

# Using 7-Zip to encrypt files

7-Zip is open source file compression software that gives users the capability to encrypt/password protect files. A batch of sensitive files could be compressed into one archive file. If you share that file with someone else (or if it falls into the wrong hands) only someone you have shared the password with will be able to open the archive.

See <http://www.7-zip.org/download.html>

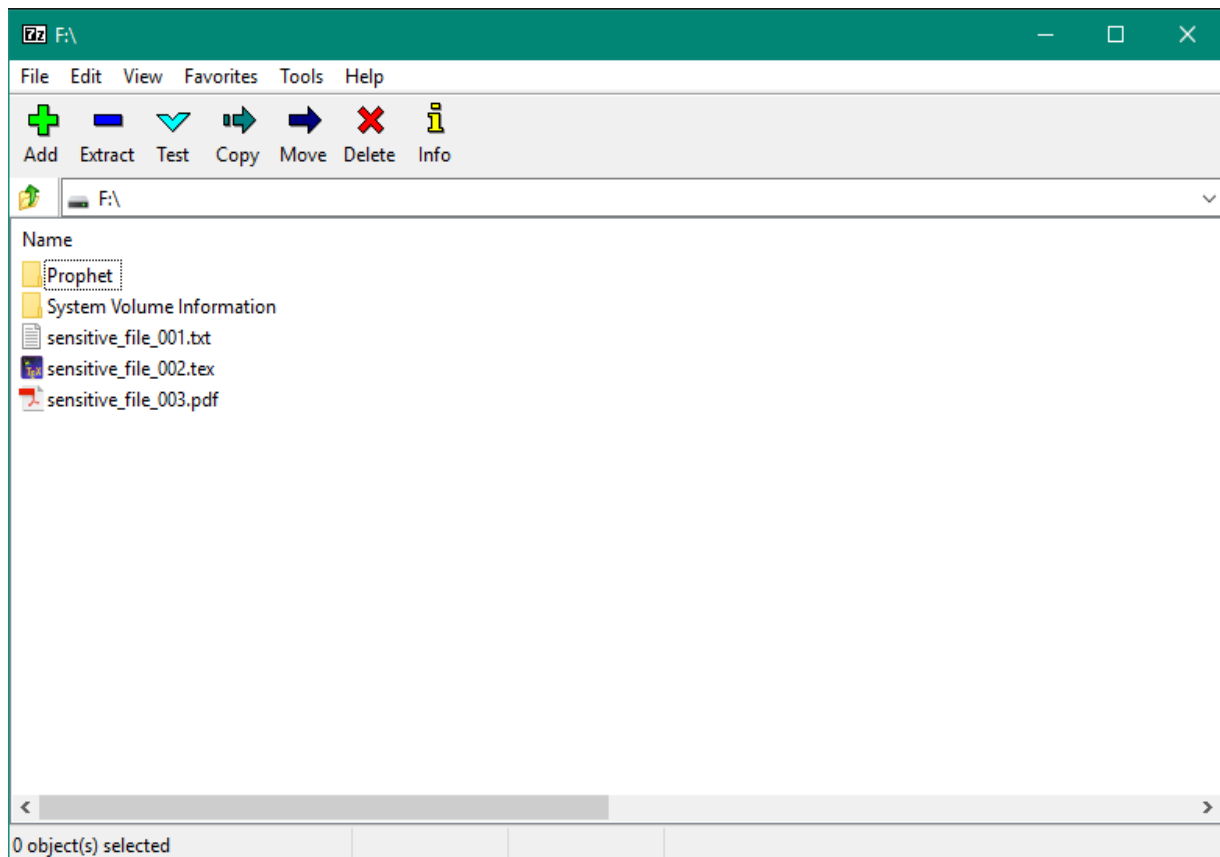


Figure 1 - 7-zip interface

## To compress, encrypt, and password protect files using 7-Zip:

1. Select the relevant file/s
2. Click the **Add** menu option (usually shown with green + symbol)
3. Refer to the screen shot on page 2
4. Decide which Archive file format would be most appropriate:
  - a. If you are confident the recipient has a Windows device **and** will be able to use 7-zip choose the 7z format.
    - i. This will constrain the encryption methods: only **AES-256** will be available.
    - ii. An additional option “Encrypt file names” will be available. This is selected by default and it is suggested that you don't change this.
  - b. If you are not sure what operating system the recipient is using, choose zip format
    - i. This will offer a second encryption method called **ZipCrypto**. Select this method.
  - c. The other two archive formats (tar and wim) are **not** recommended.

There is no need to change any other settings.

