

External User Access

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Accessing a Shared Document

This guide is for external users who have received a share link to access a document in OfficeDocs. Follow these steps to open the document and complete the email verification process.

Step 1: Click the Share Link

Click the link you received by email, chat, or another communication method.

- The link opens the OfficeDocs access page
- You may be asked to verify your email before the document opens
- This helps confirm that the document is being accessed by the intended recipient

Step 2: Enter Your Email and Full Name

1. Enter your email address and full name in the field provided.
2. Use the same email address the link was intended for.
3. Click **Send Verification Code**.



Secure File Access

Verify your email to access this document

File

New Document.docx

Email

Full Name

Privacy Notice: By verifying, you agree that your name and email will be logged in the document's audit history for accountability purposes. We'll send a verification code to your email.

Send Verification Code

Step 3: Check Your Email

A verification code will be sent to your email address.

- Check your inbox for the verification message
- If you do not see it, check your spam or junk folder
- The email contains a 6-digit verification code

John Summers has shared a document with you:

File

New Document.docx

Access: view and edit

Your verification code:

V H W 2 D Q K 2

Expires in 15 minutes

Step 4: Enter the Code

1. Return to the verification page.
2. Enter the 6-digit code.



Check Your Email

We sent a verification code to

gab***@polarismail.com

Enter the 8-character code from your email

A 3 F 9 K 2 M 8

 Code expires in 15 minutes

Verify Code

Resend Code

2 attempt(s) remaining

[Wrong email? Start over](#)

3. Click **Verify**.
4. The document directly opens in your browser.

Using the Document

View-Only Access

If you have view-only access:

- You can read and move through the document
- You cannot make changes
- You may be allowed to download a copy, depending on the share settings

View and Edit Access

If you have view and edit access:

- You can make changes directly in the document
- Your changes are saved as you work
- Your activity may be associated with your verified email address

Session Duration

Your access session is usually valid for a limited period.

- You may stay signed in for a set amount of time
- If the session expires, you may need to verify your email again
- The share link itself may still work if it has not been revoked or expired

Returning to the Document

1. Use the same share link.
2. If your session is still valid, the document may open directly.
3. If your session has expired, complete the email verification step again.

Troubleshooting

Link doesn't work

- The link may have expired
- The owner may have revoked access
- The document may no longer be shared externally
- Contact the person who shared the document if you still need access

Code not received

- Check your spam folder
- Wait a moment and request a new code if the option is available
- Make sure you entered the correct email address
- Confirm that you are using the email address the link was created for

No Account Required

As an external user, you do not need to create a full account to open a shared document.

- Email verification is enough to confirm your identity
- You can access the document through the share link you received
- Your available actions depend on the permission level assigned to that link

Email Verification Process

External users must verify their email address before accessing shared documents. This extra step helps make sure only the intended recipient can open the file.

How Verification Works

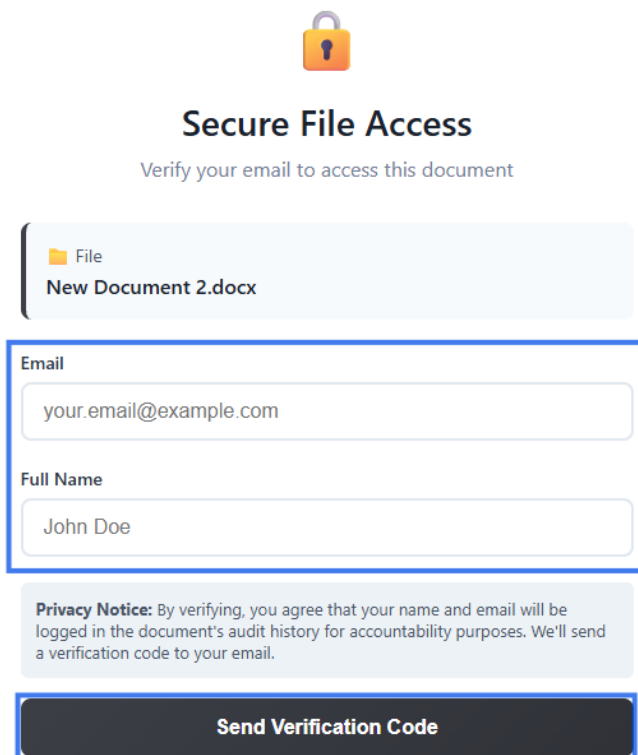
1. The external user clicks the share link.
2. They enter their email address.
3. A verification code is sent to that email.
4. They enter the code on the verification page.
5. Once verified, they can access the document.

