



Is WinZip compatible with older versions of WinZip and other Zip file utilities?

- WinZip
- WinZip Enterprise

The information in this article applies to all WinZip applications that create Zip files, including WinZip Mac Edition. Some of the mentioned compression methods will not be available in every WinZip program, but **Legacy** compression (Deflate) is available in all of them.

Yes is the short answer to the question posed in the title. The current version of WinZip is compatible with older WinZip versions and other Zip file utilities.

However, you must consider a few things when you create Zip files. To insure compatibility, default **Legacy** settings are the safest for you to use. If you are sharing your Zip files with others, it is recommended that you find out what Zip file utility they have installed before you create Zip files for them.

WinZip provides several methods for compressing the files that you add to a Zip file. In making a choice of compression method, you should determine whether you will be sharing your Zip file with others, as mentioned above. Also, there are several other things to consider including, the type of data you are compressing, your plans for later unzipping the data, and the amount of time you are willing to wait while your data is being zipped or unzipped.

The Settings option displays the two basic zipping choices and their default compression methods.

- **.Zip:** This option allows you to select one of four **Legacy** compression settings used to create a .zip file. These settings provide good, fast compression, compatible with most Zip file utilities. You may want to choose this option if speed of compression is a primary concern or if you are sending Zip files to others (and their Zip file utility is not known). Compression settings available for .zip are:
 - ◆ Maximum
 - ◆ Enhanced Deflate
 - ◆ Super fast
 - ◆ No compression
- **.Zipx:** This option causes WinZip to create a .zipx file. Like the .zip option, this option allows you to choose one of four compression methods, however in this case they are advanced compression methods. The default is **Best method**. When using Best method, WinZip chooses a compression method for **each file** being zipped based on its file type. You may want to choose one or another of the advanced compression options if file size is a primary concern. If you are planning to share these files with others, you should be sure that they are using WinZip 12.1 or later. **MP3** compression, **Jpeg** compression, and **WavPack** compression are only available when using Best method. Advanced compression settings available for .Zipx are:
 - ◆ Best method
 - ◆ BZip
 - ◆ LZMA
 - ◆ PPMd
 - ◆ XZ
 - ◆ Zstd

When considering compatibility of the Zip files you create with WinZip, you should also be aware of these two additional extensions to the Zip file format.

- **AES encryption (128- and 256-bit key):** AES encryption provides much greater cryptographic security than the traditional Zip 2.0 encryption method used in earlier versions of WinZip. Please see [KB 125900](#) and the related articles listed at the bottom of that page for more information.

- **64-bit extensions:** The Zip 2.0 format imposed restrictions on how large a Zip file could be, and the number of files it could contain. For all practical purposes, the 64-bit extended format eliminates all these restrictions. Please see [KB 125869](#) for more information.

Advanced compression methods and AES encryption are extensions to the Zip file format. Although WinZip has published the specifications for these format extensions, not all Zip file utilities have adopted them. You may want to avoid creating .zipx files, and you may want to avoid using AES encryption when you are not sure of the recipient's Zip file utility.
