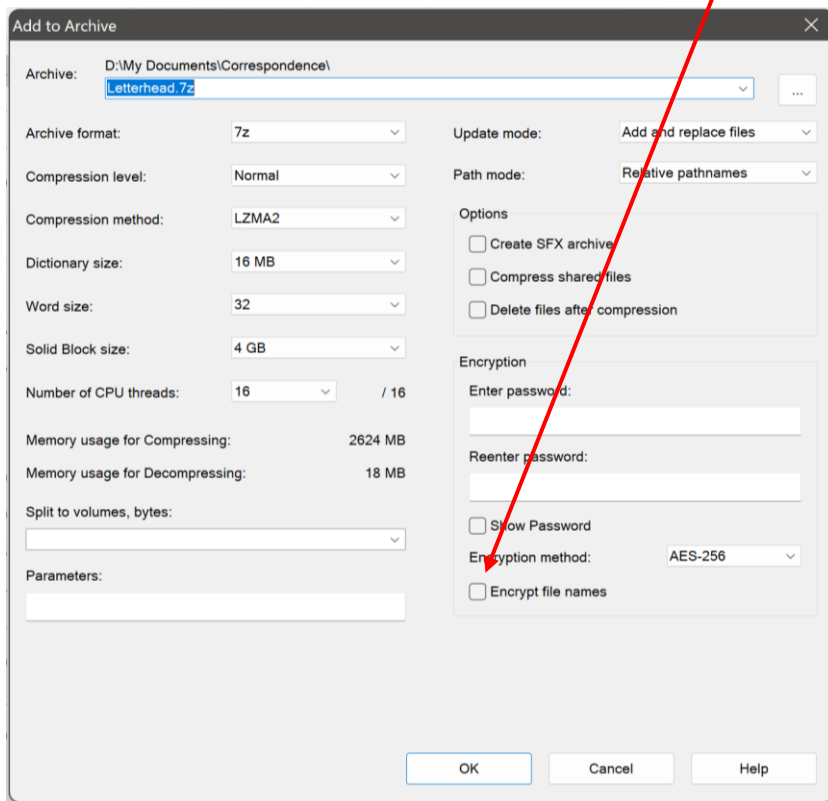


Right-click on any file in the 7-Zip window then click “Open”

The window which opens needs the password to be entered before the requested file is opened. The same applies to every file.

