

Recover Your Computer from a Black Screen

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Legal notice: We are sharing information in this publication that is used by qualified technicians to diagnose a black screen on a computer. We cannot gauge your experience in working on computers and therefore cannot guarantee that any of the following remedies and solutions will work for you. The author of this publication holds no responsibility for the damage you may cause to your computer. If you choose to repair your computer yourself, without using a qualified technician, please proceed to do so at your own risk.

If your computer is under warranty I strongly suggest you take it back to your place of purchase.

Introduction

When Windows works properly, it's relatively easier to ignore the wirings inside the PC and the processes that take place while your PC is booting. When WINDOWS is loaded and when your favorite desktop wallpaper appears you concentrate on the work you're trying to do. At this point, you probably don't even notice any of the things that might have happened with the operating system and inside your computer casing. You just wait for the desktop to appear so you can start using your computer.

One of the things that happen without your awareness is that the system checks what's called the boot sector on your hard disk. This is a physical location where it finds the necessary magnetically encoded information to get Windows loaded so that you can use it. We will discuss more about that a little while.

But when something goes wrong, it often requires an experienced guide to solve the problem and restore the computer to working condition. However I am into saving money and I do not like seeing people waste their money by getting a professional to repair their computer when the problem is actually very simple. Hopefully your problem will fit into this category.

I used to work on hundreds of computers that had black screen problems, as they were second-hand and came to me in dead condition. This is how I made my money. If I could bring a computer back from the dead, it was an absolute bargain because people had branded it as useless.

The purpose of this manual is to simply make you aware of the possible causes and hopefully solutions to your black screen computer problem. There is absolutely no guarantee that you will be able to repair your computer yourself but if you are willing to give a few simple tests a try, you never know your luck.

Black Screen of Death

Sometimes when you turn on your PC and nothing happens, all you see a blank dark screen then you come to know that something has gone wrong, the boot sector gets compromised. It might be caused by a virus infection. Or it might just be physical degradation of an aging hard disk. These are some of the more difficult causes to diagnose but it also could be something as simple as having the wrong device plugged in.

When you turn on your machine, nothing happens. All you see is a blank gray or black screen called the Black Screen of Death.

Like black screens we do have blue screens called as Blue Screens of Death (BSODs), or just Blue Screens, here we have one advantage that it displays text on a solid blue background.

When the failure is so complete that it interferes with the computer's ability to display an error message, the screen goes completely dark and we have this menace a **black screen** error.

When your PC torments you with a black screen (or, more accurately, a blank screen), all you know for sure is that the startup process has failed at some point. Unlike with a Blue screen, there's no crash file to analyze, no tools you can use to figure out the root cause.

The first step in the troubleshooting process involves figuring out where the problem lies, which can be anywhere in the chain of events that begins when you push the power button. It might be a bad system configuration, faulty hardware, defective third-party software, a buggy driver, a race condition or hang in a system service, corruption in the file system or registry, or malware.

If you see a black screen you should ask yourself these questions:

1. Did you install any programs or new drivers onto your computer?
2. Did you install any updates to programs?
3. Did you install any new hardware on your computer?
4. Has your computer been transported from one place to another?
5. Has your computer recently been shut down the wrong way?
6. Did your computer show any signs of a virus?

7. Have you left something plugged into your computer that should not be there?

Common things that can happen when your computer has a black screen:

- At boot up, it sound like it is booting as the CPU fan is running and the lights are on. It also finds the CD ROM but it won't boot from a CD either.
- Sometimes the computer has a black screen and the power switch light will be green and then turns to orange or amber. Everything is running.
- Everything seems to be running but you can't see anything on the screen, not even a flashing cursor.
- You thought Windows was loading but all you see is a black screen and a flashing underscore or cursor.
- Your Windows has loaded but there is no desktop and you can see your mouse and move it around the screen. The screen is black.

Common causes of a black screen:

- Black Screen of Death is displayed when the operating system fails to boot due to a missing file, corrupt startup.
- Black Screen of Death can also be replicated when you enable file compression on all files resulting in the compression of the operating system.
- A black screen with boot failure may also be caused by bios corruption.
- Hardware malfunctioning.
- Software/application/driver incompatibility.
- Another common cause is malware that has installed itself using windows vulnerability.
- Another potential cause would be a corrupt user profile.
- You did not shut your computer down correctly.

Please observe the screen shot below:

Have you ever seen the window below show up when you start your computer? When people see this screen saying that the computer did not start successfully because it was not shut down correctly, they often press **start Windows normally**.

This is a risk in itself, as the computer is telling you that there was an error and you are ignoring it. After restarting from this page people often end up with a black screen.

It would not hurt to simply boot into [safe mode](#) just to be "safe". You can also choose [last known good configuration](#), also just to be "safe".

```
We apologize for the inconvenience, but Windows did not start successfully.
A recent hardware or software change might have caused this.

If your computer stopped responding, restarted unexpectedly, or was
automatically shut down to protect your files and folders, choose Last Known
Good Configuration to revert to the most recent settings that worked.

If a previous startup attempt was interrupted due to a power failure or because
the Power or Reset button was pressed, or if you aren't sure what caused the
problem, choose Start Windows Normally.

Safe Mode
Safe Mode with Networking
Safe Mode with Command Prompt

Last Known Good Configuration (your most recent settings that worked)

Start Windows Normally

Use the up and down arrow keys to move the highlight to your choice.
Seconds until Windows starts: 29
```

Quick step action plan

Check all your cables

1. Check to see that or you're plugs are securely plugged in and there is nothing connected that should not be there. This includes having a small USB flash drive plugged in while you are trying to start the computer.

Check for faulty devices

2. Check for bent pins or faulty devices. Unplug printers and external hard drives. Also check the ends of connections to see if there are any bent pins. For example a bent pin on the end of the keyboard cable can cause a black screen.

Check hardware

3. Check your internal hardware. Check to see if your hard drive and CD drives are plugged in correctly and securely. If you have recently transported your computer from one place to another this could dislodge the CPU all loosen certain cables. Also check your computer memory as this is one of the number one reasons for a black screen.

Last known good configuration

4. Restart your computer and press F8 to get to the advanced options menu. Choose to start with the [last known good configuration](#).

Enabled low resolution video or enable VGA mode

5. If you are playing a game on your computer and it shut down and when you restart you only have a black screen, you need to restart the computer. When restarting press F8 to go to the advanced options menu, and choose "enable low-resolution video" or "enable VGA mode".

Connecting a TV or another monitor

6. If you have recently changed monitors or connected your computer to a TV try restarting and pressing F8 to get the advanced options menu, then choose "enable low-resolution video" or "enable VGA mode". You can also try pressing the Fn key on your keyboard and F5 or F6 at the same time.

Start in safe mode

7. If you can start your computer in [safe mode](#) you should be able to choose to do a system restore, providing you have not disabled this feature.

On-board video vs install video card

8. If you are just set up your computer when plugged all the cables in, check to see if the monitor is plugged into the on-board video plug when you actually have a PCI or AGP video card installed. Trust me I have done this myself. Simply move the plug to the correct position.

Both Black Screens and Blue Screens are symptoms of very serious problems. When one of these screens appears, it almost always means that Windows has shut down everything that was running when it detected the problem.

A Black Screen is exactly what the name suggests: the monitor goes completely dark, with absolutely no information or images in the display, and there's no response from the keyboard, the mouse, or any other input device. For all practical purposes, the computer has frozen up. If a Black Screen error occurs, you will probably lose whatever work you were doing when the computer failed. More often than not, a Black Screen is a symptom of a hardware failure. Unfortunately, a Black Screen doesn't provide any specific information about the cause of the failure; since it can't display any text at all, Windows can't tell you anything about the problem, so you must resort to more general troubleshooting methods.

When they occur, the only thing you can do is to turn off the computer and turn it back on again. If you're lucky, the Black Screen was caused by some kind of temporary problem and restarting Windows will allow you to get back to whatever you were doing before it appeared.

If restarting the computer doesn't work, or if the Black Screen appears again, you will have to figure out what has gone wrong.

But all is not lost. If you know what to do, you can recover from this seeming tragedy.

A brief on what happens when you switch on your PC

Every time you turn on your computer, the machine and Windows OS perform a series of actions, always in the same order: First, the read-only memory basic input/output system (ROM BIOS) performs a series of diagnostic tests to confirm that the processor and memory are working properly. Then it tests some of the computer's other components, including the hard drive and the video display. When those tests are complete, the BIOS runs the first of a series of programs that lead to starting the full Windows operating system. In other words, the whole startup process uses a relatively simple program located on a memory chip to start other, more complex software in several stages.

The power-on self test (POST) is the first thing that happens when you turn on the computer. During the POST, the central processor uses instructions in the BIOS firmware (software located in a memory chip on the computer's motherboard) to confirm that the power supply is working properly, run some memory and hardware

tests, find operating system software on a hard drive or some other storage media, and set the configuration options specified in the BIOS.

When the computer detects a problem during the POST, it either displays a text message that describes the error, or it sounds a series of beeps (actually, beep codes). If the problem is so serious that it will not allow the computer to work properly (such as a massive memory failure), the system will either lock up or turn off the computer completely.

After the computer completes the POST built into the motherboard, it may run additional tests on some of the other components, including the hard drive and the video adapter. Each of these tests can produce its own set of error messages.

When the POST is complete, the computer tries to load the operating system software stored on the hard drive, a floppy disk, a CD, or some other storage device.

If BIOS does not discover any problems, it locates the boot sector on the startup drive and runs a Windows boot loader program called ntldr (NT Loader or boot loader). Ntldr takes over control of the computer from the BIOS.

Windows uses the information gathered by ntdeTECT.com to identify and configure the various hardware devices that it uses to send, receive, and store data. This includes the keyboard and mouse; disk drives and other data storage devices; the video adapter that controls the monitor display; the I/O(input and output) ports, including the serial, parallel, Ethernet, and USB ports; and any other input or output devices installed in the expansion slots on the motherboard. NtdeTECT.com also reads certain information from the BIOS firmware, including the time and date.

The file ntoskrnl.exe in your Windows installation is the Windows kernel; it contains the core of the Windows operating system. The ntldr program loads the kernel into memory, along with a file that contains information about the specific hardware installed on this computer. Once these two files (ntoskrnl.exe and the hardware file) load successfully, Windows starts a series of programs called the "Windows executive" that reads configuration information from the Windows Registry and starts the secondary programs and background services that have been set to load during startup. Once the kernel finishes running the startup instructions in the Registry, it runs the Session Manager program (smss.exe), which, among several other important functions, shifts Windows from text mode to graphics mode. In other words, this is the point at which you begin to see graphic images on your screen.

At this point, Windows is in control of your computer. The logon routine requests the current user's username and password (if any). Once that user logs in, Windows

loads any additional startup programs specified in the Registry for that user's account.

The Registry specifies a set of logon scripts, startup programs, and services for each user. These might include enhancements to the core Windows operating system, security (such as antivirus or antispyware) programs, and other utility programs that run in the background. Once Windows finishes running those scripts and all specified programs and services have started, the Windows startup sequence is finished, your Windows desktop is visible along with your favourite wallpaper, and the computer is ready to use. Well this is how things work.

That is the general procedure or sequences between the starting of your PC and the appearance of the desktop.

Things can go wrong

When everything is working properly, all of this takes longer to describe than it takes to complete. The whole startup process should take no more than two or three minutes, unless there's some time-consuming program (such as a complete antivirus scan) included among the list of programs that run automatically after logon.

