

Small business IT | Medium | 2 min read

Sharing files safely: OneDrive, SharePoint and Google Drive basics

Cloud storage makes teamwork easy, but one wrong sharing setting can expose customer files to the world. These basics apply to OneDrive, SharePoint and Google Drive.

Know the difference

- **Personal storage** (such as OneDrive) is for one person's files. If they leave, access can be awkward.
- **Shared storage** (SharePoint sites, Teams, or Google shared drives) belongs to the business, not an individual. Put anything the business depends on here.

Set it up sensibly

1. Create shared folders by purpose, for example Finance, Customers, Staff.
2. Give access to **groups or named people**, not "everyone".
3. Use **view only** unless someone really needs to edit.
4. Name the owner of each area, so someone is responsible.

Be careful with links

Sharing links are convenient but risky. The choices usually include:

- **Anyone with the link**: anybody who gets the link can open the file. Avoid for anything private.
- **People in your organisation**: safer for internal files.
- **Specific people**: safest for sensitive material.

Where possible, set an expiry date on links and remove them when the job is finished.

Regular tidy-up

- Every few months, review who can see each shared folder.
- Remove access when people leave or change role.
- Check what is shared with outsiders, such as former contractors.
- Turn on two-step sign-in for every account.

Do not forget backup

Cloud sharing is not a backup. Deleted or overwritten files can be lost, and ransomware can sync encrypted files to the cloud. Keep a separate backup.

When to get more help

Get help if you have personal data about customers or staff stored in shared folders, if you are unsure who can see what, if files have been shared by mistake, or if you are moving from one system to another. We can review permissions and set up a clean structure.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.