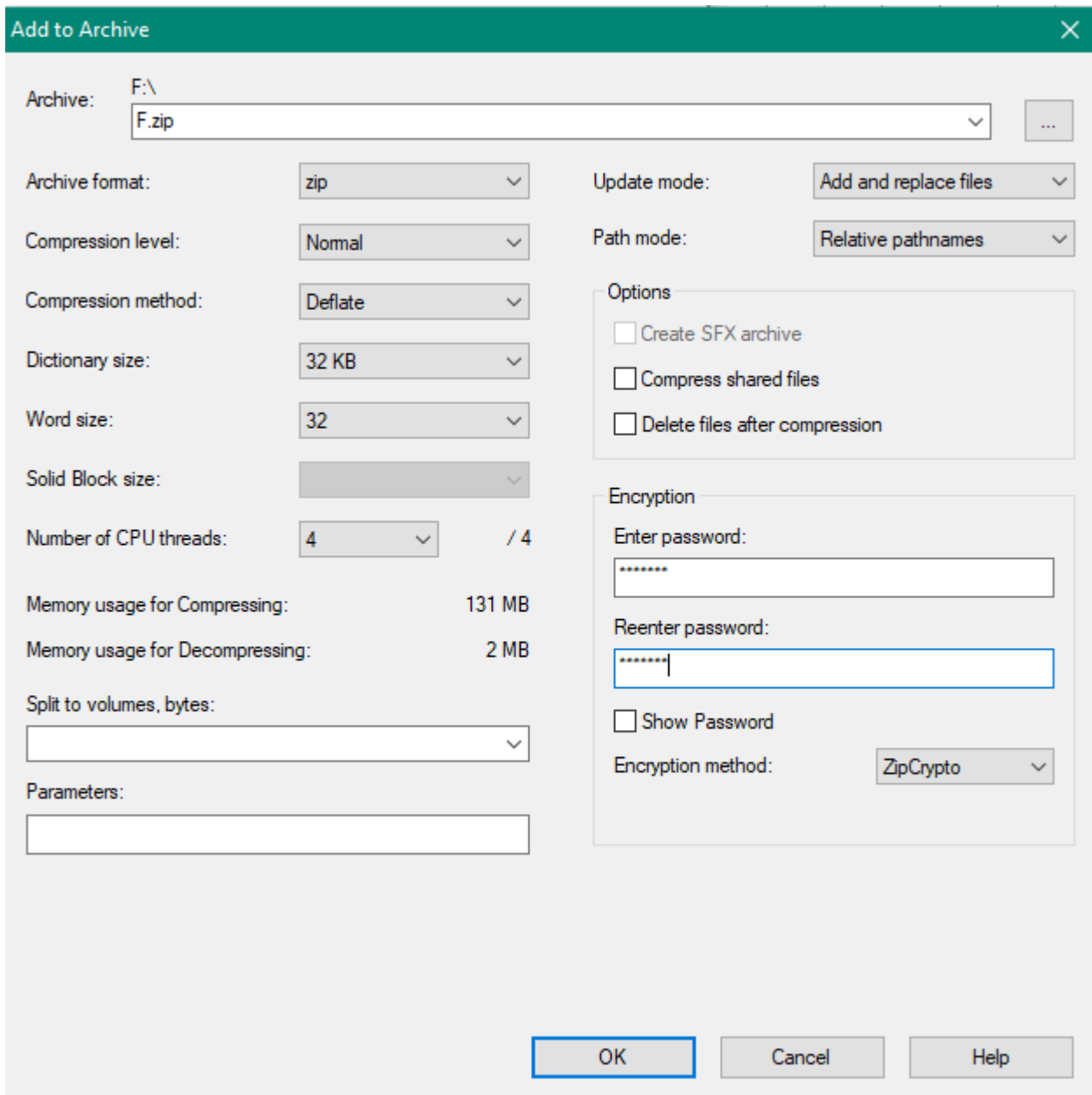


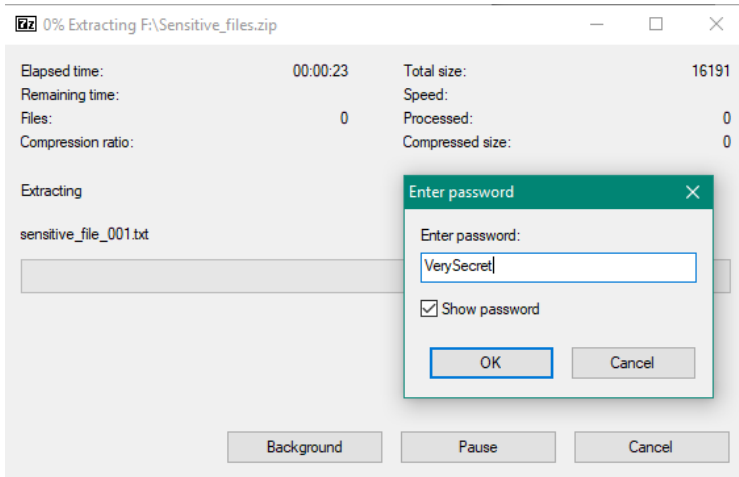
Figure 2 - 7-zip archive options

**If you email encrypted files make quite sure that you send the password in a separate email message or call the person and tell them the password.**

Choose a strong password consisting of a random combination of letters and numbers, including one or more upper-case letters.

Ideally make this 8 or more characters in length.

# Extracting/unzipping files



Here (left) is the interface used within 7-zip.

The password would not ordinarily be visible.

The example password shown here is very weak.

An encrypted archive opened within Windows (not using 7-zip, in other words) would result in dialogues resembling those shown below.