Obviously, there are a lot of separate processes involved in starting Windows. Each of the phases discussed depends on the ones that precede it; if something goes wrong in any of them, the whole sequence will probably stop. So the key to troubleshooting a start-up failure is to identify the particular start-up phase that failed and the individual process that failed within that phase.

When startup fails, the monitor can go dark:

If that is the case we have in our hand what we call a black screen of death, so how can we go for the resurrection of the PC. There are few things we can try (not just one) to do the rescue work.

You must not panic at this stage, as the computer could be taking an overly long time to start. Be patient and wait until you are sure that is not going any further than the black screen you see. Everything you do from here must be done slowly as rushing and trying too many things at once could ruin your computer even further.

To begin trying to fix this problem, first try restarting the computer. In some cases, the failure will have been caused by a temporary problem that disappears when you reboot. This kind of temporary glitch can be hugely irritating, but the repair is relatively painless, except for the data you might have lost when Windows failed.

As I stated before, do not rush into anything. When you are sure that your computer is not loading any further, you need to shut down the computer by pressing the on switch in for five seconds. If you have a reset button on the front of your computer case then you should press this. If you find that you still have a black screen when the computer starts, you will need to start troubleshooting.

Before moving ahead lets have a look at BIOS:

BIOS or The Basic Input Output System contains information like boot sequence, boot devices, and other hardware information. You might need to access your BIOS to enable your computer to boot from a CD instead of the installed operating system on your hard drive.

Getting into BIOS: First, turn OFF the computer. Wait a minute or so before turning it on again.

When your computer is starting you want to press certain keys on your keyboard to enter setup which is your BIOS.

You can look in your owner's manual to see what key gets you into SETUP mode.

Otherwise please see the hint below.

HINT: most computers use either the F2 key or the delete key to enter setup. When your computer starts normally, it usually flashes a message at the top or bottom of the screen telling you to press this key if you want to enter setup. Look for it the next time you boot up.

See more details about [how to get into your bios and change the settings](#).

Let's continue with the problem at hand -the black screen of death

The various instances of this menace:

PLEASE NOTE: You can skip to any section of this document by pressing the heading.

1. [You have logged into Windows to see the appearance of a black screen](#)

The system goes blank after windows logon. The desktop doesn't appear, it stays dark, and what we hear or see - noises of hard disk spinning, CPU fan running, hard disk activity LED glowing, but the monitor has dark or greyish appearance. No graphical activity whatsoever or if we are lucky enough we may have My computer icon on the lone and dark desktop.

2. [You see a black screen with a flashing cursor](#)

The black screen of death can be observed even before the logon screen. This menace can become apparent just when the windows about to start loading.

3. [Windows stops loading after the appearance of the Windows progress bar](#)

System powers on but won't boot from installed operating system.

If you're able to watch system messages during the Power On Self Test (POST) routine but the system seems to stop responding before you get to the Windows logo or to a login screen, there might be problems with the startup files on your hard disk, or a recent configuration change (software or driver) might have interfered with the ability of the shell to load.

4. [I started the computer and it has a black screen with fans running.](#)

We might have this problem when we switch on our machine and we see nothing, no flashing of POST (power on self test) or logo of manufacturer (of mother board or the PC manufacturer). Still there is some noise CPU fan running, hard disk spinning, or LED blinking. But to our amusement nothing is happening on the screen (no display).

5. [I was working on the computer and the screen went black.](#)

And there are occasions when working in the windows with some application, and suddenly with no warning at all we have a crash and the screen goes black.

6. Blue Screen Warnings

You have received various blue screens but now you have a black screen and your computer will not start.

7. You Suspect A Computer Virus

You either suspected that your computer had a virus or you tried to get rid of it yourself and have ended up with a black screen on your computer.

8. Computer Won't Start. Power on Button Light Flashing

How annoying it is when your computer won't start and you can see the computer power button flashing? One minute they are fine, and the next thing you know it is basically dead. I especially hate it when you press your power button and nothing happens. You can see the computer Power light blinking but nothing comes up on the screen.

These are some of the instances when things go bad and annoying, and we are on the edge of losing our valuable data. The bigger problem is that these nuisances come without warning. One moment the machine is running fine, then another moment we are left with a deserted look. The trouble shooting for such problems can be annoying also, because there can be a number of causes for these problems.

However, as for a fix for this, there's generally only one real solution: Reinstalling windows, or restoring from a factory image

So what we need is a multi approach strategy to overcome this menace. It is just like a check sheet; taking one probable cause at a time.

You have logged into Windows and see a black screen

The system goes blank after windows logon. The desktop doesn't appear, it stays dark, and what we hear or see - noises of hard disk spinning, CPU fan running, hard disk activity LED glowing, but the monitor has dark or greyish appearance. No graphical activity whatsoever or if we are lucky enough we may have My Computer icon on the lone and dark desktop.

Let's just get one thing straight, you saw Windows load on the screen and you logged in, therefore it is not a problem with the graphics. It possibly could be a bad driver, however if you saw the Windows logo screen and the login screen your display is working to an extent.

1. The first thing to try is to hit CTRL ALT DEL keys on your keyboard and if task manager appears this is a good sign. On the **applications tab**, press on the **new task button**, located at the bottom of the screen. Type in **"Explorer.exe"**

Another reason could be that there might be a problem with your user profile. The second option on the System Recovery menu, System Restore, can roll back recent changes to a known good state, which might allow you to log on. If all else fails, try to start in Safe Mode and create a new user profile. If the new profile works, you can copy your data from the old profile and get back in business fairly quickly.

Boot the machine in safe mode, usually by pressing F8 key at the time of booting. Several options come up, select boot in safe mode.

Even though Safe Mode loads a limited version of Windows, it may be enough because it will often let you bypass whatever is keeping you from running Windows normally (such as a device or software conflict) and let you use troubleshooting tools and techniques to identify and solve a problem.

Safe Mode

Safe Mode is a special startup sequence that loads only the files and drivers needed to run Windows and nothing else. It's a valuable trouble shooting tool because it starts the core Windows services without any of the additional programs or services that normally start with Windows. If Windows won't start normally but it will start in Safe Mode, the cause of the problem is not in the Windows kernel.

There may be some software compatibility issue, use add/remove program feature to remove the most recently installed or updated software / application.

While still in safe mode, we can opt for system restoration utility, to restore the system to a back date to undo the changes that might have caused this problem.

Device Manager in Safe Mode

Also, the utility that comes handy is device manager, it records the drivers for the hardware installed in the machine, it might show yellow or red mark for warning or some serious changes to device drivers, we can always rollback the drivers or uninstall the drivers.

If Windows appears to start properly in Safe Mode, take a look at the Device Manager (Start>Settings>System>Hardware>Device Manager) to confirm that all of the controllers, adapters, and other devices are working.

Another way of starting the device manager is:

1. Go to the start menu and choose run from the menu.
2. If you cannot get to the start menu press on the WIN key on the letter R to open the run box.
3. Type devmgmt.msc and click the OK button. The Device Manager window appears on the screen.

If there's a red exclamation point (!) or a yellow question mark (?) next to any of the items listed in the Device Manager, double-click that item and follow the troubleshooting procedure in the Properties window.

Disable start-up programs

If there's no apparent hardware failure, and if the Black Screen occurred during startup, go to the **System Configuration Utility** (Start>Run>msconfig) and try turning off the programs or services listed in the Services and Startup tabs, one at a time. Let the Configuration Utility restart Windows in Normal Mode.

If the Black Screen doesn't come back, you have identified the source of the problem; if it does reappear, go back to the Configuration Utility, restore the check mark that you had previously removed, and uncheck the next item in it will you buy an idea that it in any file in it and job all in a shopping you will be here is a list and drums formula something no other jobs on a job he list. Keep trying until Windows starts successfully.

The System Configuration Utility in detail

When in safe mode, we can try the system configuration utility.

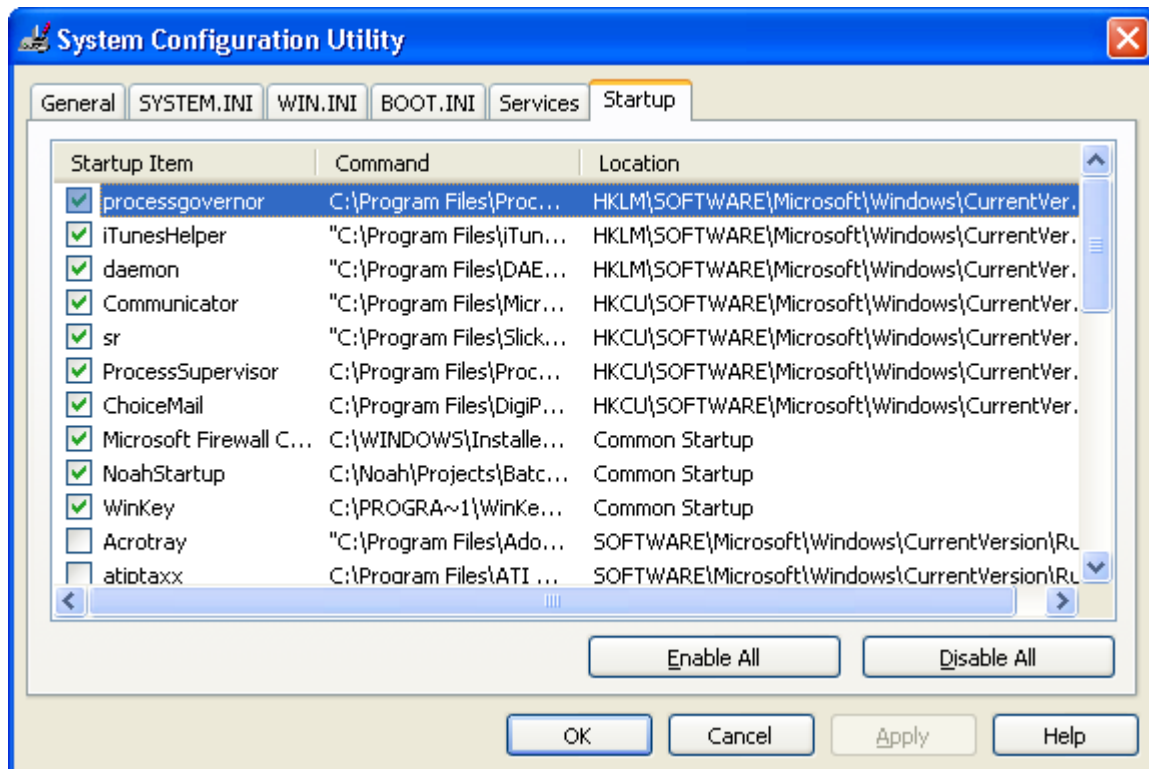
Usually Windows loads additional programs and background services after the core Windows software starts. The System Configuration Utility gathers all the startup programs into a single list and makes it possible to disable each program.

As a troubleshooting tool, the Configuration Utility can instruct Windows to skip one startup program at a time during startup; if Windows starts successfully without one of the programs, that one is probably the source of the problem.

To run the System Configuration Utility:

1. Go to the start menu and choose run from the menu.
2. If you cannot get to the start menu press on the wing key on the letter are to open the run box.
3. Enter msconfig, and click OK.

The System Configuration Utility window has some tabs. The General tab contains a list of individual commands, programs, and services that normally start as part of the Windows startup sequence.



