



MetaClear

User Guide

Share the photo. Not the data.

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This guide covers everything MetaClear does and how to get the most out of it. Use the sections below to find what you need.

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What is MetaClear?

MetaClear is a native macOS privacy tool that strips hidden metadata from your photos before you share them. Every image file you take or save contains invisible embedded data -- your GPS location, the camera or phone you used, the date and time, and in AI-generated images, the exact prompt and model used to create them. MetaClear removes all of it in seconds, leaving your photo intact and your private information private.

MetaClear works entirely on your Mac. No account is required, no data is uploaded anywhere, and your files never leave your device. It is a one-time purchase with no subscription.

Who is MetaClear for?

- Parents who share photos of their children and want to protect their family's location from being embedded in every image.
- Photographers who share work publicly and want full control over what technical information travels with their images.
- Anyone who uses AI image tools and wants to remove embedded generation parameters before sharing.
- Privacy-conscious individuals who simply want to know -- and control -- what data their photos carry.

How MetaClear Works

MetaClear uses two separate pipelines that run in sequence on every file.

Standard Metadata Pipeline

The first pipeline uses Apple's ImageIO framework to read the image, strip selected metadata fields, and write a clean copy alongside the original. This handles GPS coordinates, device information, timestamps, software identifiers, and ownership data. It works for all supported formats: JPEG, PNG, TIFF, HEIC, HEIF, WebP, AVIF, and RAW files.

AI Content Stripping Pipeline

The second pipeline operates at the raw byte level on the file produced by the first pipeline. It removes AI provenance data that the standard ImageIO pipeline cannot reach -- C2PA Content Credentials embedded in JPEG APP11 segments and PNG chunk structures, Stable Diffusion and ComfyUI generation parameters, XMP generative edit history, and IPTC digital source type indicators.

Your Original Is Never Touched

MetaClear always writes a new clean copy of your file. Your original is never modified, overwritten, or deleted. The clean copy is saved alongside the original with a configurable suffix (default: `_clean`). You can change the output location or suffix in Settings.

System Requirements

Requirement	Minimum
macOS	macOS 26 or later
Architecture	Apple Silicon (M1 or later)
Storage	10 MB for the application
Memory	4 GB RAM recommended for large batches
Internet	Not required for use

Getting Started

On first launch MetaClear presents a brief welcome screen that walks you through the three steps of its workflow: drop your photos, review what was found, and clear the metadata. After completing the welcome screen you will not see it again unless you reopen it from the Help menu.

License Activation

MetaClear includes a five-use trial so you can verify it works with your files before activating. A trial use counter appears at the top of the window while in trial mode. To

activate, open Settings, scroll to the License card, enter your name, email address, and license key, then click Activate License.

First Run Checklist

- Open MetaClear from your Applications folder.
- Complete the welcome screen.
- Drag a photo onto the drop zone or click Browse for Photos.
- Review the metadata tags shown on the file card.
- Click Clear All Metadata.
- Use the folder icon on the file card to locate the clean copy.

The Clear Photos Screen

The Clear Photos screen is the main workspace. It is divided into three zones: the sidebar on the left, the drop zone at the top of the content area, and the file queue below it.

Sidebar

The sidebar shows the app name, navigation links, a session counter showing how many files have been processed in the current session, lifetime statistics, and links to korerium.com and support.

Drop Zone

The drop zone is the large dashed rectangle at the top of the content area. Drag photos or folders here to add them to the queue. You can also click the blue 'click to browse' link to open a file picker. The drop zone accepts JPEG, PNG, HEIC, HEIF, TIFF, WebP, AVIF, RAW formats, and folders.

File Queue

Files you add appear as cards in the queue below the drop zone. Each card shows a thumbnail, the filename, metadata category tags, and a status badge. You can click any card to open the Metadata Preview Panel for a detailed breakdown of what is in that file.

Bottom Bar

The button at the bottom of the screen changes based on the state of the queue. When empty it reads Browse for Photos and opens the file picker. When files are loaded it reads Clear All Metadata and processes the entire queue.

