

Before AI touches your files, *change these 5 things.*

This month a TV show lost its whole finished season. Reports blamed an AI agent, the broadcaster blamed a backup that didn't work. Either way, the fix is the same: set these up once, before you let any AI clean, move or edit your files.

1 Turn on automatic backups

One copy you never touch. If anything goes wrong, you restore it in a minute.

- Windows: Settings > Accounts > Windows backup (or File History to an external drive)
- Mac: System Settings > General > Time Machine
- Cloud folders: OneDrive / Google Drive / Dropbox keep deleted files for 30 days

2 Make the AI ask before it deletes

Tell it once, at the start of every clean-up job.

COPY THIS

Before you delete, move or overwrite anything, show me the full list and wait for me to say yes. Never delete more than 10 files at once. Put deletions in a folder called _to_delete instead of erasing them.

3 Give it a test folder, not your whole drive

Copy the files into a folder like AI_workspace and only give the AI access to that folder. Your real files stay out of reach.

In Claude Code, start it inside that folder. In apps with file access, pick that folder only.

4 Keep version history on

Word, Google Docs, Excel and Notion all keep old versions. Check it's on, so a bad edit is one click to undo.

- Google Docs: File > Version history
- Word / Excel on OneDrive: File > Info > Version History
- Notion: ••• > Page history

5 Lock the files that matter

Taxes, contracts, client work: make them read-only or keep them in a folder the AI never gets.

COPY THIS

List every file in this folder you think is safe to delete, with its size and last opened date. Do not delete anything. Mark anything that looks like taxes, contracts, invoices or IDs as KEEP.

Backups are boring until the day they save you. Set them once.

Saved your taxes? Tell a friend.

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