The two tabs, Services and Startup, open pages that list the programs and services that load during the final startup phase. If the Windows desktop appears on your screen but the computer never completes the startup sequence, the source of the problem is probably one or more of the items listed on these pages.

To identify the specific program or service that is causing the problem: Open the System Configuration Utility (Start>Run>msconfig)> Select the Services tab or the Startup tab>At the left side of the list of Services or Startup Items, click one of the check boxes to remove the check mark. The next time you restart Windows, the program or service on the same line as the unchecked box will not start> Click the OK button at the bottom of the window.

The Configuration program will ask if you want to restart your computer now. Watch the screen as Windows restarts. If Windows starts normally, the program or services you unchecked was the source of your startup problem. If Windows continues to

hang, use the Reset button of the computer to restart the computer, and press the F8 key to start in Safe Mode. Open the System Configuration Utility again. Select the Services tab or the Startup tab, and restore the check mark that you removed in earlier. Uncheck the next item in the list and repeat the restart process.

Continue to disable one program or service at a time; then restart the computer after each modification until you isolate the program or service that is causing the startup problem. This can be a tedious and time-consuming process, but it really is the best way to isolate the program that is keeping Windows from starting properly.

Once you have identified the program that is giving you grief, there are several things you can do. If it's not an essential program, the best thing to do is to uninstall it. If it's a program you use all the time, try uninstalling it and reinstalling.

When you open the System Configuration Utility, you probably won't recognize all of the programs and services listed in the Services and Startup tabs. Some of these might be useful programs or obscure parts of Windows, but it's quite possible that some other programs have added themselves to the startup list without your knowledge or permission. Each of these programs increases the amount of time needed for Windows to start and ties up some small amount of the computer's memory that could otherwise be used for more valuable work, so it's a good idea to permanently disable them. But how can you tell which programs and services are essential and which are junk? In some cases, the name of the startup item or service or the text of the command is a giveaway, but other names are more cryptic.

For an explanation of any unfamiliar program or service, you can always use a web search tool (such as Google) to find a description of the name you see in the Startup Item or Service column. Several websites are dedicated to explaining most of the items that appear in the Configuration Utility, with a recommendation for each item to either keep or disable it.

Don't worry about turning off an essential program by accident. If Windows won't restart properly, you can restore a startup item by replacing the check mark next to its name. You might have to work through the list and turn startup items on one at a time to find the essential one, but you won't do any permanent damage by turning something off just to see what happens.

NOTE: If Windows will run in Safe Mode but it won't start normally, you can usually isolate the problem to one of the add-in drivers or services that normally start with Windows.

Changing your screen resolution

A black screen can also be caused by display driver problems, or selecting a mode that the monitor cannot display. So when in safe mode, change the resolution to a more stable and hardware compatible resolution or revert to default graphical setting. Remove/ uninstall the display driver updates, might be the display drivers are not compatible with your version of windows operating system.

Corrupt registry entry

One more critical source of problem could be the windows registry. During updates or through malwares the registry can get corrupted. After taking backup of the registry, the registry can be edited using freely available registry cleaners (or can go for professional registry cleaners, if you don't mind spending on its purchase), or can do it manually through registry editor. Go start > run > regedit.

WARNING: This should only be tried if you know what you are doing. Playing with registry editor can seriously worsen the case. It can cause irreparable damage to the system leaving you with your precious data lost.

That's why it is always important to make backups of your data regularly. You never know the menace (BSOD) is round the corner.

Of course there are other ways to get over to this problem, after pressing F8, we also get options like restore to last good configuration, through this the system can be restored to last known good configuration.

Safe Mode is a troubleshooting tool. Your desktop in Safe Mode will probably look quite different than it usually looks (different resolution, larger text and icons, no background image), because Safe Mode does not load the configuration file that controls its appearance. Because Safe Mode supports only essential devices and services, including the mouse, the keyboard, the hard drives and the CD drive, and most VGA display controllers, when Windows is running in Safe Mode, you won't be able to use audio devices, printers, or most other peripheral devices. Safe Mode is also useful because it can sometimes allow you to bypass the problem that was interfering with startup and run Windows with enough power to support many applications.

Restart the computer in safe mode with command prompt

Sometimes when you cannot get into safe mode and all other avenues do not work you can try to restart your computer in safe mode with the command prompt. This will bring up a command prompt (cmd.exe) instead of starting Windows and Explorer.exe.

This can be a backdoor way in if you make it to the command prompt area. When you get there you can type in the command, Explorer.exe and press enter. Hopefully it will start Windows Explorer in safe mode and from there you can maybe do a system restore.

Returning to the Last Known Good Configuration

If Windows won't start after you install a new program or device driver or an update or patch to existing software, the Last Known Good Configuration tool can often solve the problem by returning the computer to the state it was in before the new software was installed and any other recent configuration changes took place.

Every time Windows starts successfully, it stores a copy of the current configuration in the CurrentControlSet section of the Registry. The copy is called Last Known Good. As the name suggests, the Last Known Good Configuration tool returns the computer to that configuration and ignores any changes that might have occurred since then. By returning to the last known good configuration, you can sometimes fix Windows so that it will start; this is kind of like turning back time.

To return to the last known good configuration, follow these steps:

With no disks in the CD drive or the floppy disk drive, restart the computer>When the results of the POST appear on your screen, press the F8 key until the Windows Advanced Options menu appears > Use the up and down arrow keys to highlight the Last Known Good Configuration option, and press the ENTER key.

Windows might restart using the LastKnownGood control set.

If the LastKnownGood control set can load Windows, the computer should restart, and Windows should start with the old configuration settings.

If neither Last Known Good Configuration nor Safe Mode works, you might have to use the Recovery Console to remove one or more damaged system files or the Windows CD to completely reinstall Windows.

The system goes blank (dark) , after windows logon. The desktop doesn't appear, it stays dark, and what we hear or see - noises of hard disk spinning, CPU fan running, hard disk activity LED glowing, but the monitor has dark or greyish appearance. No graphical activity whatsoever. This is quite similar problem like the one listed above but with a little difference. We might have a cursor or mouse pointer blinking on the greyish monitor.

This time you can pinpoint your cause to one or very few anomaly, mostly being the drivers, software / application incompatibility and more specifically look for display

adapters. Sometimes after windows updates this anomaly has observed. This thing can also be observed after we run the windows verification tool. The verification has failed, after sometime the windows crashes and we are left with a dark display with nothing on screen – absolute dark.

There is one thing that we can try specifically for this type of problem and can also be tried for the above case (A). When the screen is dark after starting the system and after the logon screen, try ctrl + alt + del key combination to launch the task bar, in the application tab go for new task and type explorer.exe. Sometimes it works, it is still not clear what triggers windows not load its graphical capabilities, so we can force or tell windows by doing so to start or initiate its GUI capabilities.

If that doesn't work try loading the windows in safe mode or safe mode with command prompt (by pressing F8 key). If we opt for safe mode with command prompt, just write in 'explorer.exe' (without the quotes) once the command prompt appears. This will load the GUI.

In safe mode try removing the last or latest software or application that you installed. In device manager try removing or rollback of the drivers that were updated.

Check for malwares or virus like activities.

Also try for system configuration utility, look for abnormal start up program (not in your knowledge) and disable them and restart the system to check if the system has restored to its old self (with your favourite wallpaper). We might have to repeat the iteration several times if more than one suspicious or unknown programs have cropped up in the start up list. But make sure to uncheck for the programs that were checked previously (at least they are not causing the system to crash or are not causing the BSOD, otherwise the system was able to show fully functional desktop). This is an iterative process, and when the system desktop appears with its entire aura, we have zeroed down on the program that caused the system to go dark. Now next thing is simply remove that program and the registries related to that program.

Your display drivers have been updated knowingly or unknowingly, also it may be possible that one or other display driver files have been corrupted. Once in safe mode try uninstalling the drivers, and restart the windows and let the windows load default drivers for your display adapter. If the Windows has appeared with the desktop, your problem has been solved. Then refer to the manufacturer to get the digitally signed or compatible drivers for Windows operating system that you are using. You can also contact the manufacturer for the updated drivers.

In safe mode, we always have the option of system restoration; mind it that it is handy tool in our troubleshooting armoury.

NOTE: Keep in mind, once in safe mode; try to take the backup of your data.

If the system doesn't load in safe mode, try to load windows with last known good configuration.

If that also doesn't work look for recovery console and get the corrupted windows file repaired / replaced.

If these tactics do not work you might have to look for fresh Windows install.

The Boot Log: It is a History of Startup Programs.

When Windows fails to start correctly, the failure may occur because one or more of the programs in the boot sequence does not load. A list of startup programs that shows whether each program has started can help you find the specific source of the problem. There is one; it's called the Boot Log.

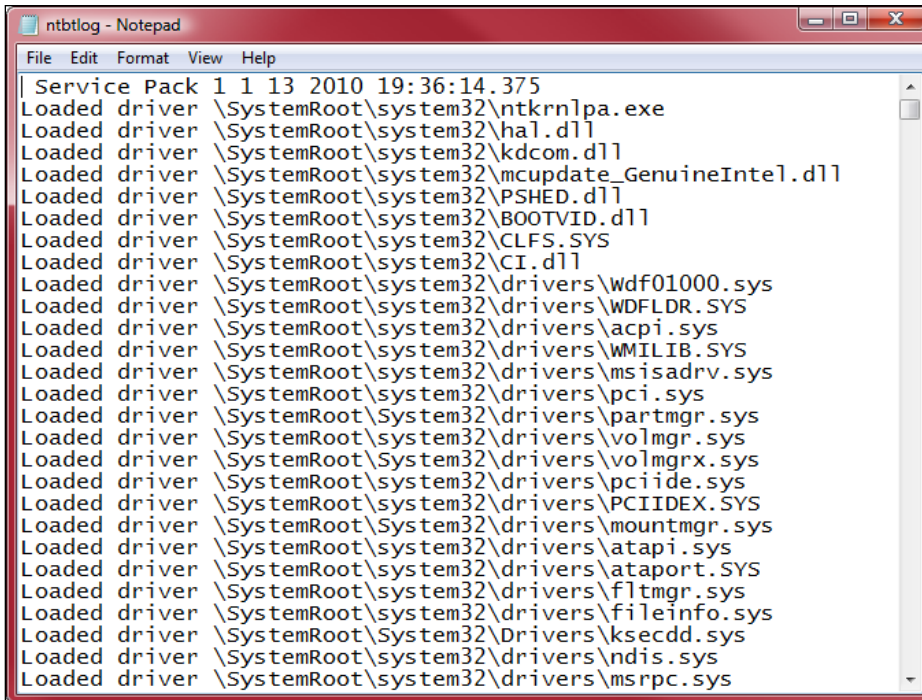
The Boot Log does not store this information every time Windows starts, but when Windows fails to start properly you can turn on the logger and then restart the computer to create a new log.

The Boot Log itself is contained in a file called nbtlog.txt, located in the system root directory (usually C:\Windows). If you can't find nbtlog.txt in that directory, just search for it, using windows search program.

To turn on the Boot Log: Find the existing nbtlog.txt file, and rename it nbtlog-old.txt and Restart Windows. Once the computer shuts down and begins to start again, press F8 repeatedly to open the Windows Advanced Options menu. Select Enable Boot Logging from the Options menu, and press ENTER.

Windows will load normally, but it will also create a new Boot Log. If Windows does not start successfully once you have turned on the BootLog, restart the computer in Safe Mode. To read the Boot Log, change to the system root directory (probably C:\Windows), and double-click the nbtlog.txt icon. The Boot Log will appear as a text file.