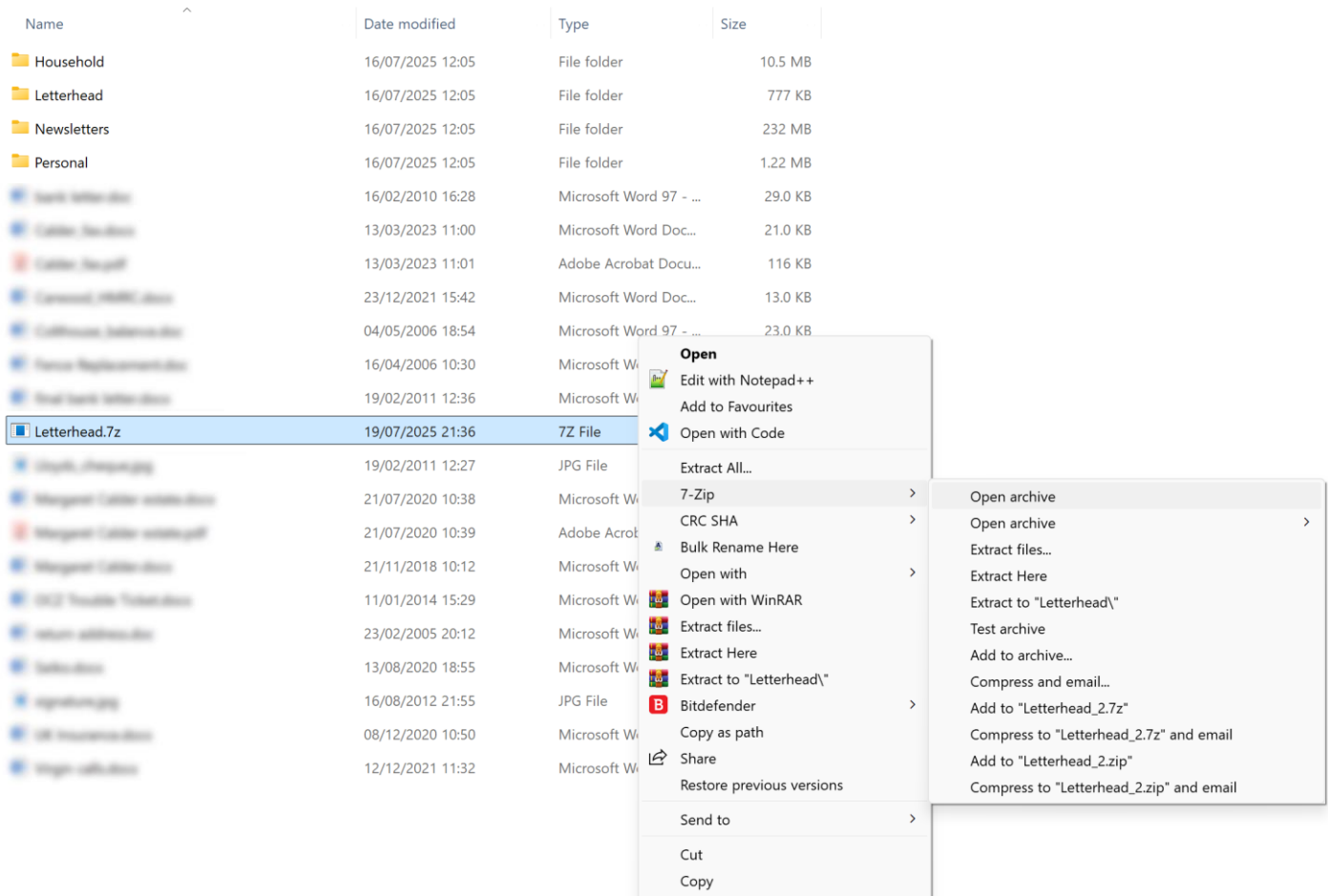


The more observant amongst you may have spotted a tick box on the original 7-Zip window called “Encrypt file names”.



When we covered this topic in the session, I said that this changed the file names but I have since discovered that I was wrong. Ticking this box in fact applies the password protection to the whole 7-Zip file rather than the individual files contained within it, so is probably a much more convenient option in most cases.

When you enable encryption of file names, the 7z file is created in the same way and stored in the same location. To open it, right-click then select 7-Zip and “Open archive”.



| Name                       | Date modified    | Type                    | Size    |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Household                  | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 10.5 MB |
| Letterhead                 | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 777 KB  |
| Newsletters                | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 232 MB  |
| Personal                   | 16/07/2025 12:05 | File folder             | 1.22 MB |
| bank letter.doc            | 16/02/2010 16:28 |                         |         |
| Calder, New.doc            | 13/03/2023 11:00 |                         |         |
| Calder, New.pdf            | 13/03/2023 11:01 |                         |         |
| Carwood, MHC.doc           | 23/12/2021 15:42 |                         |         |
| Colthouse, Sallina.doc     | 04/05/2006 18:54 |                         |         |
| Fence Replacement.doc      | 16/04/2006 10:30 |                         |         |
| Real bank letter.doc       | 19/02/2011 12:36 |                         |         |
| Letterhead.7z              | 19/07/2025 21:36 |                         |         |
| Ulysses, J.Peng.pdf        | 19/02/2011 12:27 |                         |         |
| Margaret Calder estate.doc | 21/07/2020 10:38 |                         |         |
| Margaret Calder estate.pdf | 21/07/2020 10:39 |                         |         |
| Margaret Calder.doc        | 21/11/2018 10:12 |                         |         |
| OKZ Trouble Ticket.doc     | 11/01/2014 15:29 |                         |         |
| return address.doc         | 23/02/2005 20:12 | Microsoft Word 97 - ... | 46.0 KB |
| Sallina.doc                | 13/08/2020 18:55 | Microsoft Word Doc...   | 12.7 KB |
| signature.jpg              | 16/08/2012 21:55 | JPG File                | 3.82 KB |
| UK Insurance.doc           | 08/12/2020 10:50 | Microsoft Word Doc...   | 13.5 KB |
| Virgin call.doc            | 12/12/2021 11:32 | Microsoft Word Doc...   | 16.4 KB |

0% Opening...

Elapsed time: 00:00:32      Total size: 533 K

Remaining time:      Speed:     

Files: 0      Processed: 0

Compression ratio:     

