

# RAR - what it is, common risks, and safe handling tips

Gridinsoft Help Center

## What it is

RAR is a proprietary archive format that compresses one or more files into a single container with the .rar extension. It supports strong compression, error-recovery records, multi-part volumes, and self-extracting archives. Newer RAR versions add AES-256 encryption with password protection, so contents can be both smaller and locked.

## Why it matters

RARs make large transfers faster and tidier, but they are also a common vehicle for malware. Encrypted archives can hide malicious payloads from casual inspection until a user extracts them.

## How it works - quick tour

- Compression: packs files with algorithms tuned for size.
- Packaging: stores paths, timestamps, and optional recovery data.
- Splitting: creates .part1.rar, .part2.rar for easier sharing.
- Protection: optional password and AES encryption for contents and names.

## Red flags

- Unexpected RAR attachments from unknown senders.
- Double extensions inside the archive like invoice.pdf.exe.
- Archives that demand a password from the email body or a shady site.
- Self-extracting RARs (.exe) that request admin rights.

## Prevent it

- Scan archives before opening and prefer extracting to a temporary folder.
- Do not run executables directly from inside a RAR.
- Be wary of password-protected archives you did not request.
- Keep your archiver updated and block SFX extracts on locked-down systems.