NOTE : The Boot Log includes a status line for each driver that loads with Windows.



```
ntbtlog - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
| Service Pack 1 1 13 2010 19:36:14.375
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\ntkrnlpa.exe
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\hal.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\kdcom.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\mcupdate_GenuineIntel.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\PSHEd.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\BOOTVID.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\CLFS.SYS
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\CI.dll
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\wdf01000.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\WDFLDR.SYS
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\acpi.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\WMILIB.SYS
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\msisadrv.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\pci.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\partmgr.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\volmgr.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\volmgrx.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\pciide.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\PCIIDEX.SYS
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\mountmgr.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\atapi.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\ataport.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\fltmgr.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\fileinfo.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\Drivers\ksecdd.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\ndis.sys
Loaded driver \SystemRoot\system32\drivers\msrpc.sys
```

The top line of the Boot Log shows the version of Windows and the date and time that the log was created. Each of the following lines lists the status of a driver: either Loaded driver or did not load driver. A Did not load driver log entry tells you that Windows could not find the driver file or the file is damaged.

The Boot Log lists the drivers in the order in which Windows tried to load them. In most cases, the most important entry in a Boot Log for a failed startup is at the bottom of the list because that entry probably shows the name of a critical file that failed to load.

NOTE: When the name of a driver file appears in the Boot Log without a path, that file is located in the root directory, which is the one that contains the ntbtlog.txt file. If a driver file is in a different folder, the Boot Log shows the file's full path address (such as \WINDOWS\System32\DRIVERS\ filename).

Solving Those "Did Not Load" Errors

You will probably see several Did not load items in the Boot Log, even if Windows seems to have loaded successfully and appears to be working properly. Some of the drivers or services that do not load will be relics from programs or devices that you have removed from your system but still contain references in the Registry. You can remove those references with registry cleaner tool, but they're basically harmless. However, if you find one or more Did not load driver items at the end of the Boot Log, they are probably the ones that caused Windows to stop loading. With this

information in hand, the best approach to repairing the startup routine is to work backward from the end of Boot Log.

Once you identify the drivers that failed to load, you can determine if a driver is damaged by examining the file properties for the driver file.

If the file is completely missing, or if the file properties list show that the file size is 0 bytes, or if the date and time stamp shows a date that is different from the date you installed Windows (the "Created:" and "Modified" date stamps should be the same as the ones for C:\Windows\explorer.exe and C:\Windows\notepad.exe), the file is damaged. That's what "did not load" means.

If your file is damaged, you can do one of two things:

Copy the damaged or missing file or files from another computer running the same Windows version and the same service pack.

Reinstall Windows from the distribution CD. Use the repair option rather than a full Windows installation.

If another driver fails to load after you restore the first damaged file, you may need to run a new Boot Log to identify and restore that driver file. When a problem in Windows forces the operating system to fail, the computer often displays an error screen, known as a Stop message that describes the cause of the problem (with Blue screens).

A black screen with a flashing cursor

Amazingly, when it comes to computer errors, getting a black screen with a flashing cursor is far better than just a plain old black screen. We have to look on the bright side here and presume that the fact that you can see a flashing cursor is a good sign. At least we can treat this as a bit of clue on what to try when troubleshooting this black screen.

When the average computer user sees a black screen on their computer monitor panic immediately sets in. Both black screens and blues screens are known disasters that are dreaded by most. But as I said, seeing a black screen with a flashing cursor is not that bad.

Please note that this particular error has stopped your computer from entering Windows. It is not a black screen with a movable mouse cursor on the screen it is a black screen with a flashing cursor that has not entered Windows yet. If this error does not suit your symptoms please see [My computer has a black screen and will not boot](#) for more information.

What causes a black screen with a flashing cursor on a computer?

There are many possible causes for a black screen with a flashing cursor and I will try to mention as many as possible. Some causes of a black screen are incorrect shutdown of your computer, not waking from sleep mode, not knowing where to boot to, corrupt software, damaged start up, and the list goes on.

The last sleep transition was unsuccessful:

This is one that I have had a lot of experience with. People have the Windows sleep mode enabled on their computer and after to going to sleep, the computer does not wake up. This sounds crazy, I know. I have written an article on [The computer will not wake up from powering saving sleep mode](#).

When your computer will not wake up try starting your computer in safe mode. Simply start your computer and hit either the F2, Del, or sometimes the F10 key on the keyboard. When you enter Safe mode you should then shut your computer down correctly. A clean shut down. This should wake up the computer. Then you should disable the power saving mode as soon as you can because it will most likely do it again next time. To adjust your power saving sleep mode go to the control panel, then choose the power options icon.

Why doesn't the mouse and keyboard wake up the computer. Please see this [The computer will not wake up from powering saving sleep mode](#).

A device connected to the computer can cause a black screen with a flashing cursor:

Did you leave a USB flash drive connected to your computer or maybe an external hard drive? Either way, the computer might be trying to boot to this device but it is not a bootable device. Remove all devices and try to start your computer again.

Another cause could be that you have a faulty device such as a DVD drive or CD drive. The computer is trying to find all devices connected to the computer and comes across a problem device. This often causes a black screen with a flashing cursor. If you disconnect the faulty DVD drive your computer can start without errors. People are often aware of a faulty [DVD drive](#) because you might have had previous problems removing discs or opening the contents of a disc.

When you see a black screen with a flashing cursor you can almost come to the conclusion that your actual computer is fine because it is still running but just not loading into Windows. As we have seen, there are a number of causes which also equally creates a number of solutions.

Your boot options have mysteriously changed:

It's probably not a mystery, however for some reason your computer is trying to boot to other devices and not your hard drive. You can restart your computer and get into your bios to change these settings. Here's [how to get into your bios and change settings](#). When you are in your bios, change the boot order or boot priority to the first being the hard drive. Exit and save your settings.

This error can happen when the computer is not shut down correctly or you have another device plugged in.

You recently installed new software, updates, or drivers:

Getting a black screen with a flashing cursor is very common after installing new software, downloading updates, or even installing new drivers and devices. If this happens and you have either Windows Vista or Windows seven, your first port of call would be to insert the operating system disc. Although Windows xp is a bit more difficult to deal with, Windows seven and Vista will repair most problems for you. This is why you should try this method first.

This can happen after installing almost any piece of software including Windows updates, believe it or not! The problem is, if there are two programs clashing, there is not much you can do to stop this..One has to go. For this reason, when installing absolutely anything on your computer, including a simple toolbar, I recommend you create a restore point for safety reasons. Imagine if everyone actually stuck to that rule???

Anyway, if you see that flashing cursor you are almost guaranteed that your computer will boot from a CD or DVD. After all it is looking for something to boot to. Of course at this stage, when you see the flashing cursor, it is too late to insert the CD, and it is too early for other remedies.

When you insert your operating CD you must restart your computer. See the following instructions.

Restore your Windows 7 computer after having a black screen with a flashing cursor?

If you get the black screen of death using Windows 7 you can always try to recover a working system by using your Operating system disc!

1. Boot from the **Windows 7** operating system disc. If your computer is not set to boot from cdrom first then you need to be able to [enter the BIOS to change your boot options](#).
2. Choose your **language** from the list.

3. Choose the ***Repair your computer*** option on the install now section.
4. Choose the ***System restore*** option.
5. Choose a ***restore point***. If you have installed a program today that caused a problem choose a restore point prior to that?
6. Let it take you back to when you didn't have a problem.

These instructions above will work for Windows Vista as well.

Also see this article on [How to repair Windows XP without formatting](#).

Notes on having a black screen with a flashing cursor:

- This black screen tutorial has been split up into separate sections as people are getting confused with what to try for their actual problem.
- This tutorial is not about a black screen with a movable mouse cursor on the screen it is about a black screen with a flashing cursor that has not entered Windows yet.

Windows stops loading before the appearance of the Windows progress bar

System powers on but won't boot from installed operating system.

If you're able to watch system messages during the Power On Self Test (POST) routine but the system seems to stop responding before you get to the Windows logo or to a login screen, there might be problems with the startup files on your hard disk, or a recent configuration change (software or driver) might have interfered with the ability of the shell to load.

The problem can be caused due to the simplest of the reasons –you might have a disk in the floppy drive or the CD drive, but it does not contain the essential startup files.

To troubleshoot, try booting from the Windows installation disk or a system repair disk. Windows Repair option that checks for common startup issues and automatically fixes registry corruption, missing or damaged system and driver files, disk or file system metadata corruption, errors in boot configuration data, and incompatible drivers or updates. It can also detect memory and hard disk errors, although it can't repair them.

If you can't boot from the installation media or a repair disk, you probably have a hardware problem.

We might have a problem related with windows corrupt files like ntldr or corrupted boot record, or some hardware failure.

Here start the machine and press key F8 to start advanced system menu. And try to load windows in safe mode and see if the above mentioned tips work or not. Can also try with loading Windows to last known good configuration.

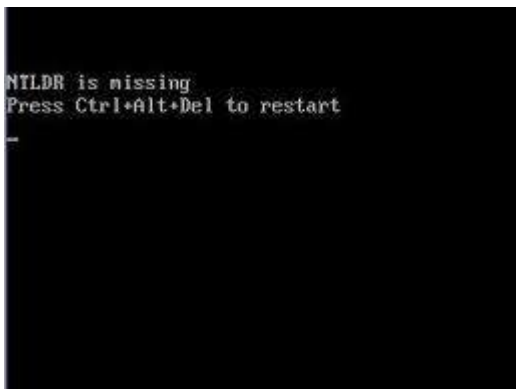
If none of these tactics work, then we zeroed down on fewer things like; corrupted Windows, hardware failure. As since the POST has been flashed, we need not to worry about motherboard or memory (RAM) failure. Though on careful observation of the POST, their conformance can be acknowledged. We may have to worry about the hard disk and the display adapters.

For windows corruption, its repairing can de done by the recovery console.

Recovery Console

The Recovery Console is a simple text-based tool for changing the file structure that controls Windows and repairing or replacing damaged files. The Recovery Console is a command-line interface that accepts a limited set of troubleshooting and maintenance commands. It's similar to the old DOS shell that we used before Windows and other graphical interfaces were introduced. When Windows will not start in either Normal Mode or SafeMode, you can often use the Recovery Console to disable a driver or service that is causing a problem, restore a damaged file or a corrupt Master Boot Record (MBR) on your hard drive, or fix a host of other potential problems.

If a Black Screen appears before Windows starts, it's possible that one of the startup files is seriously corrupted. Use the Recovery Console to replace the Master Boot Record (MBR), the boot sector, and the ntldr and Ntdetect.com files.



NOTE: The Recovery Console can be a powerful tool for finding and fixing certain types of startup problems, but if you don't know exactly what you're doing, it can also allow you to create new problems that will complicate the ones that are already on your computer or even completely trash Windows' ability to start. Therefore, it's best to use the Recovery Console only when you have detailed information.

Master Boot Record Problems: The Root of Everything

Microsoft describes the Master Boot Record (MBR) as "the most important data structure on the disk." If the computer's processor can't read the MBR, it won't make sense of anything else on the same drive or floppy disk. Without the MBR, the rest of the drive is useless.

So what exactly is MBR?

The MBR is stored in the first sector of each hard drive. When the POST is complete, the computer loads the MBR from the drive that contains the operating system software into memory and the MBR runs the ntldr startup program that loads Windows.

