



# Redaction Processes for Word and PDF Documents

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**Note:** While redactions can be made in PDFs, the best practice is to remove sensitive content from the source Word document and then generate a new PDF document. If the source Word document is unavailable, use the [Redaction Process for PDF Documents](#).

## Redaction Process for Word Documents

1. Save a copy of the original Word document. Keep the original document as a backup until the redaction process is completed.
2. Turn off **Track Changes** in the copied document.
3. Review the copied Word document for sensitive content. Check all headers and footers, footnotes and endnotes, alt text of images and objects, captions, labels, comments, etc.
4. Delete all sensitive content.
5. Rename the copied Word document to indicate that manual redaction has been completed.
6. Open a new blank Word document.
7. Select and copy all the content from the copied Word document into the new document. (This removes residual document composition information.)
8. In the new document, remove hidden data and personal information using the [Document Inspector](#) in Word.<sup>1</sup>

**Note:** The Document Inspector might also delete the title and author from the document properties and remove the document's template. Re-enter the title and author information and re-apply the template after running the Document Inspector, as needed.

9. Review the new Word document to ensure that all sensitive content has been deleted. (If possible, have someone else do this second review.) Repeat Steps 4 through 9 as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/remove-hidden-data-and-personal-information-by-inspecting-documents-presentations-or-workbooks-356b7b5d-77af-44fe-a07f-9aa4d085966f>

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10. When you have confirmed that all sensitive content has been removed from the new Word document, use Word's **Save As** feature to generate a new PDF.

**Note:** After the redaction process has been completed, archive or discard the original Word document and all interim copies made during the redaction process per your department's retention policies.

## Redaction Process for PDF Documents

1. Save a copy of the original PDF document. Keep the original document as a backup until the redaction process is completed.
2. Review the copied PDF document for sensitive content. Check all headers and footers, footnotes and endnotes, alt text of images and objects, captions, labels, comments, etc.
3. Redact all sensitive content using the appropriate techniques described in Adobe's article, "[Removing Sensitive Content from PDFs](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/removing-sensitive-content-pdfs.html)"<sup>2</sup> (<https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/removing-sensitive-content-pdfs.html>)
4. Review the redacted PDF document to ensure that all sensitive content has been deleted. (If possible, have someone else do this second review.) Repeat Steps 3 and 4 as needed.
5. When the removal of all sensitive content from the redacted PDF document has been confirmed, the redaction process is complete.

**Note:** After the redaction process has been completed, archive or discard the original PDF document and all interim copies made during the redaction process per your department's retention policies.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/removing-sensitive-content-pdfs.html>