



Backing up the enrollment key pair / Firefox cert store – Mozilla Firefox

What is an enrollment key pair?

The certificate enrollment key pair is a critical part of your ECA certificate request. Without the enrollment key pair, the rest of the process won't work. Here's a timeline of what happens to the enrollment key pair during the whole request process:

1. When you use Firefox to request a certificate on our ECA website, our certificate server tells Firefox to create a certificate enrollment key pair. The enrollment key pair isn't a certificate yet, but it's a unique set of data tied to your specific request, and you'll need it later!
2. The enrollment key pair is stored in Firefox's certificate store until you need it. You should back up the Firefox certificate store now (more on that below).
3. When you receive your issuance notification email from us, you'll return to Firefox to import your certificate. Firefox will locate the original enrollment key pair and use it to create your finished certificate.
4. Finally, you'll make a backup copy of the completed certificate. The new backup copy contains your whole certificate, including your enrollment key pair, so you don't need to keep a backup of the Firefox certificate store anymore.

Why should I back up my enrollment key pair?



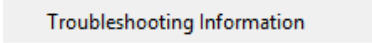
Since it's stored locally on your computer, in the Firefox certificate store, the enrollment key pair is vulnerable to deletion or corruption by viruses, hardware failures, or even updates to your browser or operating system. If this happens, the *only* way to import your finished certificate is through a backup copy of the Firefox certificate store. We at ORC never have access to your enrollment key pair, so if it's lost and you don't have a backup copy, your only option is to buy a new certificate to replace it.

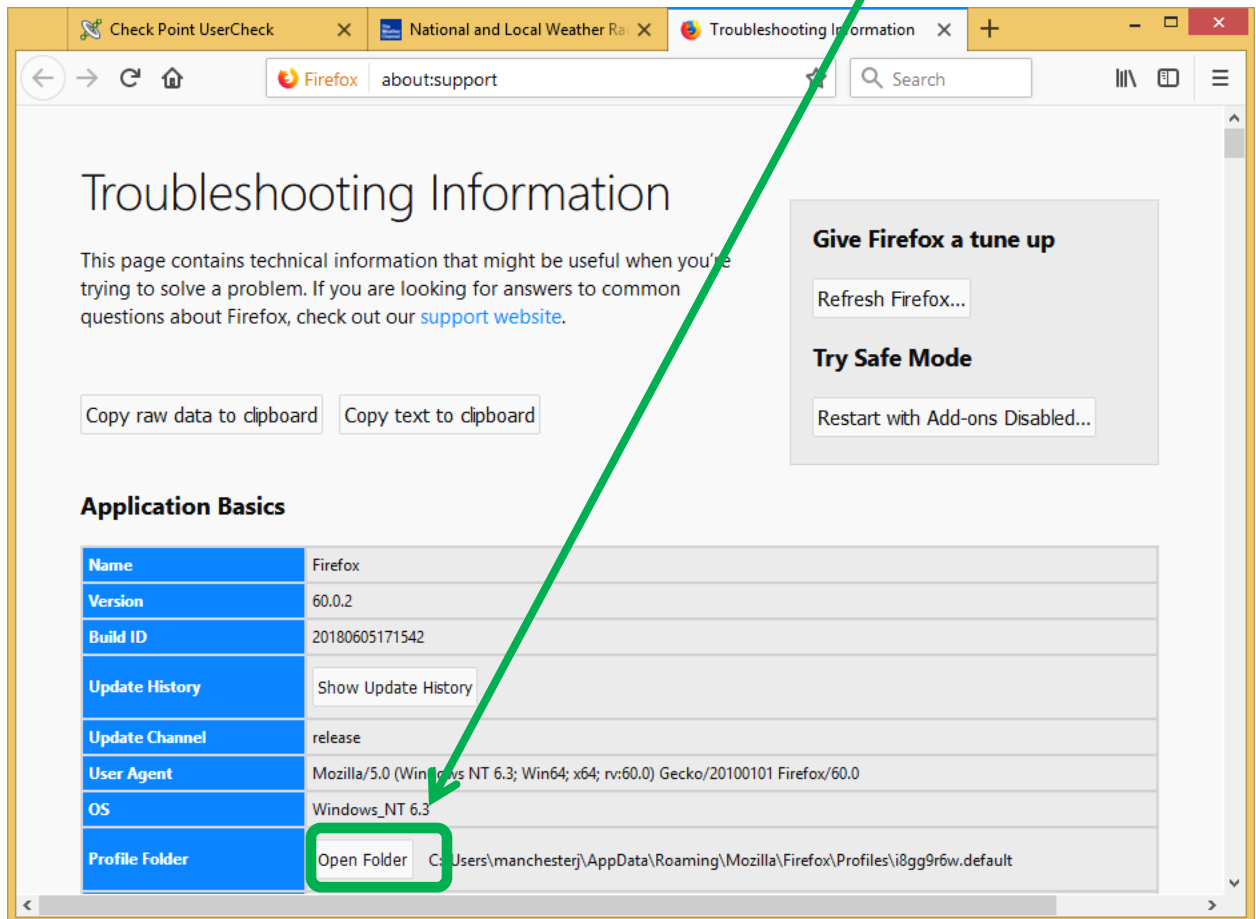
How do I back up my enrollment key pair?