If the computer can't read the MBR—due to a corrupt file, a virus, or other damage to the hard drive—one of the following errors might be the cause:

Invalid partition table.

Error loading operating system.

Missing operating system. A disk read error occurred.

NTLDR is missing.

NTLDR is compressed.

For all of these error messages, we have in our hand corrupted windows start up or a hard – disk failure, more often than not these are the usual suspects in such cases.

The first thing to do when you encounter one of these errors is to place an antivirus boot disk in your computer's floppy drive or CD drive (which ever drive the computer tries to read first) and run an antivirus scan. Most commercial antivirus programs include an emergency boot disk that can perform a startup scan.

Warning: If your computer is infected with a virus and you use the FIXMBR command, you may be unable to start the computer. Before you use this command, make sure that the computer is not infected with a virus.

Black Screen may result because of some malware getting onto your computer and infecting it. The first symptoms you will see are: PC slowing down, Pop ups all over the Place, there may be unusual network activity. This means the malware is attempting to communicate with other computers and pass on your private information, such as credit card details and passwords and you can see the lights on your modem flashing like crazy, even when you are not using it, or the network activity lights on your taskbar constantly flashing.

This is a sign you need to take urgent action to not just protect your computer but your confidential information too from malware such as Daonol, also known as infostealer, which has been blamed (frequently) for this black screen and crashing problem.

You can avoid them by uninstalling any programs which you do not use or any free programs you have downloaded and seem to slow down your computer. One way malware enters your PC and triggers this problem is by being distributed with free software you download, leaving you looking for a black screen of death solution. Make sure your PC is equipped with an antivirus. If you have an [antivirus software](#) update it regularly and run a full system scan on a regular basis. This will find anything hidden in the depths of your computer.

Having a good firewall is a must, because even if your computer is infected a good firewall will recognise and block attempts by malware and spyware to send this information out of your computer.

You can also go for a [registry cleaner](#). This is part of the black screen of death solution, because even if malware has got into your computer and bypassed your antivirus it has to hide somewhere. When it does, it has to have an entry in the windows registry to enable it to work and by removing these entries you can stop this malicious software operating and decimating your computer and stealing your information

If the scan does not detect a virus, use the Recovery Console to restore the MBR, the ntldr file, or a corrupted boot sector. If it's not a virus, it will be a damaged file.

A shorty on ntldr:

After the ntldr runs the boot loader, it starts the Ntdetect.com program, which gathers information about additional devices installed in your computer. These

devices include the time and date set in firmware and the video adapter, keyboard, mouse, communication ports, disk drives, and other devices on plug-in expansion cards.

If ntldr detects a problem with any of these devices, it will display an error message during startup.

To see more information about "Computer stops responding with a black screen when you start Windows XP" Please refer to:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/314503>

Initiating Recovery Console

Enter into the BIOS setup and set the default boot device to CD-ROM, if this is not set to it. It might be set to hard disk (because that's where you normally boot from). Change this option to boot from CD. Click on save, then exit. Insert a Windows bootable CD into the CD drive and turn off the machine.

WARNING: What I mean by a Windows bootable CD is NOT something that came with your computer. That's probably a reinstallation CD which reinstalls Windows and gets your machine back to its original factory condition, usually the recovery discs. Here we are talking about the windows installation disc.

Note: There are many disaster recovery services and backup software products available in the market that can help you create the bootable CD. Two of the most highly rated are True Image from a company called Acronis and Shadow protect from a company named StorageCraft.

Recovery console for Windows XP

The best way to load and use the Recovery Console is to run it directly from the Windows CD. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Place the **Windows Operating CD** into the drive.
2. **Restart the computer** from the CD.
3. You will be prompted to "**press any key to start from the cd**". I usually press the space bar.
4. At the Welcome to Setup screen, press the **R key**.

Windows XP Professional Setup

Welcome to Setup.

This portion of the Setup program prepares Microsoft(R) Windows(R) XP to run on your computer.

- To set up Windows XP now, press ENTER.
- To repair a Windows XP installation using Recovery Console, press R.
- To quit Setup without installing Windows XP, press F3.

ENTER=Continue R=Repair F3=Quit

5. The **Recovery Console starts** and shows a list of Windows installations on your computer.
6. Enter the number of the version you want to use, and press the **ENTER** key. For example if you only have one version of Windows on your computer the number you enter will be 1.

```
Microsoft Windows XP(TM) Recovery Console.  
The Recovery Console provides system repair and recovery functionality.  
Type EXIT to quit the Recovery Console and restart the computer.  
  
1: C:\WINDOWS  
  
Which Windows installation would you like to log onto  
<To cancel, press ENTER)? 1  
Type the Administrator password: *****  
C:\WINDOWS>
```

7. The Recovery Console will ask for the **administrator password**. Type the same password you would normally use to log into Windows as an administrator, and press ENTER. If there is no administrator password just press the **ENTER** key. Hopefully you have not set an administrator password and you can just press enter.
8. When the Recovery Console accepts the password, it will display a **C:\WINDOWS>** prompt.

To close the Recovery Console, type Exit at the C:\ prompt.

As has been discussed earlier the BIOS built into your computer's motherboard uses ntlldr to begin the process of installing and running Windows. It uses NTDETECT.COM to find and configure input and output devices. If the BIOS can't

process either of these program files, Windows cannot load.



You can use the Recovery Console to restore a missing or damaged copy of ntlldr or the NTDETECT.COM startup file and to replace the Master Boot Record and the boot sector.

To enter a command into the Recovery Console, type the command at the C:\WINDOWS > prompt. Press the ENTER key at the end of each command to send it to the computer.

Below are some examples of commands to use.

Replace the ntlldr

To replace ntlldr, enter **copy drive: i386\ntldr**

In place of drive, use the drive letter for the CD drive. For example it might be D drive so you would enter **copy d: i386\ntldr**

Replace the NTDETECT.COM

To replace NTDETECT.COM, enter **copy drive: i386\ntdetect.com**

In place of drive, use the drive letter for the CD drive.

Replace the fixmbr for Windows XP

To replace the Master Boot Record, enter **fixmbr**

Replace the fixboot for Windows XP

To replace the boot sector, enter **fixboot**

The Recovery Console will ask if you want to Overwrite system? (Yes/No/All). Enter Y for yes each time the question appears.

NOTE: When the ntldr and NTDETECT.COM files have been damaged, you may also have other damaged system files at the same time. Using the Recovery Console to restore those files alone might not be enough to get Windows up and running, but it's a good start.

If things didn't work out the way we want, we may to look for the complete fresh installation of the Windows operating system.

Let's take the hardware failure; we can start with the hard disk. First of all turn off the computer, open the cabinet with the help of screw driver (be cautious of Electrostatic charge). Here is an article on [How to open a computer case safely](#).

Check if all the connections to the hard disk are proper, they are not loose. The data cable and the power cable are properly attached or not? If they are ok, then there might be a good chance that you have a faulty hard disk at your hand. Some bad sectors might have appeared.

Check Disk

They can be checked by entering for Chkdsk which is available from the Windows Recovery Console and can be a very valuable tool in dealing with a system that does not boot properly.

WARNING: if some of your files are located and stored on bad sectors on your hard drive, then running Chkdsk can make those files inaccessible.

The use of the Recovery Console for this command:

chkdsk drive: /R

Though there are many switches for the Chkdsk command in the Recovery Console, two are more commonly used those are:

/P : Does an exhaustive check of the drive and corrects any errors. Does not check for bad sectors

/R : Locates bad sectors and recovers readable information. Includes functions of /P

This is a way to check if the hard drive is having bad sectors and if they are found by the chkdsk command, and if you are lucky enough that your hard drive is relatively new and is still under warranty then you should contact your manufacturer and look for replacement. Otherwise you will have to shell out money in getting a new hard drive.

System recovery console for Windows Vista

If you want to enter the system recovery console for Windows Vista you will need your operating system disk, as with Windows XP.

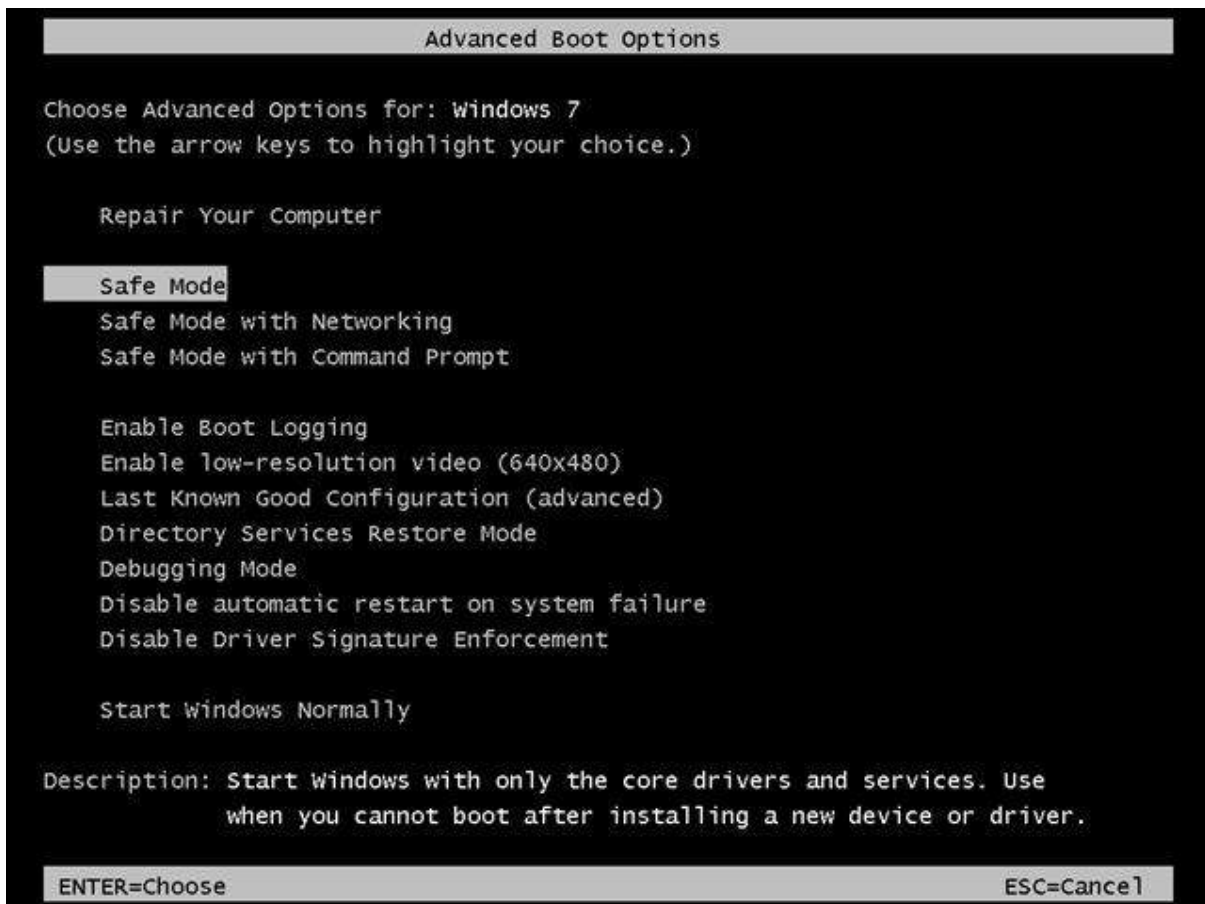
After you have booted to your Windows Vista operating system disk by restarting the computer, you will then get the option to click on "repair your computer". This part is similar to the Windows 7 system recovery as you can see below.

