

Recovering Overwritten Business Files Checklist

Review, preserve and restore earlier cloud-file versions safely

Important: Before recreating lost work, check the file's version history. Preserve the current version first.

1 Identify

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|---|--|
| ☐ Confirm the correct file (not a copy or duplicate) | ☐ Stop unnecessary editing |
| ☐ Confirm the storage location: Drive, OneDrive, SharePoint or Teams | ☐ Check who is currently editing |
| ☐ Confirm Google Workspace or Microsoft 365 | ☐ Record what appears to be missing |

2 Preserve

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|---|---|
| ☐ Review the current version | ☐ Inform collaborators |
| ☐ Identify valid recent changes | ☐ Confirm you have permission to restore |
| ☐ Save or copy valid recent work | ☐ Download the current version where appropriate |

Restoring an old version before preserving recent work can lose valid changes made since the mistake.

3 Recover

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|--|--|
| ☐ Google: File > Version history > See version history | ☐ Find the last correct version |
| ☐ Microsoft: filename > Version History, or right-click the file in OneDrive / SharePoint | ☐ Restore, copy or download the earlier version |
| ☐ Review dates, editor names and version numbers | ☐ Copy only the missing content where safer |

Restoring the whole file is faster; recovering only the missing content is often safer.

4 Verify

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|---|---|
| ☐ Confirm the required work is present | ☐ Check formatting, comments and attachments |
| ☐ Confirm recent valid work remains | ☐ Review editor and timestamp |
| ☐ Test formulas and links | ☐ Confirm the file opens correctly |

5 Investigate the Cause

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|---|---|
| ☐ Accidental edit or wrong file opened | ☐ Excessive edit access or sync conflict |
| ☐ Incorrect data import | ☐ Former-employee account involved |
| ☐ Duplicate copies in circulation | ☐ Suspicious activity or multiple files affected |

One overwritten file is usually a productivity problem. Many changed files may indicate a security incident.

6 Prevent Recurrence

- ☐ Use one approved cloud copy per document
- ☐ Use links rather than attachments
- ☐ Name important versions
- ☐ Restrict edit access
- ☐ Protect key spreadsheet ranges
- ☐ Review sharing permissions
- ☐ Store files in approved locations
- ☐ Confirm backup and test recovery

7 Make a Decision

- ☐ Recovery complete
- ☐ More versions need checking
- ☐ Administrator help required
- ☐ Deleted-file recovery required
- ☐ Backup restore required
- ☐ Security investigation required

Record the Outcome

Affected file: _____

Owner: _____

Date: _____

Recovered version: _____

Actions taken: _____

Action owner: _____

Next review date: _____

Where Version History May Not Help

- ☐ File stored only on a local device
- ☐ Retention period has passed
- ☐ File downloaded and overwritten outside the cloud
- ☐ File deleted and removed from retention
- ☐ Ransomware affected many files or versions
- ☐ Insufficient permission — ask the owner or admin

Version history helps recover earlier work. A backup helps recover when the live service, account or retained history is

Plain-English takeaway

Check version history before recreating lost work, preserve the latest changes and restore only what is needed. Confirm the result and remember that version history is not a complete replacement for backup.



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