In order to maintain the security of certificates installed in Firefox, the interface to the certificate store limits what we can see and do with certificates in Firefox. The Firefox certificate store is a "black box" to the user; you can't see inside it. You can't see the enrollment key pair or make a direct backup copy of it, but you *can* back up the entire Firefox certificate store. The backup will contain everything hidden in the certificate store, including your enrollment key pairs. The only things that we can see and do are what is allowed in the Firefox user interface.

The Firefox certificate store is composed of three files: key3.db, cert8.db, and secmod.db. Copying all three files to a folder will back up the Firefox certificate store. On the next page you'll find the steps you should take to locate and back up the Firefox certificate store.

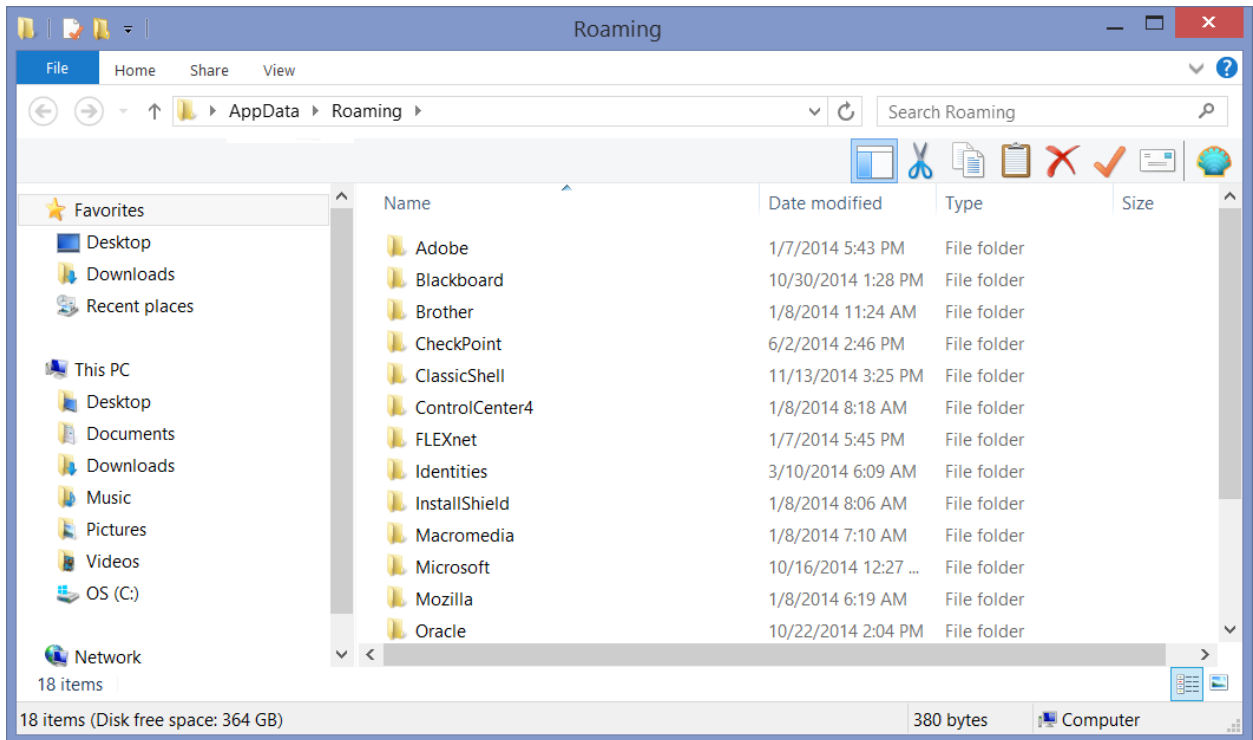
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1. Start Mozilla Firefox
2. Click the menu button  and then click  Help
3. In the Help Menu, select  Troubleshooting Information
4. On the Firefox Trouble Shooting Information page, find the line for Profile Folder and click the button to Open Folder