System Recovery for Windows Seven

Things have drastically changed if you are using Windows 7. To access the system recovery options all you have to do is restart your computer and press F8 to get to the advanced Boot options screen. First you should make sure you have not got a CD or any USB flash drives attached to your computer. You do not need to put a Windows operating system disc in.

PLEASE NOTE: If your computer has more than one operating system, use the arrow keys to highlight the operating system you want to repair, and then press and hold F8.

When you get to the advanced Boot options, simply choose ***repair your computer***. You can make your choices by using the arrow up and down keys on your keyboard. See the screen shot below.



Then the system recovery options will be displayed to you. See the screen shot below.



Here you can choose an option that will repair your computer for you. For example if you can almost load Windows, but not quite, then you should choose the **start-up repair**. If you have install something, which ruined your computer and gave you a black screen, then choose **system restore**.

Replace the Bootsect or MBR on a Windows 7 computer

To fix their MBR on Windows 7 you will need to have your operating system installation disc to proceed.

1. Insert your **Windows 7 installation DVD** into your DVD drive.
2. Make sure your system is set to boot from the DVD drive first. This can be changed in the **BIOS settings**. Most new systems will boot to the DVD or CD drive anyway.
3. When it says **press any key to boot from CD**, press a key on the keyboard to confirm. I usually press the space bar.
4. Now the **system recovery options** will show. Choose "**command prompt**" from the menu which is option five.



5. If your computer is in C drive we need to change it to the same drive that the disc is in. For example if your DVD disc is in D drive, at the command prompt we need to type "**D:**"
6. If your computer is already in D drive then you just need to change directories to where bar **bootsect.EXE** file is.
7. To change directories type in "**cd d:\boot**" and press enter. See the screen shot below.



8. When you see the command prompt that looks like this "**D:\boot>**", one of the following commands and press enter.
 - "**bootsect /nt60 C:**" if you have Win 7 installed in the C partition.

- **"bootsect /nt60 SYS"** to repair all system files on the main hard drive.
 - **"bootsect /nt60 ALL"** to repair the system partition or all partitions.
9. Now you can eject the DVD and restart your computer. You can type in **"shutdown -r -t 0"** at the command prompt to restart your computer.

Non System Disk Failure

We may get an error like "Non System Disk Failure": **A solution for Non System Disk Error**

Sometimes you might get an error message and that is often cryptic, it requires a more detailed explanation before you can correct the problem that produced it.

One of the most common startup error messages looks like this:

"Non-system disk or disk error"

"Replace and press any key when ready"

This message appears when the first disk drive or other storage device that the processor tries to read does not contain a copy of Windows operating system. The startup routine ignores drives with no media in them, but if there's a floppy disk or a CD in the startup drive, or if the processor can't find a copy of Windows on the hard drive configured as the C: (this is the default location of windows installation) drive, the computer will display a "Non-system disk" message. (Just because it can't find Windows doesn't mean that it's not there—it may simply be missing one or more key startup files.)

To solve this problem, make sure there are no disks in the floppy disk drive or the CD drive, and then press the space bar or some other key on your keyboard.

This will instruct the computer to try reading the startup drive again. If the same error message appears again, the problem is in your hard drive: the hard drive does not contain the Windows startup files, the startup files are on the drive but they are damaged, or the computer is having trouble reading the drive because the drive has been damaged or the cables to the drive are not connected.

You can also try to have your hard drive installed in your friend's system and check if that is detected in that other system. If it is not, then you know that the fault lies with your hard-drive. If the hard drive is detected, then you may have problem with your graphics card. The same can be done here, take out your graphics card and let the system start on the onboard VGA capabilities. If the Windows is loaded with the default onboard display adapter. Then your graphics card is at fault. You can also have installed on a friend's computer and check if the system boots on or not. If not, it is to confirm that we have a faulty graphics card at our hand. Contact your manufacturer for a possible replacement, if it is still under warranty. Else shell out money to buy a new graphics card.

Check if your BIOS need to be updated, nowadays more or less all manufacturers of the motherboard supply supplemental CDs that contain the drivers for the motherboard. They usually also ship a BIOS updating utility for updating the BIOS. Refer to your suppliers' manual on how to update the BIOS.

Try restarting the computer again, and this time watch the screen as the startup testing information scrolls past. You might see a text message that identifies the problem.

If there's no obvious source for the problem, turn off the computer, disconnect the power cord, and open the case. Look for power and data cables that might have come loose from the motherboard or some other component, and confirm that the memory modules and the main CPU processor are properly seated in their sockets.

I started the computer and nothing happened. No logo or logon screen.

We might have this problem when we switch on our machine and we see nothing, no flashing of POST (power on self test) or logo of manufacturer (of mother board or the PC manufacturer). Still there is some noise CPU fan running, hard disk spinning, or LED blinking. But to our amusement nothing is happening on the screen (no display).

System won't power on at all

In this scenario, the system is plugged in and you see lights indicating that it's receiving power, but pressing the power button has no effect. The problem might be related to power management.

Performing a Hard Reset

Your first troubleshooting step should be to perform a hard reset of the system. Disconnect all external devices and unplug the AC power cord (remove the battery from a portable PC as well). Wait for few seconds or so and then plug in the AC power cord and press and hold the power button for at least five seconds. If the PC still doesn't start up, you have a serious hardware problem, possibly a bad power supply or a failed motherboard. If you hear hard disk noises and beeps that suggest the system is starting up but nothing appears on the screen, you might have a failed video card or monitor.

Here in this case the most probable reason is hardware failure.

Look for a Hardware Problem

If Windows won't start and flash the POST and or the manufacturer's logo, and the screen stays dark. The problem is almost certainly in the computer hardware.

Try simple and general things like turning off the computer, disconnecting the power cord, and opening the computer case to see if anything is out of place. Look for power and data cables that might have come loose from the motherboard or some other component, and confirm that the memory modules and the main CPU processor are properly seated in their sockets. Things can go wrong if any of those components are not properly functioning or have failed.

Hardware top 10 reasons for a black screen

1. Your computer power supply has either died or it is on its way out because it is not delivering enough power to run the system.
2. Your motherboard has died or it has a bad connection on it or bent pin.
3. Your monitor or keyboard plug as a bent pin on it. When you try and other monitor or keyboard your computer will work.
4. Your computer memory is bad is not seated into its slots on the motherboard correctly.
5. You have left an external hard drive or a USB drive plug-in while starting your computer. This problem usually leaves you with a black screen with a flashing cursor.
6. Your computer has a black screen after installing new hardware. Often when computer users install hardware in order to upgrade their own computers they run into problems. If you have just performed an upgrade and then get a black screen, the answer is obvious. Some hardware components may not be compatible with the others in your system. And of course there is always

the risk of static electricity damaging your components when you are not an experienced computer repair person.

7. You have recently transported your computer and it was working, but now it's not. This is a common problem and can easily be fixed by checking the internal parts of your computer and making sure they are plugged in correctly. For example your CPU processor may have jumped out of its socket for some unknown reason. Believe it or not, sometimes a power supply will die you did not use it. If you transport a computer from one room to another, this might be all right, but if you transported in a car and then inspected to work a few days later, it may not work.
8. One of the biggest problems when having a black screen is display. This could be a problem with your installed video card or maybe your on-board video. Maybe you simply have your monitor plug connected to the wrong port? Yes it can be as simple as that. It can also be as simple as having a monitor plugged in and through DVI when it should be plugged in through VGA.
9. You will get a black screen and maybe a flashing cursor if you have a hard drive that is not connected properly or is dead. Most of the time if the hard drive cannot be accessed, you will get an on-screen warning, however sometimes this doesn't happen. Don't ask me why, but it depends on the problem at hand. I love it when the error shows on the screen and it is right in front of your face.
10. Of course, it could be your monitor. This is the first thing that everyone thinks it will be, but it is often not the case. Monitors usually change colour and appreciate over time, and usually do not all of a sudden just go.

Did you ever think that it might just be a the power cord that is faulty? I know many people have overlooked this simple little cause. Unfortunately if you don't check these kind of things first, and you take it to work computer technician, they will not tell you how easy it was to get it fixed. It might be as simple as plugging in a different power cord. Trust me this has happened to me.

Also, you can try to change the CMOS battery (very much like a small coin), it might require getting it changed / replaced.

Get memory test and hard-drive test done.

The first and most obvious reason for a computer appearing to run but you cannot see the video is the monitor. A common mistake is to plug the monitor into the

onboard video plug when you actually have a PCI or AGP video card installed. Trust me I have done this myself. Simply move the plug to the correct position.

I was working on the computer and the screen went black

And there are occasions when working in the windows with some application, and suddenly with no warning at all we have a crash and the screen goes black.

This is a problem which is lot easier to troubleshoot, when we are dealing with software malfunctioning or bugs. Here we can be sure that the hardware malfunctioning is not the case (though this is not the thumb rule). Usually the system can be booted in safe mode. And the software that caused the crash can be removed, and the anti-virus can be used to scan for harmful viruses or bugs. A registry cleaner can be used to clean the Windows registry area.

Shutting down due to overheating

A computer will shut down if it cannot breathe properly or run at the right temperature. Obviously we have fans installed inside the computer to keep it cool, however sometimes these fans get dust on them, which causes them to not work properly.

You can tell if your computer is overheating because it will shut down after a certain amount of time when you are using it. For example it might take half an hour of use before it shuts down. If this happens to you more than once, it is not a coincidence.

You need to check inside your computer for a build-up of dust on the fans and on the CPU.

Here are a few articles for you to read.

[Dust on your computer power supply](#)

[How to clean inside your computer safely](#)

Black screen when playing games

Problem: You are playing a computer game such as the *Sims 3* and your computer shuts down after an hour of playing. One of the main causes of this is not having the

proper hardware to run this kind of game. It is a power full game and uses a lot of computer resources; therefore your computer can overheat while using it.

Solution: Although there are many solutions for this problem such as upgrading your hardware, however there are a few other things to try. You can adjust the settings for your display. For example if you have an Nvidia graphics card you can try changing these settings:

conformant texture clamp -> Use OpenGL spec.

Trilinear texture optimization -> Enabled

Force mipmapping -> Trilinear

Vsync -> Forced enabled

If the crash has occurred due to some updates, the system can be restored back after booting in to safe mode or that update can be removed.

Black screen when viewing large graphics

When your computer screen turns black when you are trying to look at pictures on your computer, this can mean that you have a display problem. If you can update your driver for your graphics card or on-board video then do so.

You can go into Control Panel/system properties/hardware/device manager to see if there are any yellow marks next to your display device. See how to find [device manager](#).

The computer shuts down and will not reboot

If the computer shuts down and will not turn on again, as in all of power off, this could mean that your power supply has overheated or died. You could let it cool down and then try restarting. If it is completely dead I would try another power supply. Obviously I'm not going to mention or ask if your power has actually gone out in your house.

If you have the chance to login to Windows again you must not presume that everything is now okay. You need to start doing some tests and finding what caused the problem. Often people presume that their system is fine if they have logged into Windows successfully.

The first thing I would do if I could log back in the Windows after having a black screen would be to insert the operating CD and tried the [system file checker](#). This is where use the command **sfc /scannow**.

