RepairHomePermissions (1.0) for macOS Sierra, High Sierra and Mojave
Documentation
Howard Oakley https://eclecticlight.co

Prior to OS X El Capitan, a common solution to a wide range of problems was to repair permissions on your startup volume. Although the permissions of system files there shouldn't have become altered, when they did, strange problems often resulted.

In El Capitan and later, System Integrity Protection (SIP) ensures that nothing can alter the permissions of system files, and a whole lot more besides, so macOS Sierra (and later) no longer offers that. However, Apple has revealed that incorrect permissions in a user's Home folder can cause a wide range of other problems. According to its support note, these include:

- changes to preference settings, particularly those for System Preferences, do not 'stick';
- changes made to the Dock do not 'stick';
- you are asked to authenticate when trying to move or alter some folders in your Home folder;
- when trying to save, you are told that the file is locked, or that you don't have permission;
- Preview, TextEdit, and App Store apps (which are sandboxed) may crash when opened;
- alerts warning that the startup disk has no more space available for app memory;
- Safari or SafariDAVClient use large amounts of resources (memory);
- your Mac runs very slowly;
- iTunes cannot sync a device;
- problems with Photos or iPhoto libraries, including inability to import into the library, or forgetting the library each time the app is opened.

In those circumstances, Apple recommends a new procedure of repairing permissions in your Home folder, which should restore normal function. The recommended procedure consists of two to four steps:

- use the Get Info dialog on your Home folder to set the correct permissions, and propagate those throughout the enclosed folders and files;
- run the undocumented command `diskutil resetUserPermissions / `id -u`` in Terminal;
- if that returns error -69841, then run the command `chflags -R nouchg ~` in Terminal, and repeat the `diskutil` command.

This is what RepairHomePermissions helps you do. You still use the Finder to set and propagate the permissions – something which the app guides you through – but it then runs the Terminal commands for you.

What you need

- A Mac running macOS Sierra, High Sierra or Mojave. This version has been built to be fully compatible with High Sierra, including APFS, and with Mojave.
- A copy of the latest version of RepairHomePermissions from https://eclecticlight.co/downloads/
  (This is delivered by secure HTTPS download.)

RepairHomePermissions (1.0) for macOS Sierra, High Sierra and Mojave
Documentation
Howard Oakley https://eclecticlight.co

Getting started

RepairHomePermissions comes compressed as a Zip file, which you should decompress, and move the app to your preferred folder, such as /Applications. It is not fussy where it is run from, though.

RepairHomePermissions uses my developer code signature, so should run normally first time after installation.

If it does not, you should still be able to use it safely. Instead of double-clicking to run it the first time, select the app icon in a Finder window, and use the Finder's *Open* command to run it. You will be prompted to confirm that you want to open it: click on the button to say that you do. After that first use, on that Mac, you should be able to use it normally. If you are told that it is damaged or the signature is incorrect, please contact me.
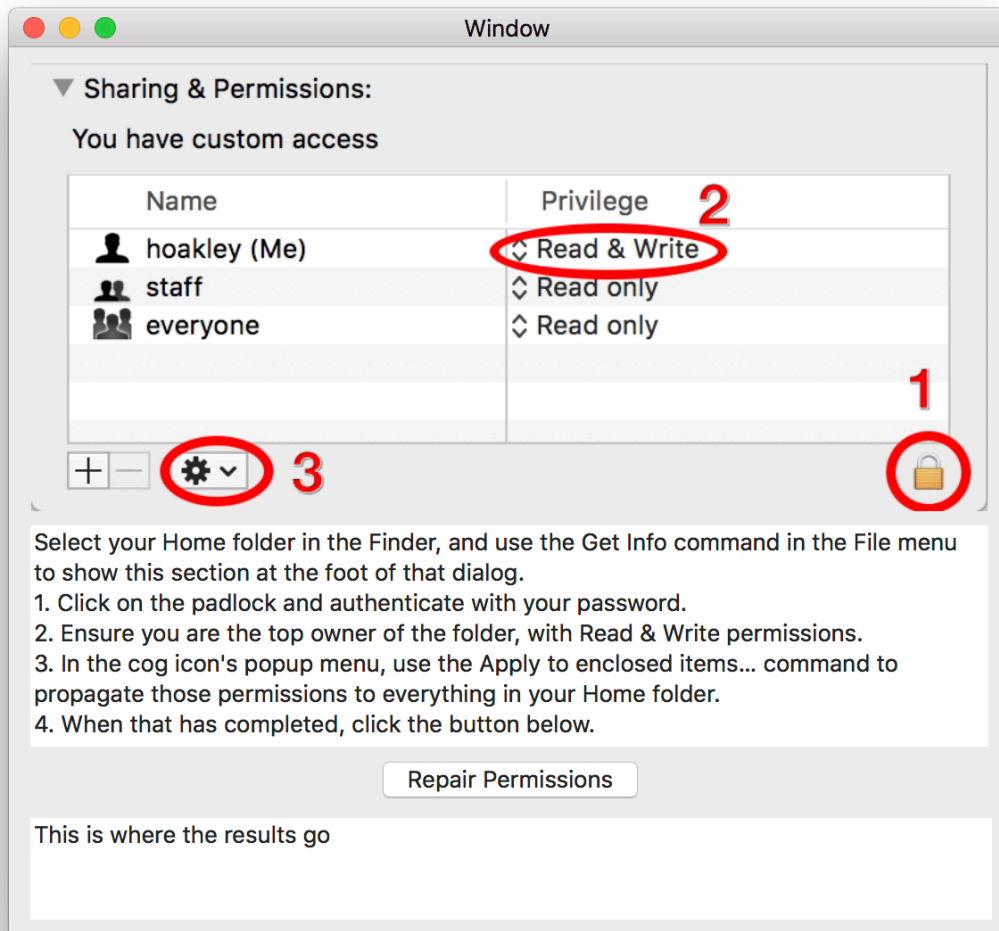
RepairHomePermissions (1.0) for macOS Sierra, High Sierra and Mojave
Documentation
Howard Oakley https://eclecticlight.co

To repair permissions on your Home folder, follow the instructions given in the window. When you click on the **Repair Permissions** button, the commands given above will be run. They may take some time – a large Home folder can take a minute or more to repair – and at the end of that process the results will be displayed.

In the current release, you may need to made the window deeper in order to read the whole results in the box at the bottom.

If this repairs many permissions, the next Time Machine backup is likely to be very large and take a long time to complete. It is also possible that some third-party software may start to misbehave, if it relied on permissions set unusually, although I cannot think of why that should cause problems.

Hopefully this will fix the problem which you had in the first place.

Release History

1.0 release:
- first full release after long beta period
- ported to Swift 4.2 and built in Xcode 10ß4
- ported to Mojave, with support for Dark Mode
- runs shell commands in background
- added Browse updates command
- completed single-window configuration, so closing window quits app.

18 July 2018.