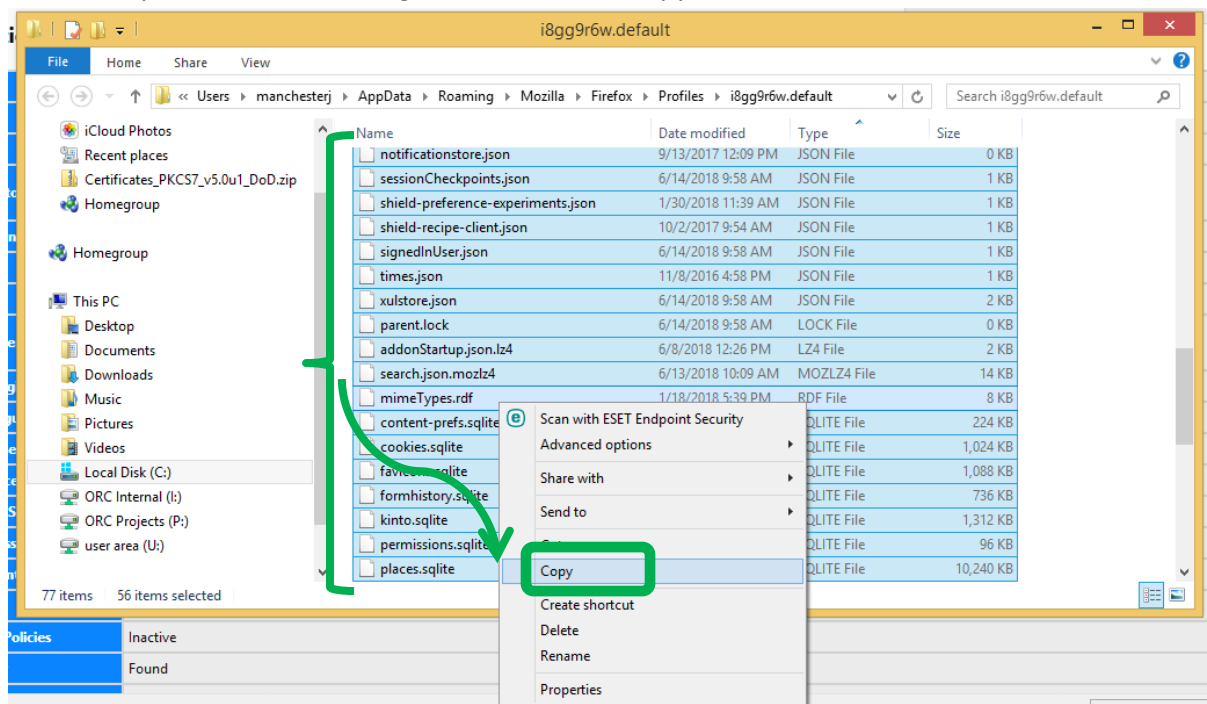


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5. A Windows File Explorer folder will open to your application data folder. **Important: Close Firefox now**