Blue Screen Warnings

This is where you get the chance to prevent the occurrence of Black Screen, the blue screen of death (sometimes called) is the event when the system crashes when you are in some application in Windows or at the startup of the windows, this can happen due to hardware changes or sometimes driver / application incompatibility.

The blue screen is not a bug; it's a feature, more properly known as a STOP error. STOP errors allow Windows to respond to a catastrophic hardware or software failure that prevents the system from continuing to operate. A STOP error captures diagnostic information about the source of the failure and displays it as white text on a blue background.

If you see a Blue screen, there are debugging tools and well-documented troubleshooting techniques you can use to resolve it. The biggest advantage of the blue screen problem is that if we can decipher the error codes that appear on the blue screen we can get to the root of the problem rather easily.

See the screen shot below. Number one shows the driver that caused the crash, but this does not always shows like this. Number two shows the error code and number three shows the STOP code.

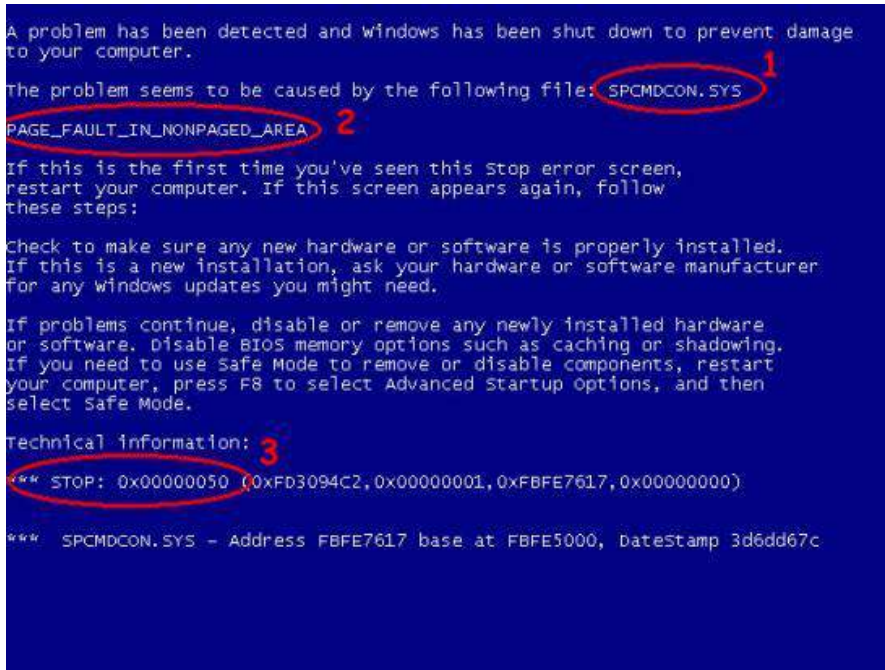


Image credit: Opera.com

This may look different if you have a newer version of Windows, however it will look similar. When you have this information you can use it to search on the Microsoft website for a possible solution. The error code and the STOP code can be used to search [Microsoft's support pages](#). If you cannot find your problem at the Microsoft website, I then suggest you try searching in Google.

With a blue screen at least you have an error message right in front of you to work with.

If the problem is not taken care of, on an early basis, it can become serious or result in a black screen problem.

So better take initiatives at the first appearance of the blue screen problem. Look for the error messages that are on the screen, evaluate them as they are the solution for this type of problem. The error codes are in it self generated by the Windows operating system.

If you can log into Windows here's how to check the system files

This system file checker works for all versions of Windows, however with Windows XP you must insert your operating system CD.

1. Open Command Prompt by pressing on the **win key +R** and typing **cmd** into the box..(You need to run command prompt as an administrator.)
2. In the command prompt window type in the following command:
sfc /scannow
3. This command must be type in exactly so it is, sfc and then a space, slash, scannow.
4. The system file checker will now scan your files to see if they are exactly like the cached stored copies.
5. Restart your computer if sfc /scannow did actually repair any files.

Checking your files with the system file checker will only work if the Windows system files have been changed in any way. If you are having a driver compatibility issue then running this system file checker will not help as Windows has nothing to do with this. This tool is for fixing Windows system files only.

You Suspect a Computer Virus

There is no excuse why you should be getting a virus now days. If you install the correct [antivirus software](#), a firewall, and maybe a [registry cleaner](#) / optimizer, your computer should be safe.

If you still get infected, usually the system can be booted in the safe mode and these can be uninstalled and changes can be undone, caused by these unwanted applications. Sometimes system restoration can be used to good effect. Unfortunately other times the virus will still be there and you will need to deal with it quickly and thoroughly.

What are your choices?

1. If you have the skills and knowledge to search for and destroy a virus, then I suggest you keep your computer running and avoid shutting it down. Disconnect all devices including the Internet.
2. If you do not have the skills to deal with a virus, you should shut your computer down immediately, as the longer it is on and not dealt with, the virus is doing damage.

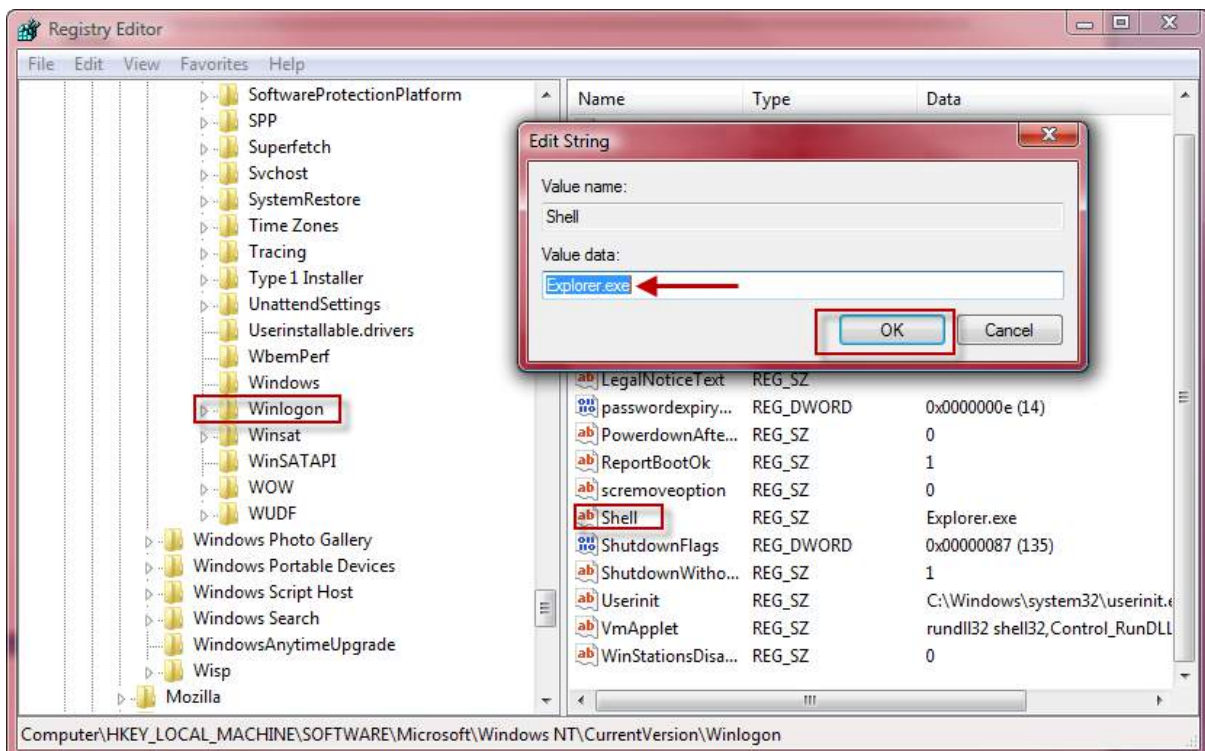
Problem: I have had customers that have tried to remove viruses themselves and got to the stage where they could start their computer but no processes were running.

Solution: Sometimes if they were lucky they could press CTRL ALT DEL and get into task manager to start Explorer.EXE. Restart your computer in safe mode, leading it load completely, and then restarting as normal.

This may not solve the problem, but it might get you into Explorer.exe and therefore you could possibly backup your files or scan for more viruses.

A Simple Check in the Registry

1. If you can press **CTRL+ALT+DEL** and get into task manager you can try:
2. Run a new task called **regedit.exe**
3. Now in the left hand column **navigate to** HKEY_local machine/software/microsoft/WindowsNT/Currentversion/winlogon.
4. Click on the **winlogon** folder.



5. Now in the right hand panel click on **shell**.
6. The data value should only be **explorer.exe** as shown above so delete anything after that.

If you feel you have a virus and you can still access Windows, I suggest you back up your important files as soon as possible. But before doing anything though, you should disconnect your Internet connection and network cables. You should also disconnect any backup drives that might get affected.

Problem: Often you will scan for a virus with your antivirus software, often a free one, find a virus and after shutting down you have a black screen on restart. This can be caused by certain files being removed or quarantine by the anti-virus program.

First solution: If you have Windows Vista or Windows 7 and have an operating system CD you can easily and quickly repair this problem. Most viruses will damage system files and registry entries and the Windows Vista and Windows 7 OS CD supposedly repairs all of this. Enter the recovery console for [Windows Vista](#) or [Windows 7](#).

If you are using Windows XP and you have an operating system CD, you can try using this and doing a [recovery](#). However sometimes you have to do a manual repair of the [MBR](#).

There are updates and fixes/ hot fixes / stability/reliability updates or service packs available to overcome the vulnerability of the Windows operating system. You must keep your programs up to date and for that matter, you should always have the right programs install to keep you protected.

I also recommend that you buy an anti-virus program with a "boot time scan". This means that you can reboot your computer and the program will perform a scan before Windows loads. At boot time scan will pick up problems in the registry before Windows is loaded and using it. This is just one of the reasons why I recommend using a Avast Internet security in this article about [antivirus software](#).

Getting help when you have a virus?

Believe it or not there are plenty of websites out there that specialise in helping people get rid of their virus on their computer. Of course this is all subject to whether you can actually access your computer or not? Here is a list of websites where you can get help with removing your virus.

Techsupportforum.com

Bleepingcomputer.com

Majorgeeks.com

I would not recommend trying to remove a virus yourself as it takes experience and knowledge to do so. This is an important job because if it is not done correctly you risk your computer's health and safety.

I hope that you never see the black screen of death. And if it does affect your PC, I hope you are better prepared for this nuisance.

If you cannot even boot your computer because of a virus, this [boot disc](#) will help you. It does not matter if you have a virus, it will help you get back into your computer so you can sort the problem out.

Computer Won't Start. Power on Button Light Flashing

How annoying it is when your computer won't start and you can see the computer power button flashing? One minute they are fine, and the next thing you know it is basically dead. I especially hate it when you press your power button and nothing happens. You can see the computer Power light blinking but nothing comes up on the screen.

It seems like the computer is sending me a signal, but what is it trying to say? We have tutorials about computers not starting when the **computer has a black screen**, when you need to [repair the boot sector of your hard drive](#), and many more. However this article is about your computer not starting, but seeing a flashing light at the same time.

Check the power supply

Unfortunately different makes and models of computers do different things, which could actually be the same error causing the problem. Some computers have a beep sequence code and others have no signals at all. However when the computer won't start and the power light flashing I always test the power supply first.

You can also take the side of your computer case off to listen for the cpu fan starting when you press the button. If it seems a bit slow and quiet you can almost guarantee that there is not enough power getting through to your computer. If you have a spare Power supply hanging around and you have done this type of thing before, try swapping them over. If you are not confident in working on computers yourself, get a professional to do it for you.

