

Changing the Unit of Measurement for New Files

Reference Number: **KB-00024**

Last Modified: **July 2, 2025**

QUESTION



When I start a new drawing, my walls and other objects are measured in metric units. How do I change my unit of measurement for new files?

ANSWER

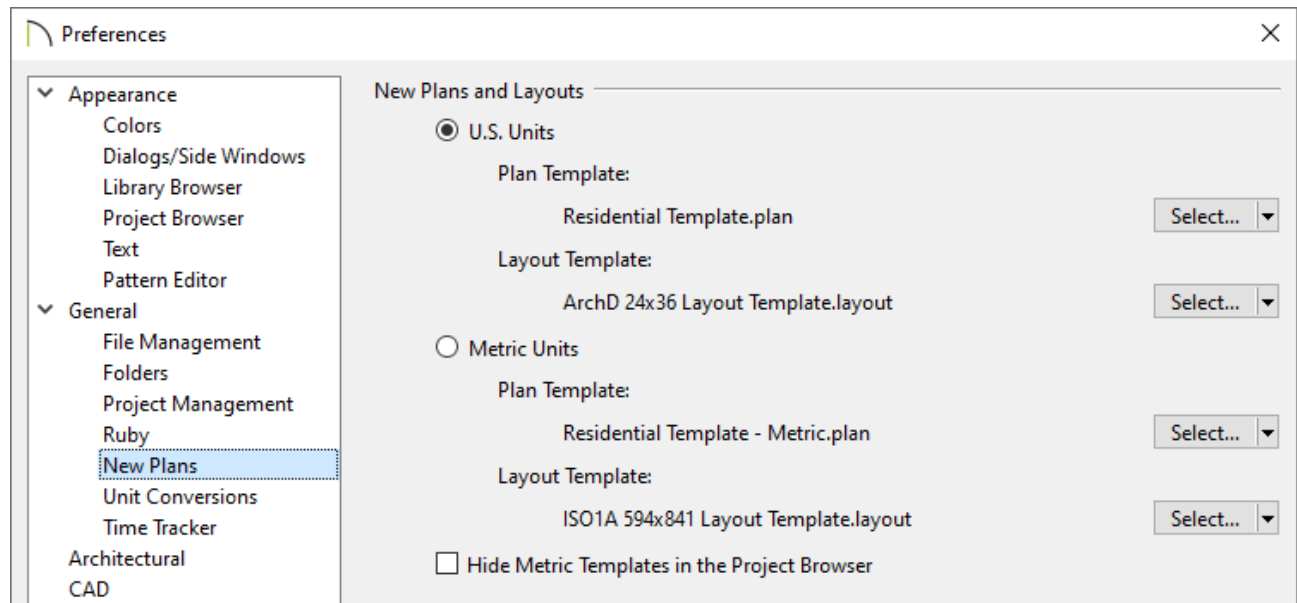
While it's possible to display both imperial and metric dimensions for any given plan, it's important to start a project using the preferred measurement type, as the measurement system assigned to the file cannot be changed after it has been created.

It is also critical that you use U.S. Unit files for your U.S. Unit templates and metric unit files for your metric templates, as the measurement system assigned to the file is used regardless of the Preference setting.

To specify the unit of measurement for new files within preferences

1. Select **Edit> Preferences**  if you're on a Windows computer or **Chief Architect> Preferences**  if you're on a Mac.
2. On the **NEW PLANS** panel of the **Preferences** dialog, select between two measurement types: **U.S. Units**, also known as standard, imperial, or SAE, or **Metric**

Units, also known as SI.



Note: The default plan templates for U.S. Units are the "Residential Template.plan" and "Kitchen and Bath Template.plan," while the default plan templates for Metric Units are the "Residential Template - Metric.plan" and "Kitchen and Bath Template - Metric.plan." Metric templates will typically include "M," "Metric," or "ISO" in the file name.

The default layout template for U.S. Units is the "ArchD 24x36 Layout Template.layout", while the default layout template for Metric Units is the "ISO1A 594x841 Layout Template.layout".

If the radio button is set to U.S. Units, but the template specified is a metric template, or vice versa, use the Browse button to navigate to and select the appropriate template.

If you don't see the Browse button, click on the drop-down arrow next to Edit Path, then click Browse.

Never specify a *.layout file as your plan template.

3. Click **OK** to apply the change. The file that is currently open will not be affected by the change; however, when you create a new project, plan, or layout, the specified

measurement system will be used or selected, by default.