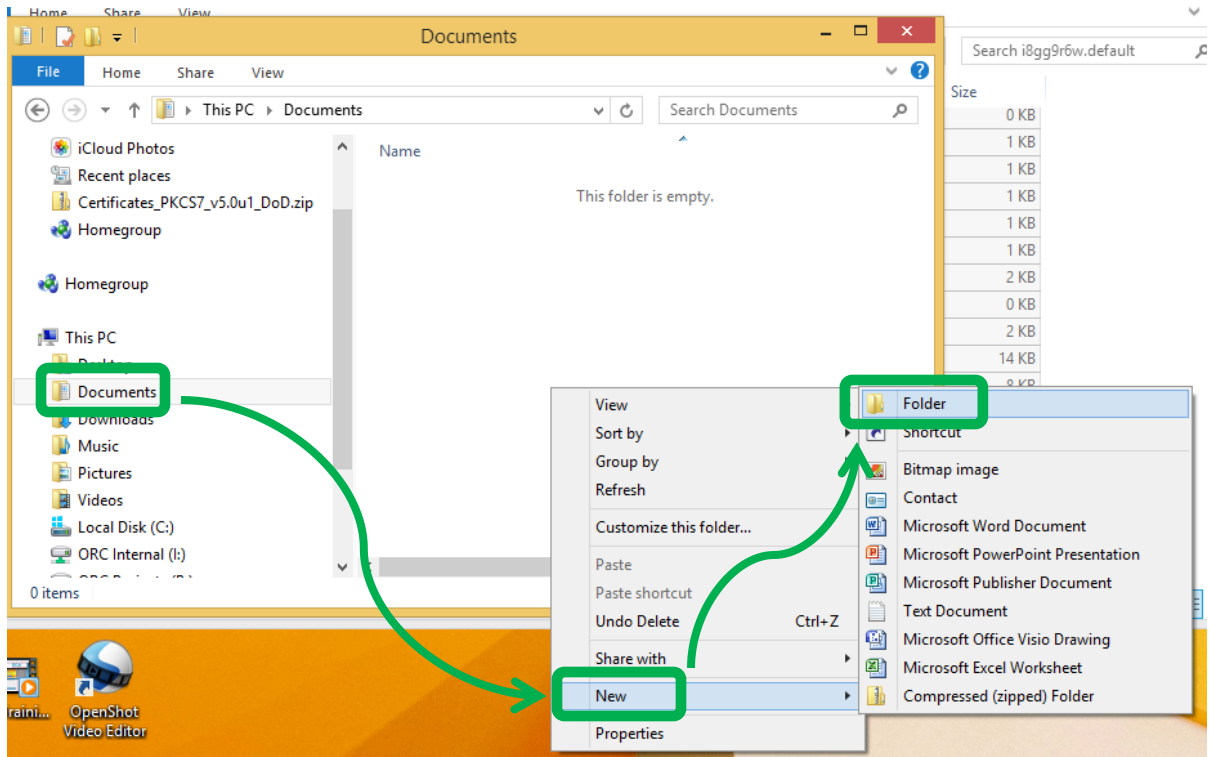


6. Select every item in the folder, right click and select Copy



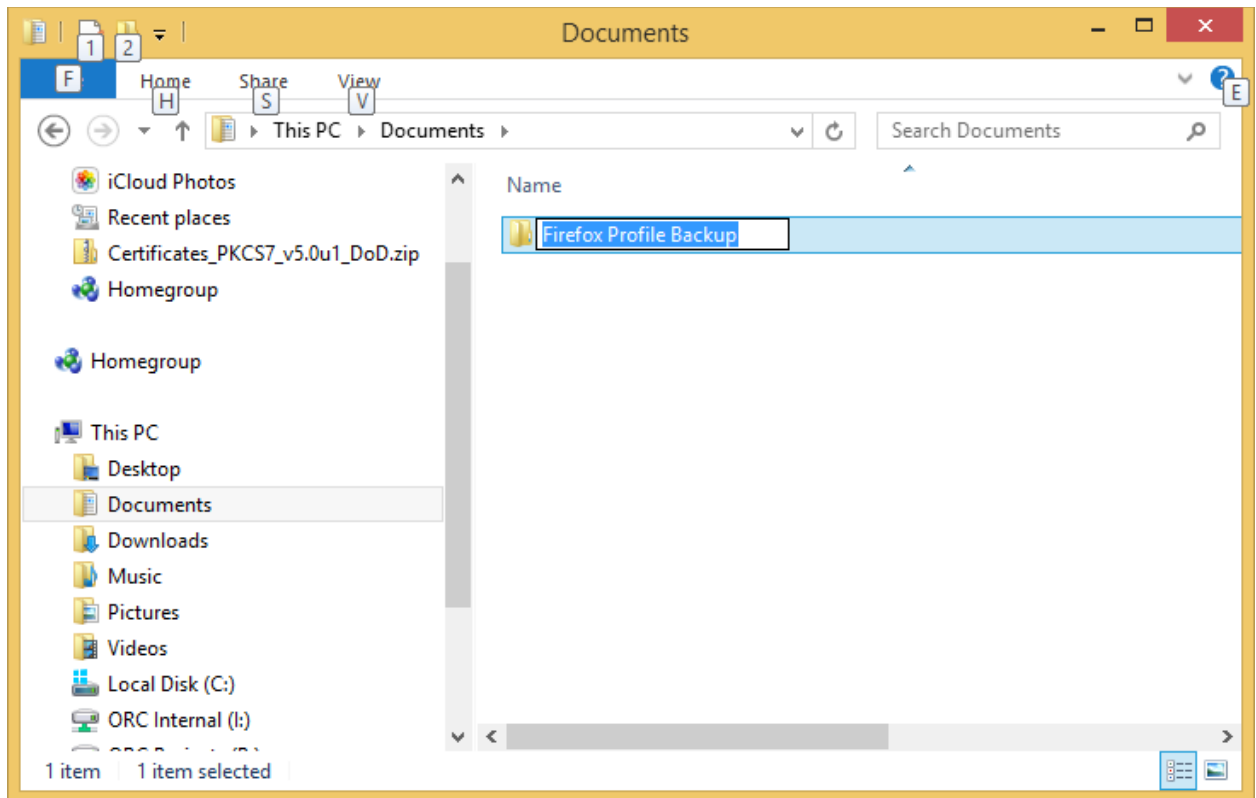
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7. Open a new File Explorer window folder  and navigate to your documents folder



