

RepairHomePermissions 1.2 for macOS Sierra, High Sierra and Mojave

Documentation

Howard Oakley <https://eclecticlight.co>

Prior to OS X El Capitan, a common solution to a wide range of problems was to repair permissions on your startup volume. Although the permissions of system files there shouldn't have become altered, when they did, strange problems often resulted.

In El Capitan and later, System Integrity Protection (SIP) ensures that nothing can alter the permissions of system files, and a whole lot more besides, so macOS Sierra (and later) no longer offers that. However, Apple has revealed that incorrect permissions in a user's Home folder can cause a wide range of other problems. According to its [support note](#), these include:

- changes to preference settings, particularly those for System Preferences, do not 'stick';
- changes made to the Dock do not 'stick';
- you are asked to authenticate when trying to move or alter some folders in your Home folder;
- when trying to save, you are told that the file is locked, or that you don't have permission;
- Preview, TextEdit, and App Store apps (which are sandboxed) may crash when opened;
- alerts warning that the startup disk has no more space available for app memory;
- Safari or SafariDAVClient use large amounts of resources (memory);
- your Mac runs very slowly;
- iTunes cannot sync a device;
- problems with Photos or iPhoto libraries, including inability to import into the library, or forgetting the library each time the app is opened.

In those circumstances, Apple recommends a new procedure of repairing permissions in your Home folder, which should restore normal function. The recommended procedure consists of two to four steps:

- use the Get Info dialog on your Home folder to set the correct permissions, and propagate those throughout the enclosed folders and files;
- run the undocumented command `diskutil resetUserPermissions / `id -u`` in Terminal;
- if that returns error -69841, then run the command `chflags -R nouchg ~` in Terminal, and repeat the `diskutil` command.

This is what RepairHomePermissions helps you do. You still use the Finder to set and propagate the permissions – something which the app guides you through – but it then runs the Terminal commands for you.

What you need

- A Mac running macOS Sierra, High Sierra or Mojave. This version has been built to be fully compatible with High Sierra, including APFS, and with Mojave.
- A copy of the latest version of RepairHomePermissions from <https://eclecticlight.co/downloads/> (This is delivered by secure HTTPS download).

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Getting started

RepairHomePermissions comes compressed as a Zip file, which you should decompress, and move the app to your preferred folder, such as /Applications. It is not fussy where it is run from, though.

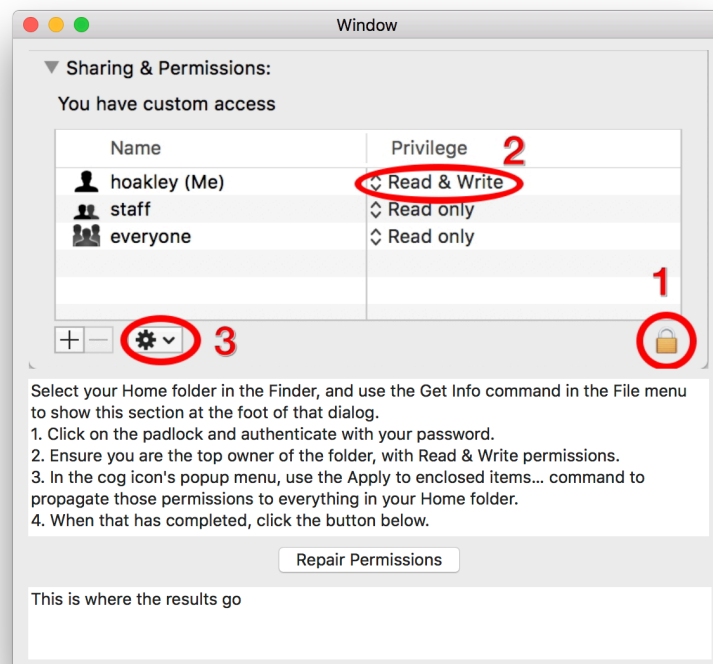
RepairHomePermissions is now not just properly signed, but is also notarized for macOS Mojave. If the app doesn't open correctly when you first try to run it, please contact me immediately.

⚠ Each time RepairHomePermissions runs, it checks its contents against its code signature. If it finds a discrepancy, it quits immediately but doesn't crash. If that happens when you try to run the app, first replace it with a fresh copy, in case the app has simply become corrupted. You may also wish to check for disk problems, and rule out the presence of malware, which could be responsible.

Mojave privacy protection

macOS 10.14 Mojave introduces stringent new privacy protections. RepairHomePermissions doesn't seek access to protected data folders such as your Contacts, Calendar, or Mail data.

With the new protections, you *must* add this app to your **Full Disk Access** list, in the **Privacy** section of your **Security & Privacy** pane, which lets it repair 'deeper' into protected areas. If you don't give it full disk access, it may fail to work correctly.



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To repair permissions on your Home folder, follow the instructions given in the window. When you click on the **Repair Permissions** button, the commands given above will be run. They may take some time – a large Home folder can take 30 minutes or more to repair – and at the end of that process the results will be displayed.

You may need to make the window deeper in order to read the whole results in the box at the bottom.

Once you have repaired permissions, Apple recommends that you restart your Mac for those permissions to take full effect.

If this process repairs many permissions, the next Time Machine backup is likely to be very large and take a long time to complete. It is also possible that some third-party software may start to misbehave, if it relied on permissions set unusually, although I cannot think of why that should cause problems.

Hopefully this will fix the problem which you had in the first place.

Obtaining updates manually

The **Browse updates** command in the Help menu opens a page on the Eclectic Light Company blog listing current versions of apps, from which you can download updates easily. Because this app is updated so infrequently, it doesn't offer automatic update checking, as most of my other apps do now.

Change List

1.2 release:

- added code signature check when opening app
- adopted build number convention
- added link to support page
- aligned instructions with Apple's updated note
- ported to Swift 5 and Xcode 10.2.

1.1 release:

- ported to Swift 4.2.1 and Xcode 10.1
- notarized for Mojave.

1.0 release:

- first full release after long beta period
- ported to Swift 4.2 and built in Xcode 10B4
- ported to Mojave, with support for Dark Mode
- runs shell commands in background
- added Browse updates command
- completed single-window configuration, so closing window quits app.

26 June 2019.