Dropping Files and Folders

MetaClear accepts individual files and entire folders. You can mix both in a single drop.

Individual Files

Drag one or more image files directly onto the drop zone. MetaClear accepts files from Finder, the Desktop, external drives, and network volumes. Files are added to the queue immediately and their metadata is read in the background while you continue working.

Folders

Drag any folder onto the drop zone. MetaClear recursively scans the folder and all subfolders, collecting every supported image file it finds. This works to any depth -- a folder containing subfolders containing more subfolders will be fully scanned. When processing a folder, clean copies are saved next to each original inside the existing folder structure. For example, a file at Vacation/Beach/photo.jpg produces a clean copy at Vacation/Beach/photo_clean.jpg. Your folder organization is preserved exactly.

Important: MetaClear does not process files from the Photos app library. To process a photo from Photos, export it using File > Export, then drop the exported file onto MetaClear. This is a deliberate design decision -- working with real filesystem files ensures you always know exactly where your clean copies are saved.

Large Batches

When more than 50 files are added at once, MetaClear shows a notice confirming that all files will be processed in the background and your Mac will stay responsive. Processing is throttled to four concurrent files at a time to maintain system performance.

Understanding File Cards

Each file in the queue is represented by a card showing its thumbnail, filename, metadata tags, and status.

Metadata Tags

Before processing, tags show which metadata categories are present in the file. After processing, the same tags show in ocean blue indicating which categories were successfully cleared. An AI tag appears if AI provenance data was detected and stripped.

Status Badges

Badge	Meaning
Queued	File is waiting to be processed
Processing	MetaClear is actively stripping metadata from this file.
X fields removed	Processing complete. The number shows how many individual metadata fields were removed.
No metadata found	The file contained no removable metadata. A clean copy was still created.
Failed	Processing encountered an error. Hover over the badge to see the error message.

Action Icons

- After processing completes, one or two icons appear to the right of the status badge.
- Folder icon -- opens Finder to the location of the clean file.
- Document icon -- opens Finder to the JSON metadata report (only visible when reports are enabled in Settings).
- Right-clicking a card opens a context menu with the same options plus a Remove from queue action.

Warning Banners

- Two types of warning banners may appear at the top of a file card:
- Already cleaned warning (amber) -- the filename ends with `_clean`, suggesting it may have been processed before.
- RAW conversion notice (blue) -- the file is a RAW format and will be converted to TIFF on output.

What Gets Removed

MetaClear organizes removable metadata into five standard categories plus a separate AI and Content Credentials category.

Location

GPS and location data embedded by cameras and smartphones.

Field	Description
GPS Latitude / Longitude	Precise coordinates where the photo was taken.
GPS Altitude	Elevation above sea level at capture time.
GPS Timestamp	UTC time recorded by the GPS receiver.
GPS Speed / Direction	Movement data recorded during capture.

Device

Hardware identifiers that reveal the camera or phone used.

Field	Description
Make / Model	Camera manufacturer and model name.
Serial Number	Unique hardware identifier for the camera body.
Lens Model	Lens make and model.
Firmware Version	Software version running on the camera.

Time and Capture

Timestamps and capture settings.

Field	Description
DateTimeOriginal	Date and time the shutter was pressed.
DateTimeDigitized	Date and time the image was digitized.
Shutter Speed	Exposure time in seconds.
Aperture	F-stop value at capture.

Field	Description
ISO	Sensor sensitivity setting.
Focal Length	Focal length of the lens in mm.
Exposure Program	Auto, manual, aperture priority, etc.

Software and Profile

Software identifiers and color profile data.

Field	Description
Software	Application used to create or edit the image.
CreatorTool	XMP field identifying the creating application.
Processing Software	RAW processing application name.
Color Profile	Embedded ICC color profile.

Ownership

Copyright and attribution data. This category is off by default as some photographers intentionally embed this information.

Field	Description
Copyright	Copyright notice embedded in the file.
Artist	Photographer or creator name.
Credit	Credit line for agency or wire service photos.
Rights	Rights management information.