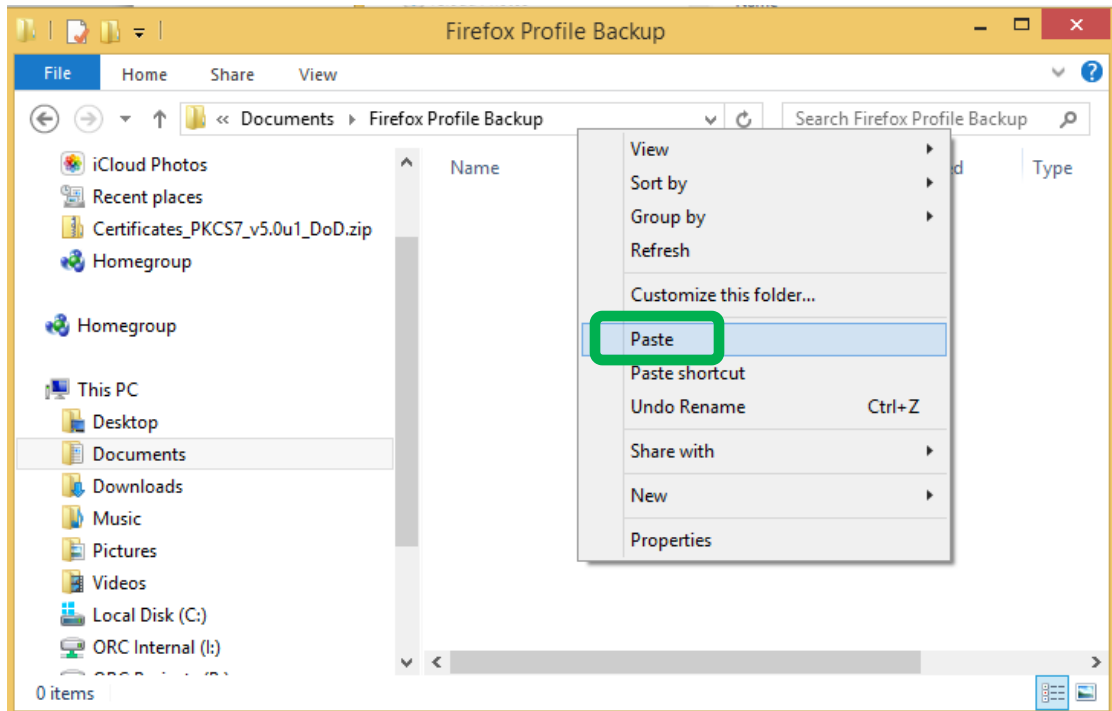
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8. Name the new folder “Firefox Profile Backup”, then open that folder

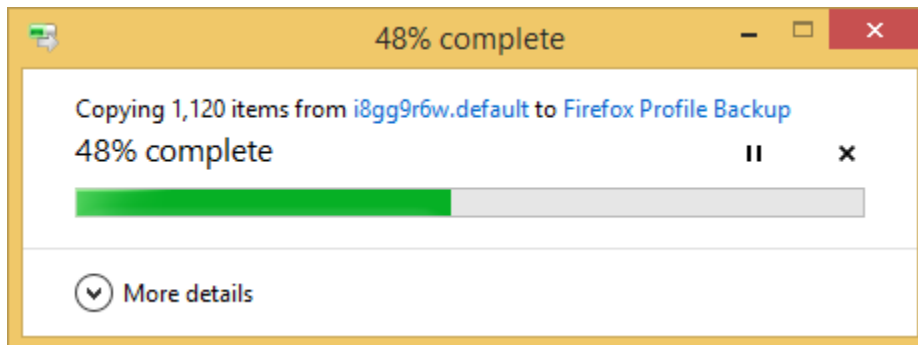


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9. In the new folder “Firefox Profile Backup”, right click and select Paste



10. It may take a little time to copy all of the profile folders and files



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11. You have now copied your enrollment keys as part of the Firefox profile. Keep the new “Firefox Profile Backup” until after your certificates are issued, installed and you have 1 back-up file for each of your two certificates (an Identity certificate and an Encryption certificate).

