macOS 27.3 lets you give apps only the folders they need: least privilege on your own laptop

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Apple's support documentation says that starting in macOS 27.3, when some apps ask for Full Disk Access or System & App Protection Override, you can choose specific protected folders or apps for the app to access instead of granting everything.

TL;DR The short version

- In macOS 27.3, when an app asks for Full Disk Access, you can grant only specific protected folders or apps instead of everything.
- Full Disk Access lets an app bypass system protections and read all files, including messages and mail.
- Update Macs, test the prompts on managed fleets first, and re-review existing Full Disk Access grants.

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What Apple says

- Apps that might ask include backup apps, disk cleaners, file indexers and security apps. Apple notes some work best with broad access, while others may ask for more than they need.
- With Full Disk Access, an app can bypass system protections and reach all files on the Mac, including messages, emails, photos and data from other user accounts. Apple says it can read, change, delete and export this data without asking.
- With System & App Protection Override, if you allow bypassing system protections rather than choosing specific apps, Apple says the app can fully control the Mac, see every window and capture every keystroke.
- Where the option appears, you can choose only specific protected folders or apps, and system protections stay in place for the rest of your data. Apple says it does not appear for every app; some, such as screen readers asking for Accessibility, still show an allow or deny choice.

What a practitioner should do

- Update your Macs, and for fleet-managed devices test the change before rollout, since permission prompts affect backup, endpoint-security and indexing tools.
- Re-review existing Full Disk Access grants in Privacy & Security settings. Where an app now offers a narrower choice, use it.
- When you evaluate a tool that asks for broad access, ask the vendor which folders it genuinely needs and why.

The wider lesson

Least privilege is an old idea that is finally reaching consumer permission dialogs. The same habit applies to the service accounts, API tokens and AI agents your team grants access to: start from the narrowest scope that works and widen only with a reason. It is the kind of judgement the TPBOK expects of a practitioner.

> Facts in this post were read from the sources listed below on 17 November 2026; this is a developing story or product and details may have changed since.

Sources and further reading

1. Apple Support. If an app asks for Full Disk Access or System & App Protection Override on your Mac. support.apple.com/en-us/149699

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