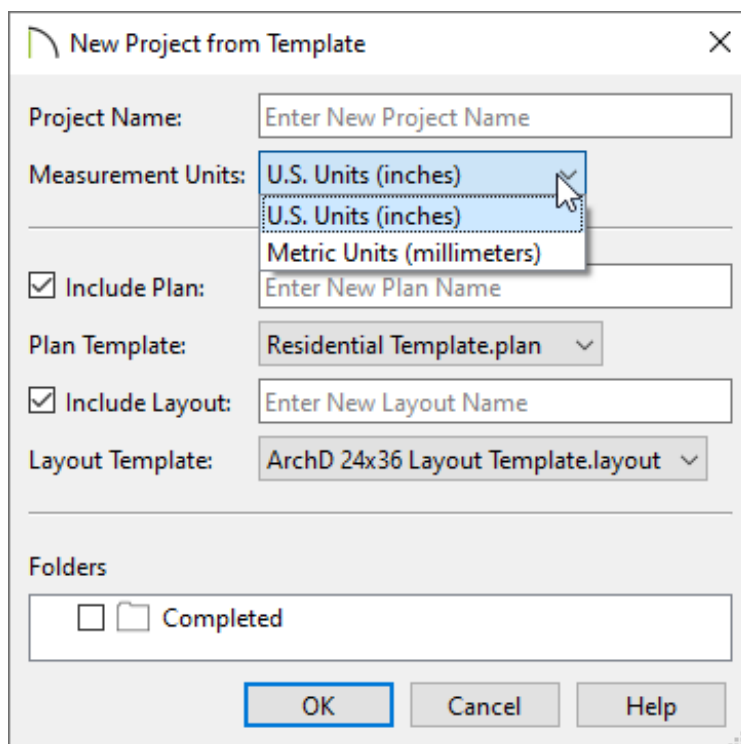
You can create custom plan and layout templates, then direct the program to refer to the template(s) when creating a new plan or layout. For more information on creating template files, please see the [Related Articles](#) section below.

To specify the unit of measurement for new files upon creation*

**Applies to X17 and newer versions when using Project Management. For more information on Project Management, see the [Related Articles](#) section below.*

1. Select **File> New Project** .

2. In the **New Project from Template** dialog:



The image shows the 'New Project from Template' dialog box. It has a title bar with a close button. The dialog contains several fields and checkboxes. The 'Measurement Units' field is currently open, showing a list with 'U.S. Units (inches)' selected. Other fields include 'Project Name', 'Include Plan' (checked), 'Plan Template' (set to 'Residential Template.plan'), 'Include Layout' (checked), 'Layout Template' (set to 'ArchD 24x36 Layout Template.layout'), and a 'Folders' section with a checkbox for 'Completed'. At the bottom are 'OK', 'Cancel', and 'Help' buttons.

Project Name:	Enter New Project Name
Measurement Units:	U.S. Units (inches) U.S. Units (inches) Metric Units (millimeters)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include Plan:	Enter New Plan Name
Plan Template:	Residential Template.plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include Layout:	Enter New Layout Name
Layout Template:	ArchD 24x36 Layout Template.layout
Folders	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed

OK Cancel Help


- Specify the desired **Measurement Units** using the drop-down menu.
- If Include Plan and/or Include Layout are checked, you can specify a **Plan** and/or


Layout Template using the drop-down menus. The default selections will match the templates specified in Preferences.


- Click **OK** and the new file(s) will be created based on the chosen settings.


Additionally, when a new plan or layout file is added to an existing project, an **Add New Plan/Layout to Project** dialog displays, where the **Plan/Layout Template** can be specified.

Related Articles

 [Creating and Using Layout Templates \(/support/article/KB-00737/creating-and-using-layout-templates.html\)](/support/article/KB-00737/creating-and-using-layout-templates.html)


 [Creating and Using Plan Templates \(/support/article/KB-00463/creating-and-using-plan-templates.html\)](/support/article/KB-00463/creating-and-using-plan-templates.html)

 [Displaying Metric and Imperial Units on a Single Dimension Line \(/support/article/KB-00055/displaying-metric-and-imperial-units-on-a-single-dimension-line.html\)](/support/article/KB-00055/displaying-metric-and-imperial-units-on-a-single-dimension-line.html)

 [Enabling or Disabling Project Management \(/support/article/KB-03210/enabling-or-disabling-project-management.html\)](/support/article/KB-03210/enabling-or-disabling-project-management.html)



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