The Verification Steps

Step 1: Enter Email and Full Name

Enter your email address and full name in the field provided.

- If the link is restricted to a specific email address, only that address will work
- Make sure you type the email correctly before continuing





Secure File Access

Verify your email to access this document

 File
New Document 2.docx

Email

Full Name

Privacy Notice: By verifying, you agree that your name and email will be logged in the document's audit history for accountability purposes. We'll send a verification code to your email.

Send Verification Code

Step 2: Receive Code

A 6-digit verification code is sent to your email.

The email typically includes:

- The verification code
- Information about which document is being accessed
- Information about who shared the document



Check Your Email

We sent a verification code to
joh*@mynewdomain.com**

Enter the 8-character code from your email

A 3 F 9 | K 2 M 8

 Code expires in 15 minutes

Verify Code

Resend Code

2 attempt(s) remaining

Wrong email? [Start over](#)

Step 3: Enter Code

Enter the code on the verification page.

- The code is valid for a limited time
- Enter it as soon as you receive it
- If the code expires, request a new one

File

New Document 2.docx

Access: view and edit

Your verification code:

8 Q Q X 3 W D M

Expires in 15 minutes

Step 4: Access Granted

After successful verification:

- The document opens in your browser
- A session is created for continued access
- You may not need to verify again right away during the same session



Verification Successful

Welcome, John Summers!

Redirecting to document...

Session Duration

Your verified session usually remains active for a period of time.

- Access may stay active for several hours or longer
- You may need to verify again later
- Closing the browser or being inactive for too long may end the session

Troubleshooting

Code Not Received

- Check your spam folder
- Confirm that your email address was entered correctly
- Wait a moment and request a new code
- Check whether your email filters blocked the message

Code Expired

- Request a new verification code
- Enter the new code promptly after receiving it

Wrong Email Error

- The link may be restricted to a specific email address
- Make sure you are using the intended recipient address
- Contact the document owner if a different email address needs access

Security Benefits

- Confirms the recipient's identity
- Helps prevent unauthorized link sharing
- Creates a record of verified access
- Connects document access to a verified email address

Re-verification

You may need to verify again when:

- Your session expires
- You open the link from a new device or browser
- Browser cookies have been cleared
- There has been a long period of inactivity

Editing as an External User

If you have received a share link with edit permissions, you can make changes directly in OfficeDocs without needing a full internal account. Your access depends on the permission level assigned to the link.

Confirming View & Edit Access

You have view & edit access if:

- The toolbar shows editing tools
- You can click into the document and type
- The document opens in editing mode instead of read-only mode

Making Edits

With view & edit access, you can:

- Add, delete, and modify text
- Format content such as bold, italic, and similar styling
- Insert images, tables, and other supported elements
- Add comments
- Use the standard editing tools available in the document editor

Saving Your Work

- Changes are saved while you work
- You can also save manually at important moments
- Your edits may appear in version history, depending on the sharing settings and access options applied to the document

Collaboration Features

Real-Time Editing

If other people are editing at the same time:

- You may see their cursors and changes in real time
- You can collaborate in the same document during the same session
- Your presence may be shown to others using your verified email

Comments

- Add comments on specific text or content
- Reply to existing comments

- Resolve comments when appropriate

Your Identity

Your contributions are connected to your verified email address.

- Version history may show your email as the author of changes
- Comments may display your verified email
- Other collaborators may identify your activity through that email address

Limitations

As an external user, you may not be able to:

- Share the document with other people
- Change sharing settings
- Delete the document
- Access other documents without separate links or permissions

Session Timeout

If your session expires while you are editing:

- Recent changes should already be saved
- You may need to verify your email again to continue
- Re-verifying quickly helps you return to the document with less interruption

Best Practices

- Save manually at important milestones
- Use comments to communicate with the document owner or collaborators
- Finish important edits before the link expires
- Keep the share link available in case you need to re-open the document later

Viewing Version History as External User

Depending on how the document was shared, you may be allowed to view or restore previous versions of the document.