Enter password

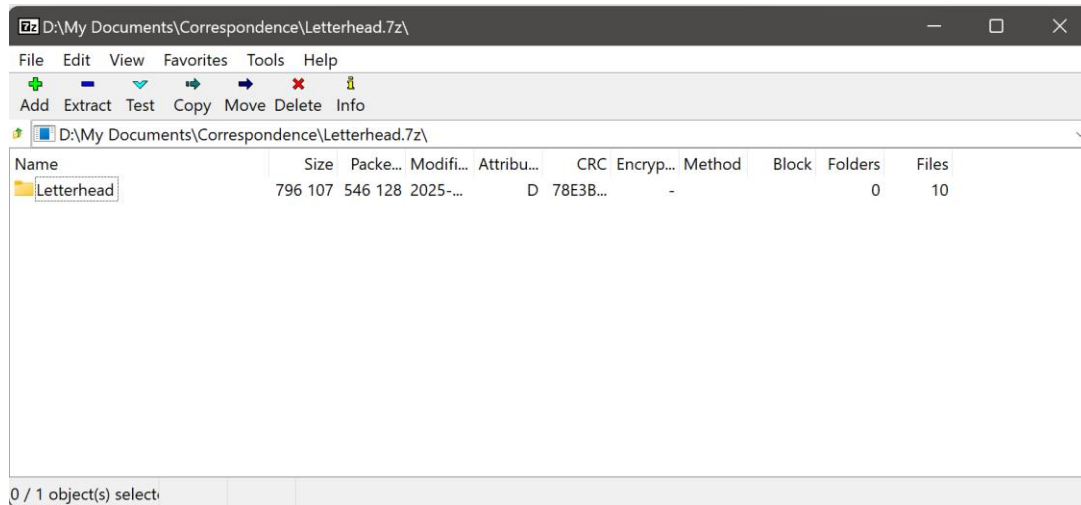
Enter password:

☐ Show password

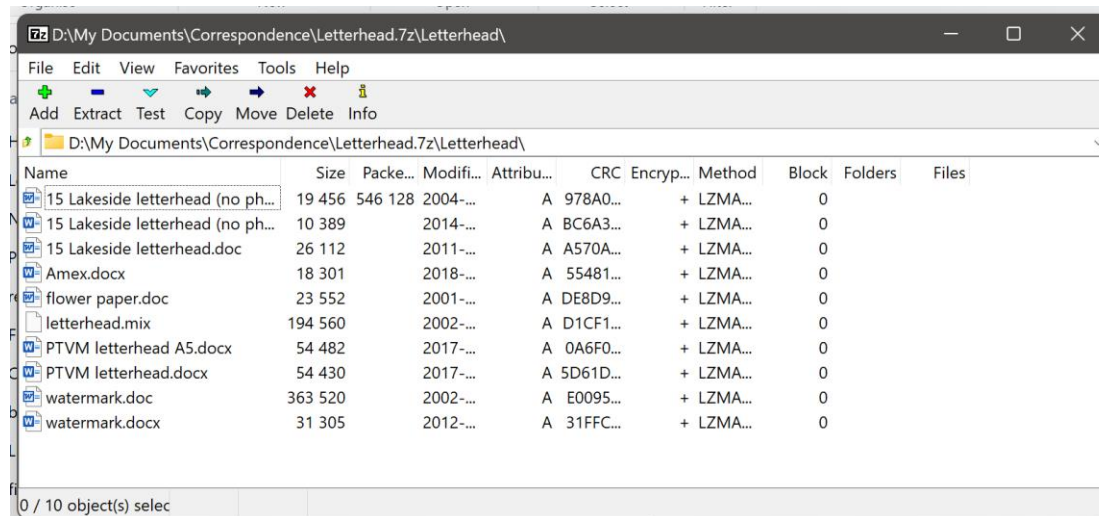
OK Cancel

Background Pause Cancel

The password screen will appear immediately, and the file cannot be opened without it.



As before, once the password is entered correctly the 7-Zip window will open showing that the newly-created 7z file contains a folder with the same name as the source folder.



Double-clicking the folder will open it to show that it contains all the same files as the source folder.

The difference here is that the documents in the protected folder can all be opened without individual passwords.

In addition to avoiding the hassle of having to enter a password to open every document in the folder, there is another advantage to this method in that file names (which can often reveal information in themselves) are also hidden.

So why would we want to password protect files or folders anyway? The most common situations are:

- ❖ To email confidential documents to someone and send the password separately, either in a separate email or (even more securely) by a different medium such as letter or text.
- ❖ To hide confidential documents from anyone who may have access to your computer. For this to be effective it is necessary to delete the source folder after creating the 7-Zip file.
- ❖ If this second reason is why you want to encrypt your documents, then **you need to be certain that you will not lose the password or the documents may be inaccessible forever.**

If you only have a couple of documents you want to password-protect, then bear in mind that most files created by Microsoft Office (Word docx documents, Excel xlsx spreadsheets and PowerPoint pptx presentations) can be individually protected by passwords.

To do this, navigate to File/Info/Protect (document, presentation or workbook) and then select “Encrypt with password”.

Whichever method you choose to use for encrypting your data, you **must** ensure that you do not lose or forget the password(s) otherwise you will lose access to the data. While there are companies which claim to be able to “crack” password protection:

- There is no guarantee of success.
- The process can be **very** expensive.
- You have no control over what the company does with your data.

**THE END**