AI and Content Credentials

Data embedded by AI image generation tools. This category is off by default and can be enabled in Settings.

Field	Description
C2PA Credentials	Adobe Firefly, DALL-E, and OpenAI provenance tokens.
SD Parameters	Stable Diffusion and ComfyUI generation parameters including prompt, negative prompt, seed, model name, and steps.
XMP AI History	Adobe Generative Fill edit history and AI action records.
IPTC Source Type	digitalSourceType field identifying AI-generated content.

Processing Your Photos

Once files are in the queue, click **Clear All Metadata** to begin processing. MetaClear processes up to four files concurrently.

Processing Order

Files are processed in the order they appear in the queue. Each file goes through the standard metadata pipeline first, then the AI stripping pipeline if AI removal is enabled in Settings.

RAW Files

MetaClear supports CR2, CR3, NEF, ARW, and DNG RAW formats. Because proprietary RAW formats cannot be re-encoded without specialized codec support, clean copies of RAW files are output as TIFF. The original RAW file is never modified. A blue banner on the file card indicates when this conversion will occur.

Output Location

By default, clean copies are saved in the same folder as the original file, with `_clean` appended to the filename before the extension. A photo named `photo.jpg` produces `photo_clean.jpg` in the same folder.

You can change the output folder and suffix in Settings. If a custom output folder is set, all clean copies go there regardless of where the originals are located.

For folder drops, the default behavior preserves the original folder structure. Clean copies are placed next to each original inside the existing folder hierarchy.

Auto-Process on Drop

Enable Auto-process on drop in Settings to have MetaClear begin processing immediately when files are added to the queue, without requiring a click of the Clear All Metadata button. This setting is off by default.

Metadata Preview Panel

Click any file card to open the Metadata Preview Panel for that file. The panel shows a complete breakdown of every metadata field found in the original image.

GPS Map

If the file contains GPS coordinates, the top of the panel shows a map tile centered on the location where the photo was taken. This makes it immediately clear how precise the location data is.

Field List

All metadata fields are listed by category. Fields that will be removed are shown in the primary text color. Fields that will be kept are shown in secondary text. The field key, human-readable name, and current value are shown for each entry.

AI Provenance Section

If AI provenance data is detected, a dedicated section appears listing the specific signals found — for example the presence of C2PA tokens, Stable Diffusion parameters, or XMP generation history. This section appears even if the AI removal toggle is off, so you can see what is present before deciding whether to enable it.

Session Complete

When all files in the queue have been processed, a Session Complete sheet appears summarizing the session results.

Summary Sheet

The sheet shows the total number of files cleared, the total number of metadata fields removed, a breakdown of fields removed by category, and the total processing time. If AI content was stripped, the number of files affected is also shown.

Done and View Session History

Click Done to dismiss the sheet and return to the queue. Click View Session History to navigate to the Session History screen which shows a per-file breakdown of the session results.

New Session

To clear the queue and start fresh, click the New session link in the queue header, or click New session in the Session Complete sheet. This clears all files from the current queue but does not affect the clean copies already saved to disk.

Settings

Open Settings from the sidebar to customize how MetaClear handles your files.

Output

Click the output location row to choose a custom folder for all clean copies. By default MetaClear saves clean copies alongside each original. Click Reset to default location to revert to the default behavior.

File Naming

The clean file suffix is appended to the filename before the extension. The default is `_clean`, producing filenames like `photo_clean.jpg`. You can change this to any string -- for example `_web`, `_share`, or `_safe`.

Processing Defaults

These toggles control which metadata categories are removed when you process a file. The defaults are:

Category	Default	Description
Location	ON	High privacy risk -- reveals when and where.
Device	ON	High privacy risk -- identifies your hardware.
Time and Capture	ON	High privacy risk -- reveals when and how.
Software and Profile	OFF	Lower risk -- often benign.
Ownership	OFF	Some photographers want this preserved.
AI Content Credentials	OFF	Enable if sharing AI-generated images.
Auto-process on drop	OFF	Power user feature -- opt in deliberately.

