

How To Make and Install an iOS Mobile Device Recovery Lock Screen Image

by Mike Sullivan | Cove Apple Club | April 24, 2013

You can make and install a recovery lock screen image that gives you a fighting chance at getting your Apple mobile device back safe and sound if you lose it. It works in conjunction with the Passcode Lock feature and Find My iPhone to help you get your lost or stolen iPhone or iPad back.

What you'll need:

1. A photo you'd like to use for your recovery screen image. Ideally, the image will contain no personally-identifiable information about you or anyone else, will be visually simple with plenty of space to insert your contact information, and be of medium-to-high resolution to look nice on your device.
1. A copy of Apple's iWork Pages app on your Mac. If you don't already have it, you can buy Pages from the Mac App Store for \$19.99.
2. An email account on your Mac and your mobile device to transport the image from your Mac to the mobile device.


Choosing your recovery image:

The image you choose for your recovery lock screen should be sized to fit the resolution of the device you're going to use it with. You can start with a higher-resolution image and then down-sample it to fit the screen size of your target device. Consult this table to find the ideal screen resolution and aspect ratio for your device:

Target Device	Native Screen Resolution	Pixel Density	Orientation
iPad / iPad 2	1024 x 768	132 ppi	Landscape
iPad (3rd & 4th Generation)	2048 x 1536	264 ppi	Landscape
iPad mini	1024 x 768	163 ppi	Landscape
iPhone 4 / 4S	960 x 640	326 ppi	Portrait
iPhone 5	1136 x 640	326 ppi	Portrait
MacBook / MacBook Pro / MacBook Air	Various: Consult the System Information app in the Utilities folder		Landscape

In this how-to example, we're going to use one of Apple's standard Desktop Picture images from OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion. The images are located in the Desktop Pictures folder of the Library folder of your Mac. You can use any high-quality photo you like for your image. If you're using your own photo, place a copy of it (not the original!) on your Desktop and skip to Step 4 to begin.

1. To find the folder containing the Desktop Images, click on the Go menu in the Finder, then click on Go to Folder. In the "Go to the folder" dialog box, type `"/Library"` then click OK. Find the Desktop Pictures folder in the Library folder, and double-click to open it.
2. Choose an image you'd like to use from the folder.
3. Make a copy of it to use as your recovery lock screen image by holding down the Option key while dragging the image to your Desktop.
4. Open the Pages app.
5. From the File menu, choose New Document.
6. In the template chooser, click on Blank in the Page Layout section of the sidebar, then select either Blank Canvas Landscape or Blank Canvas Portrait (as appropriate for your device from the table above), then click Choose. The new blank page layout canvas opens for editing.
7. Drag the image from your desktop onto the blank canvas.
8. Select the image on the canvas by clicking on it once.
9. Drag the size of the image to completely fill the canvas by dragging any of the eight the resizing handles along the borders of the image. Size the image so that no white space remains on any edge of the canvas.
10. Drag the resized image left / right / up / down as desired to be visually pleasing, remembering to leave a visually clean region on the image where you will place the recovery contact information.
11. From the toolbar, click on Text Box to create a new text box region for your contact information.
12. Enter your recovery contact information as desired. Remember to add in "Reward for Return" or "Please Call if Found" to alert whoever finds your device that they can help return it to you.

13. Select all the text in your contact information box by choosing Select All from the Edit menu while your insertion cursor is in the text box.
14. Use the toolbar Font and Size drop-down gadgets to change your recovery text to a large, bold font. Try Optima Bold, Helvetica Neue Bold or Condensed Black and Gil Sans Bold. Use the text color picker to change the color of your text, if needed, from black to white or another high-contrast color so it stands out against your image. Make sure you leave a large margin at the top and bottom edges of your image, with your contact info between those areas, to avoid conflicts with the lock screen controls and status bar.
15. When you're happy with the way your recovery lock screen image looks, save your work in Pages by choosing Save from the File menu. Name your file "Lock screen recovery image for my XXXX," where "XXXX" is the type of device you're targeting with this image.
16. Export your Pages document to PDF. From the Share menu, choose PDF. Select "Best" from the image quality drop-down list, then click Next. Type Cmd-D on the "Save as..." dialog box to select the Desktop as the location for the exported PDF file, then click Export.
17. Quit Pages.
18. Double-click the exported PDF file from step 16 to open it in Preview.
19. From the File menu, choose Export.
20. In the "Export As:" dialog box:
 - a. Choose "PNG" as the "Format:" type
 - b. Enter the ppi figure for your device from the table on Page 1 into the "Resolution" field.
 - c. Type Cmd-D to save the exported file to your Desktop.
 - d. Click Save.
21. Drag the exported PNG image onto the Mail app icon in the Dock. Mail will open and create a new message with the PNG file already attached.
22. In the new message window in Mail:
 - a. Confirm that the "Image size" drop-down box is set to "Actual Size"
 - b. Enter your own email address into the To: field
 - c. Enter "My lock screen recovery image" in the Subject: field
 - d. Click the Send icon in the toolbar to mail the message.
 - e. Quit Mail.
23. On your target device:
 - a. Open the Mail app and look for the message you just sent in your Inbox.
 - b. Tap and hold** on the image in the Mail message
 - c. When the Sharing options sheet appears, tap "Save to Camera Roll"
 - d. Tap the Home button to quit Mail
 - e. Open the Photos app
 - f. Tap "Albums" to show the Camera Roll as well as your other photo albums
 - g. Swipe or scroll to find your lock screen recovery image
 - h. Tap your lock screen recovery image to display it full-screen
 - i. Tap once in the center of the image to display the Photos menu
 - j. Tap the Sharing icon 
 - k. Tap "Use as Wallpaper"
 - l. Tap "Set Lock Screen" to select your lock screen recovery image as your device lock screen image

To set and use a lock screen passcode on your device:

1. Tap Settings
2. Tap General
3. Tap Passcode Lock
4. Tap Turn Passcode On
5. Follow the on-screen prompts to set and confirm a 4-digit passcode lock
6. Tap Require Passcode
7. Choose a time delay for your Passcode as desired. For the strongest security of your device, tap "Immediately" so that your device locks as soon as you push the sleep/wake switch.