Collecting Files from a Target Device

Introduction

This guide covers how to collect specific files from a connected device using the Collect Files option in the Investigate Device menu.

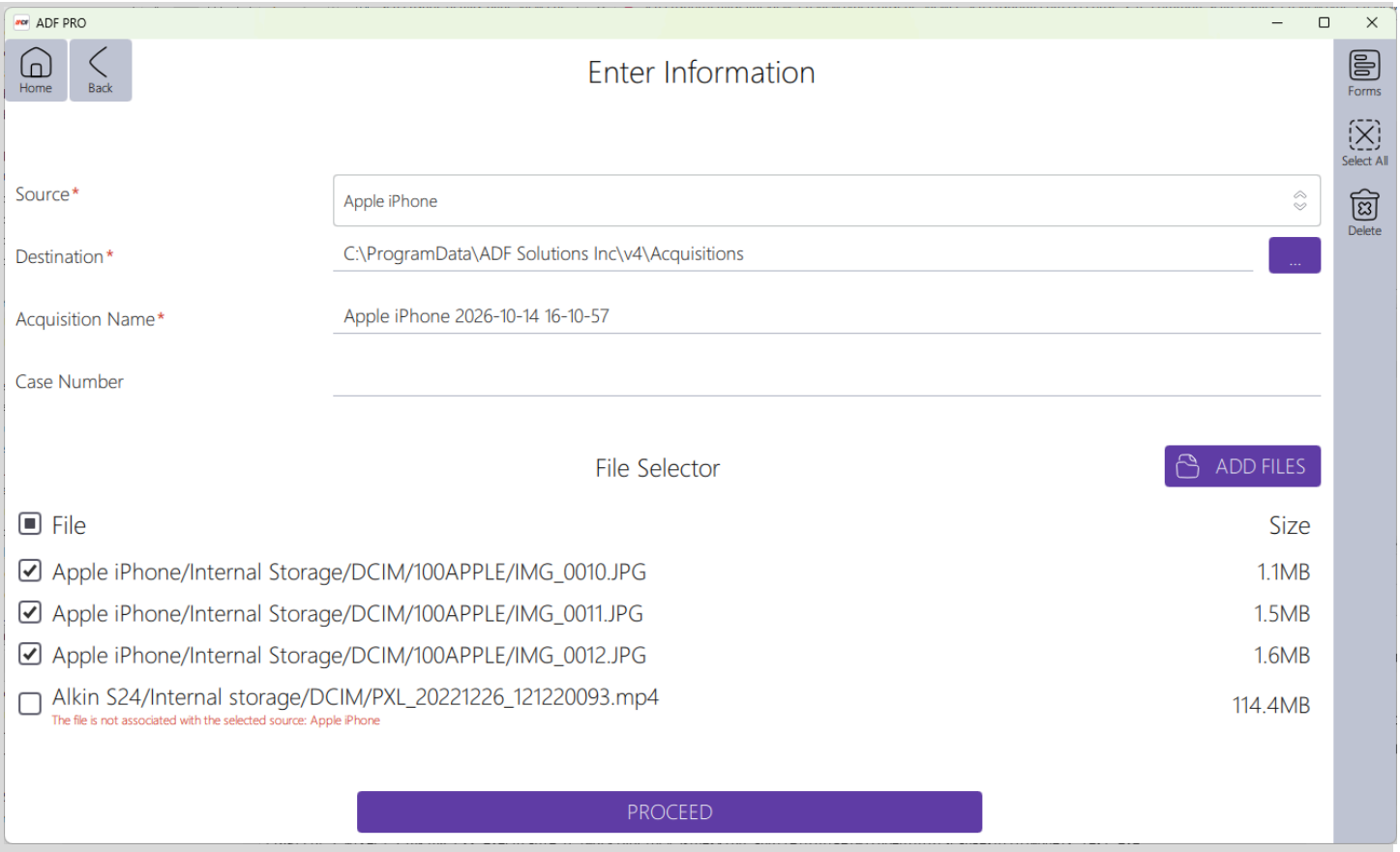
This document applies to the following applications		
ADFPRO Mobile & Computer Triage	DEI Digital Evidence Investigator	MDI Mobile Device Investigator

What is the Collect Files Feature?