Metadata Reports

MetaClear can generate a JSON sidecar report alongside each clean file. Reports are off by default, but can be enabled in Settings under Metadata Reports.

What the Report Contains

- The original filename and the clean copy filename.
- The date and time of processing.
- The MetaClear version used.
- Total fields found, removed, and kept.
- A breakdown of removed fields grouped by category.
- A breakdown of kept fields grouped by category.
- Whether AI content was stripped.
- Whether a RAW file was converted to TIFF.
- A note if the file contained no metadata.

Report Filename

Reports are named using the clean file's base name with `_report.json` appended. A clean file named `photo_clean.jpg` produces a report named `photo_clean_report.json` saved in the same folder.

Accessing Reports

When a report has been generated, a document icon appears on the file card next to the folder icon. Clicking it opens Finder to the report file. Reports can also be accessed via the file card context menu.

Session History

The Session History screen shows every file processed during the current session. It resets when you quit MetaClear.

The top of the screen shows a summary card with the total files cleared and fields removed, followed by a per-file list showing the filename, number of fields removed, and a success or failure indicator.

Session history is intentionally session-scoped. MetaClear does not maintain a permanent processing log across sessions. If you need a permanent audit trail, enable Metadata Reports in Settings -- the JSON files on disk serve as the permanent record.

Lifetime Stats

The sidebar shows all-time totals for files cleared and fields removed across all sessions. These accumulate across app launches and are stored in your Mac's preferences. You can reset them at any time in Settings under Lifetime Stats.

License Activation

MetaClear includes a five-use trial. After five uses you will need to activate a license to continue processing files.

How to Activate

- Open Settings from the sidebar.
- Scroll to the License card.
- Enter your first and last name.
- Enter the email address you used to purchase MetaClear.
- Enter your license key exactly as it was delivered -- including the dashes.
- Click Activate License.

Activation is verified entirely offline using a cryptographic key derived from your email address. No internet connection is required.

License Key Format

License keys are 35 characters in the format:

```
XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX
```

Support

If you have trouble activating, contact support@korerium.com with your order confirmation and the email address used to purchase.

A Note on Photos App

MetaClear does not support direct drag-and-drop from the macOS Photos app library. This is a deliberate design decision, not a limitation we plan to work around.

The Photos library is a managed, sandboxed database. When macOS delivers a Photos drag to a third-party app, it exports the asset to a temporary system location with a system-generated filename rather than the original file path. This means there is no stable, user-visible location for the file, and no predictable place to deliver the clean copy.

The correct workflow for processing photos from your Photos library is:

- Select the photo in Photos.
- Choose File > Export > Export Unmodified Original.
- Save the exported file to your Desktop or a known folder.
- Drop the exported file onto MetaClear.
- The clean copy will be saved alongside the exported original.

This two-step process gives you a permanent file with a known location, a clean copy you can find and share, and a metadata report you can keep alongside both. It is a safer and more explicit workflow than an in-place Photos library edit.

Privacy Statement

MetaClear is a local-first application. It does not collect, transmit, or store any data about you, your files, or your usage.

What MetaClear Does Not Do

- Does not connect to the internet for processing or license validation. Internet is only required to view maps in the Metadata Preview Panel.
- Does not send usage analytics or telemetry.
- Does not upload your photos or metadata to any server.
- Does not require an account, email address, or login.
- Does not store any information about which files you have processed.
- Does not track which metadata fields are present in your photos.

What MetaClear Stores Locally

MetaClear stores your preferences -- output folder, clean suffix, processing defaults, and lifetime statistics -- in your Mac's standard preferences system (NSUserDefaults). This data never leaves your Mac. You can reset it at any time by choosing Settings > Lifetime Stats > Reset, or by running the following command in Terminal:

```
defaults delete com.korerium.MetaClear
```

License Verification

License key validation is performed entirely offline using HMAC-SHA256 cryptography. Your email address and license key are never transmitted to Korerium or any third party. Validation happens on your Mac using a locally computed cryptographic signature.

Contact

Questions about MetaClear's privacy practices can be directed to support@korerium.com