Microsoft Excel – Protection

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Protection available

▶ Password Protection: prevent the workbook from being opened and edited by unauthorised users.

▶ Cell Locking: prevents important cells from being edited or deleted. For example, a cell may contain an important calculation (formula) that should not be altered. Cell locking is only activated when worksheet or workbook protection is switched on.

▶ Workbooks: passwords can be added to workbooks to prohibit changes and an option for Read Only meaning an authorised user can view but will be unable to change.

▶ Worksheets: cell(s) can be locked to prevent changes. A password can be added to protect locked data and the worksheet structure. A protected worksheet can only have data entered into unlocked cells and formatting prohibited too. When protection is disabled (by default) all cells are accessible whether locked or not.
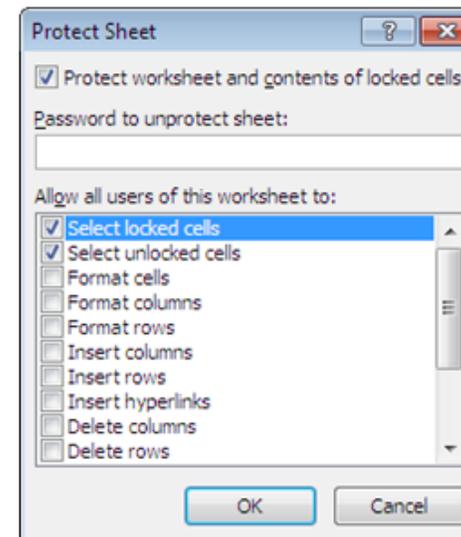
Cell Protection

▶ By default, all cells within a worksheet are locked, although this is ineffective until the worksheet has protection activated.

▶ If there is a requirement for some cells to be allowed to be edited whilst all other cells require protection, it is necessary to unlock the intended editable cells prior to worksheet protection.

▶ Usually, cells containing headings, titles, formulae are locked to prevent editing and only the cells where data is to be entered or edited are unlocked and accessible.

▶ Protection for cells can be located from the Home tab > Format button within the Cells group > Format Cells > Protection tab > uncheck Locked to release the select cell(s), then click OK.
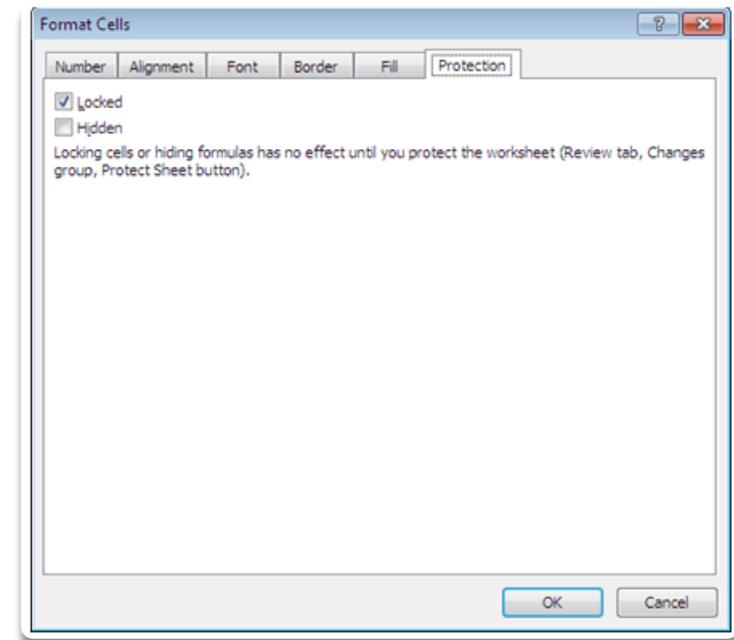
Protecting the worksheet

▶ Review ribbon > Changes group > Protect Sheet button

▶ Entering a password is optional and be careful to remember the password due to the inability to open the worksheet without it.

▶ The password will appear as asterisks as typed.

▶ Excel will ask again for the password to be confirmed during this setting, just to make sure they match and typed correctly due to being unseen (asterisks).

▶ Click OK on each occasion of entering and setting the password of choice.
Notice the options for allowing users certain aspects of the worksheet.

Attempting to ignore protection

▶ Cells are locked, except purposely set unlocked cells, when worksheet protection is engaged.

▶ Attempting to contravene the password protection and locking of cells will have Excel display a message explaining the cell or chart that is protected from attempted changes are in fact read-only.

▶ To modify a protect cell or chart, the protection must be removed by clicking on the Review tab > Changes group > Sheet protection or in this instance "Unprotect sheet" button should be clicked. When prompted, the correct password must be entered. All cells are now accessible.

Microsoft Excel

The cell or chart that you are trying to change is protected and therefore read-only.

To modify a protected cell or chart, first remove protection using the Unprotect Sheet command (Review tab, Changes group). You may be prompted for a password.

OK