Version History Access Levels

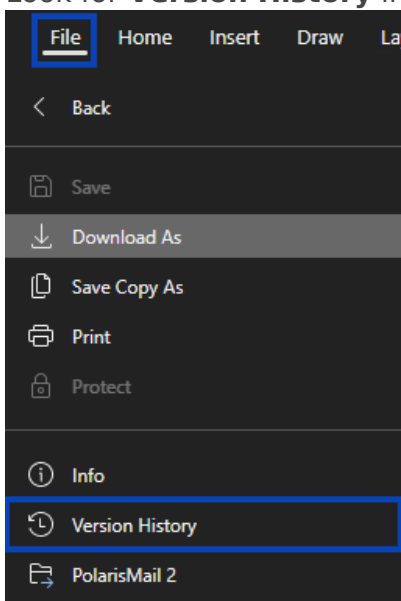
Your access depends on the share link settings:

- **None** — Version history is hidden
- **View Only** — You can see versions but not restore them
- **View & Edit** — You can view and restore versions

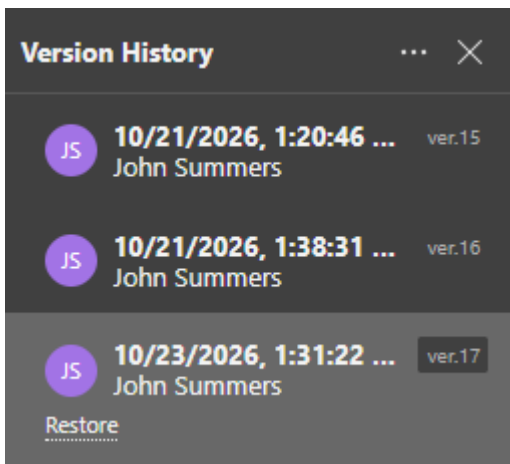
Viewing Version History

If you have access:

1. Look for **Version History** in the **File** menu.



2. Click to open the version history panel.
3. Browse the list of saved versions.



4. Click a version to view it.

What You Can See

- Date and time of each version
- Who made the changes
- Version notes, if they were added

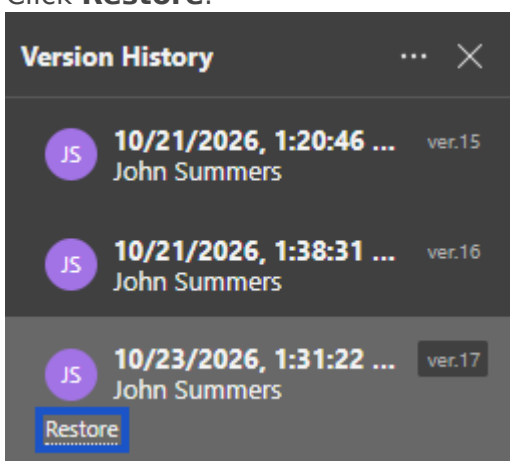
Viewing Past Versions

1. Click a version entry.
2. The document opens in that historical state.
3. Review the content as it was saved at that time.
4. Return to the current version when you are done.

Restoring Versions

If your link includes restore permissions:

1. Select the version you want.
2. Click **Restore**.



3. Confirm the restoration.
4. The document returns to that version.

Note: Restoring a version affects the live document for everyone who has access to it. It is a good idea to communicate with the document owner first.

Your Contributions

When you edit the document:

- Your changes can create new versions
- Your verified email may identify you as the author
- Other collaborators may be able to see your contributions in version history

No Version History Access

If version history is not available:

- The option does not appear in the menus
- You can only work with the current version
- Contact the document owner if you need additional access

Why It Matters

Version history can help you:

- Review how the document has evolved
- Recover content that was changed or removed
- Understand changes made by other collaborators