The **Collect Files** feature is used to manually select individual files from a connected device for acquisition. Unlike a full acquisition, this method targets specific files of interest and is ideal for narrow and focused evidence collection.

Copyright ©2016-2026 ADF Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. U.S. Pat. No. 8,219,588 and 7,941,386. ADF PRO, Digital Evidence Investigator and Mobile Device Investigator are trademarks or registered trademarks of ADF Solutions, Inc. All other trademarks referenced herein are the property of their respective owners.

Collecting Files for Acquisition



1. Navigate to **Home** > **Investigate Device** > **Collect Files**
2. Using the **Source** dropdown menu, select the device you want to collect files from.
    a. For ADFPRO Mobile & Computer Triage and MDI Mobile Device Investigator connected phones will be listed in the Source dropdown.
    b. For ADFPRO Mobile & Computer Triage and DEI Digital Evidence Investigator system drives and connected external storage devices will be available for selection using the Source dropdown MDI Mobile Device Investigator with External Devices license add-on.
    c. Without the required license, a device is listed but greyed out with **License upgrade required** message.
3. Confirm or edit the **Destination** folder path and **Acquisition Name.** Enter the **Case Number** if needed (optional): it is stored with the acquisition, and View Acquisitions groups acquisitions by case number.
4. Click the **Add Files** button to open the **Select files to add** dialog and select one or more files (folders cannot be added).
    a. For local drives, it opens at the root or first partition the first time, then in the last folder used.
    b. For MTP devices, it opens in the last folder used, which may not be on the phone: browse to the device under This PC.

Copyright ©2016-2026 ADF Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. U.S. Pat. No. 8,219,588 and 7,941,386.ADF PRO, Digital Evidence Investigator and Mobile Device Investigator are trademarks or registered trademarks of ADF Solutions, Inc. All other trademarks referenced herein are the property of their respective owners.

File Validation

Only files from the currently selected device can be added to the collection list. If files from a different device are selected, an error message is displayed and the files are not added. Any files that have already been selected will be automatically ignored to prevent duplication.

Selected Files Table

The **File Selector** table displays a list of all selected files, showing their full paths and file sizes. Each entry is associated with the currently selected source device. If the source device is changed after files have been added, any files no longer associated with the new source will be flagged with an error, and the **PROCEED** button will be disabled.

The toolbar on the right offers **Forms** (forms filled in before the collection and saved with the acquisition, see the Managing Forms guide), **Deselect All** / **Select All**, and **Delete**, which removes the checked files from the list (or the highlighted file if none is checked). The files on the device are not affected.

Proceeding with Acquisition

The **PROCEED** button becomes enabled only when at least one valid file has been selected from the currently selected source device and all required information fields such as **Source**, **Destination**, and **Acquisition Name** have been completed. If these conditions are not met, the button remains disabled to prevent accidental or incomplete acquisitions.

After clicking the **PROCEED** button, the **Creating Logical Image** screen is displayed. This screen includes a progress bar showing the status of the acquisition, along with details such as the elapsed time and total file size. A cancellation option is available, allowing to stop the process if necessary.

Logical Image File Structure

When acquiring the collected files, an ADF data container is created in a folder named after the acquisition, inside the Destination folder. The files are stored in files.zip with their folder paths and their dates and times, and the acquisition details in metadata.zip, including the case number and a SHA-256 hash of each container file. The format of the data container is described in the ADF Data Container Structure guide. To scan the collected files, add the container on the Scan screen with Add Image > ADF Data Container.

Copyright ©2016-2026 ADF Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. U.S. Pat. No. 8,219,588 and 7,941,386.ADF PRO, Digital Evidence Investigator and Mobile Device Investigator are trademarks or registered trademarks of ADF Solutions, Inc. All other trademarks referenced herein are the property of their respective owners.