Redacting content in a PDF document

You can easily redact confidential or privileged information in a PDF file to protect it from public view.

1. Change Documents preferences to protect yourself.

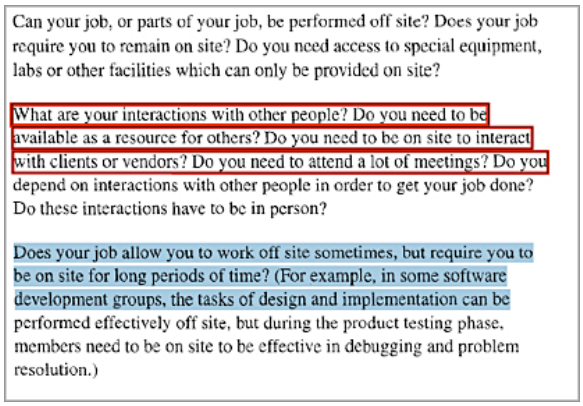
Before you redact anything, change the preferences in Adobe® Acrobat® to ensure that your original file is preserved when you make redactions. Choose Edit > Preferences (Windows) or Acrobat > Preferences (Mac OS), and select Documents on the left. Then, in the Redaction area, select Adjust Filename When Saving Applied Redaction Marks. Click OK. Now, when you save redaction marks, Acrobat will save a copy of the PDF file, preserving your original.

Tip: By default, Acrobat adds "_Redacted" to the filename of a PDF file with redactions. You can change the prefix or suffix of the saved copy in the Preferences dialog box.

2. View the redaction tools in the Protection pane.

Choose Tools > Protection. The Redaction tools are displayed under the heading Black Out & Remove Content. These tools will help you to mark and apply redactions, customize redaction colors and the properties of overlay text, and search for items to redact.

Click Mark For Redaction in the Protection panel. Click OK to close the informational dialog box that appears. Then, drag to highlight the text, image, or area of the page you want to redact.


Can your job, or parts of your job, be performed off site? Does your job require you to remain on site? Do you need access to special equipment, labs or other facilities which can only be provided on site?

What are your interactions with other people? Do you need to be available as a resource for others? Do you need to be on site to interact with clients or vendors? Do you need to attend a lot of meetings? Do you depend on interactions with other people in order to get your job done? Do these interactions have to be in person?

Does your job allow you to work off site sometimes, but require you to be on site for long periods of time? (For example, in some software development groups, the tasks of design and implementation can be performed effectively off site, but during the product testing phase, members need to be on site to be effective in debugging and problem resolution.)

Highlight the text you want to redact.

When you click outside the area, a black patch appears where the selected content was. The area has been marked for redaction, but the redaction isn't permanent until you save the document.

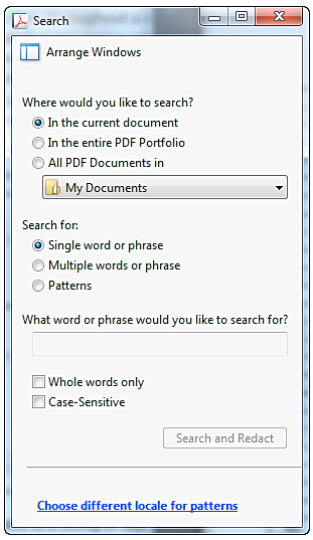
Tip: You can add a note that describes the redacted content or explains the reason for redaction. Double-click on the redacted area to open a blank sticky note.

3. Redact entire pages, if appropriate.

To redact an entire page or a set of pages, click Mark Pages to Redact in the Protection pane, and then choose Mark Page Range. Select the pages you want to redact.

4. Redact the same item throughout a document.

To ensure that you catch every time a name, phone number, or other specific text string appears in the document, search for it. Click Search & Remove Text in the Protection pane. In the Search dialog box, select whether you want to search for a single word or phrase, multiple words or phrases, or patterns, such as social security numbers or phone numbers. Enter the words or phrases, or select a pattern, and then click Search And Redact.



To redact every instance of a string or type of information, use the Search And Redact option.

The Search dialog box lists each location Acrobat found the string you selected. Mark the items you want to redact, and then click Mark Checked Results For Redaction.

5. Apply marked redactions.

When you are sure the marked redactions are correct, click Apply Redactions in the Protection pane, and click OK.

6. Save the redacted file.

Save the document to make the redactions permanent. Because you changed the preferences in step 1, Acrobat automatically saves a copy of the file, leaving your original file untouched.

Next Steps:

- Share the document through email.
- Distribute the document for review.
- Archive the document.

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