Computer won't start and the reasons are too obvious

I was working on a computer with this problem a few years ago, and it turned out to be the power cord. It was faulty, which allowed the computer to work most of the

time, but then other times it would not boot and the power light flashed. This was a rare because the problem is usually the actual power supply itself.

If this doesn't work for you, try removing everything that is connected to your computer. Remove the mouse, keyboard, monitor, PCI cards, graphics cards, etc. Now you should only have the power cable connected. Turn the computer on now. If the blinking power light is gone and it seems to be running, this could mean that there is something wrong with one of the components you have just removed. Replace them one at a time, testing to see if the computer works each time. When the flashing light comes back you know you have found the problem.

If changing the power supply didn't help, or removing all of the components either, it doesn't look good. Now it could only be the CPU or the motherboard.

Example problem – computer power light blinking

Problem: My computer won't start. I have a Dell Dimension 9150. After a power outage my PC will not turn on. It has a blinking yellow light. Everything I have read said it is most likely a power supply problem. I purchased a new power supply from 911 PC and still have the same problem. There is a green light lit up on the motherboard. Any ideas? I have also read about diagnostic lights to figure out the problem. I don't believe this PC has any of those lights. Thanks

I did remove the RAM and graphic card and tried starting it up without any of that installed and got the same thing. I then put them back and got the same blinking light. The setting is 115 on the power supply although I have toggled it and tried the other setting.

I have also tried just the power supply connected to the MOBO—no drives and get the same blinking light. Two lights also blink on the back of the PC underneath an RJ 45 connection.

Nothing beeps and nothing else turns on. [Source](#).

I did remove and change the memory to different slots and tried starting it up without any memory and got the same blinking light. I received a new power supply and tried it and got the same results. Brought the new power supply to a PC shop and they let me try their tester. It produced lights but it grinded and the fan barely moved. "Possible I got a dud. The place I got the power supply from is great—911 PC. The guy I spoke to on the phone is going to open up and test the new one and initial it before shipping it priority mail—also not even charging me for the new one being shipped as long as I send the old one back. If it turns out the motherboard is shot I'll send both back and they will refund.

Warning: When working on computers see [opening computer cases](#) and please take the right precautions.

Solution: Problem fixed. It was the front USB ports that were causing the computer not to power on and the blinking yellow lights. I took a screwdriver and kept messing with the pins on the beat up port—pushing them down, spreading them apart, etc. etc.. until finally no lights on power button. I then pushed the power button and it started right up. That port for sure is fried but I don't care. The computer works.

Thanks for the help! I had this exact same issue to the Tee with a Dell XPS 400. The front USB pins were touching causing a short on the motherboard. After i stuck a screw driver in there and pulled back the pins just mike magic everything started working!

Quick troubleshooting tips

If your computer won't start and you have a flashing power light then you can try the following:

1. The first thing you should do is check to see if you have valid warranty on your computer. If you have then you should get it repaired by the appropriate person or you will void your warranty.
2. If you are plugged into a surge protector or UPS, try plugging it straight into the wall. If killing the power for a few minutes doesn't do the trick, it sounds like a hardware failure. Could be faulty power supply, or mainboard as the first possible culprit. I would suggest getting it looked at by a competent technician.
3. Have you tried changing the power cord over.
4. Try a hard restart by pressing in the power button until the computer shuts down. Under plug all the power cables, the power button while the computer is unplugged, then plug it all in again and try to restart it.
5. Check inside the computer case and make sure the power cables are connected securely. There could be a loose connection that is causing this problem.
6. Try a new power supply.
7. Check connections on your motherboard, for example the pins, disconnected cables. Bent pins cause power shorts.
8. You can check your RAM, but I have never seen in amber flashing light, and found that RAM was the problem. But there is always a first!

<http://support.dell.com/support/edocs/systems/dim5100/en/sm/tshoot0.htm>

What does the blinking light on the computer mean?

If you have a Dell computer, here is a table showing what lights mean what. For example if your computer won't start and you see a solid amber light this can mean that either the system board is faulty or the devices connected to it.

Your power button light and hard-drive activity light may indicate a computer problem. This table was transferred from a Dell manual. If you have another brand of computer, try looking through the repair manual to see if you can find something similar.

Power Light	Problem Description	Suggested Resolution
Solid green	Power is on, and the computer is operating normally.	No corrective action is required.
Blinking green	The computer is in the suspended state (Microsoft® Windows® 2000 and Windows XP).	Press the power button, move the mouse, or press a key on the keyboard to wake the computer.
Blinks green several times and then turns off	A configuration error exists.	Check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific problem is identified.
Solid amber	The Dell Diagnostics is running a test, or a device on the system board may be faulty or incorrectly installed.	If the Dell Diagnostics is running, allow the testing to complete. Check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific problem is identified. If the computer does not boot, contact Dell for technical assistance (see your computer <i>Owner's Manual</i> for information about how to contact Dell).
Blinking amber	A power supply or system board failure has occurred.	Check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific problem is identified. Also, see "Power Problems" in your computer <i>Owner's Manual</i> .
Solid green and a beep code during POST	A problem was detected while the BIOS was executing.	See "Beep Codes" for instructions on diagnosing the beep code. Also, check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific

		problem is identified.
Solid green power light and no beep code and no video during POST	The monitor or the graphics card may be faulty or incorrectly installed.	Check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific problem is identified. See "Video and Power Problems" in your computer <i>Owner's Manual</i> .
Solid green power light and no beep code but the computer locks up during POST	An integrated system board device may be faulty.	Check the diagnostic lights to see if the specific problem is identified. If the problem is not identified, contact Dell for technical assistance. See your computer <i>Owner's Manual</i> for information on how to contact Dell.

Hard-Drive Activity Light	Problem Description	Suggested Resolution
Solid green	The hard-drive activity light is on when the computer reads data from or writes data to the hard drive. The light might also be on when a device such as a CD player is operating.	No corrective action is required.

When you have no operating system disc!

If you do not have an operating system disc then this is not the end of the world. You can [buy a boot disc](#) that will:

- Boot up ANY desktop or laptop.
- Repair missing files from your hard drive such as "bootmgr" "ntldr" .
- It will repair corrupt registry.
- Repair registry values infected by by viruses.
- Repair MBR even if it is infected with a virus.
- Rescue Windows 98/ME/2K/HOME/2003/XP/NT/Vista/7.
- And so much more..

I would not be without a [Boot disc](#) like this one! I often fix friends computers within minutes with this disc.

Tools that computer techies use

Now days computer repair guys have some amazing tools to help them fix your computer.

PCI Diagnostic Analyzer POST card

One tool is a PCI Diagnostic Analyzer. This is a hardware component that you install into a computer to help diagnose problems.

When you encounter a problem and want to *fix boot errors*, turn off your computer, open its case, and insert the POST code reader into a free PCI slot. Power on your computer and watch the codes as they appear on the code reader. Write down the code that appears immediately before or during the boot error. See my article on how to [open computer cases](#) safely.

Go to another Internet-connected computer and search for that code and your motherboard type, remember POST codes come from the BIOS and the BIOS is unique to each motherboard.

For example, your post code reader says 2B when the computer stops booting. The computer runs Dell BIOS, so you search Google for *dell bios post 2B*. As of this writing, three of the top four results all point to a listing of Dell BIOS post codes, including an explanation that "2B" means "Video memory test failed."

You can buy a diagnostic post cardreadr for around \$10.

- [PC ISA PCI Diagnostic Analyzer Debug 4 POST Card Probe](#)

Amazing repair software

Image if you had software that would boot up any computer? Well there is such a thing, and the techies use a professional version, but there is a personal version available for normal computer users.

It is called [Bootsuite 2011](#). The personal version costs about \$49 and the professional version for a computer repair guide costs around \$699. This software is truly amazing and once you have used it, you will realize its potential.

Of course a computer repair guide might have other tools such as specialty screwdrivers and antistatic straps. However these two tools that I've mentioned above will cover any software or hardware problems.

Resources:

Windows XP F8 Boot Options Explained

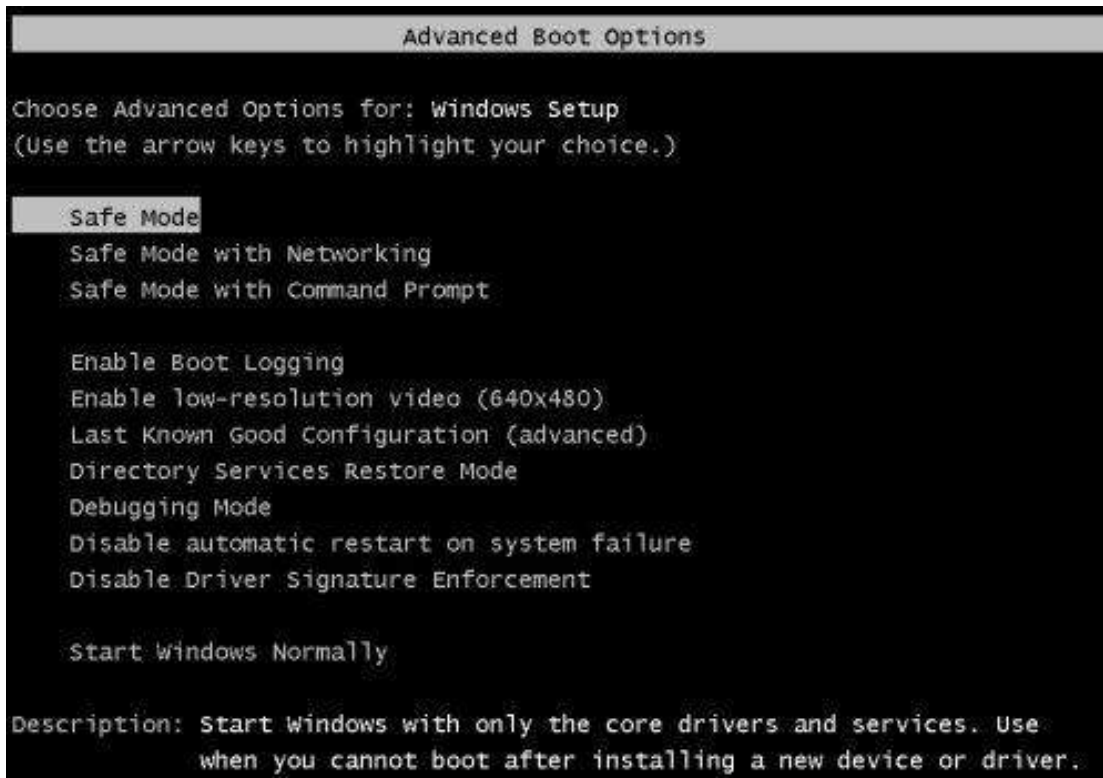
- Safe Mode (SAFEBOOT_OPTION=Minimal): This option uses a minimal set of device drivers and services to start Windows.
- Safe Mode with Networking (SAFEBOOT_OPTION=Network): This option uses a minimal set of device drivers and services to start Windows together with the drivers that you must have to load networking.
- Safe Mode with Command Prompt (SAFEBOOT_OPTION=Minimal (AlternateShell)): This option is the same as Safe mode, except that Cmd.exe starts instead of Windows Explorer.
- Enable VGA Mode: This option starts Windows in 640 x 480 mode by using the current video driver (not Vga.sys). This mode is useful if the display is configured for a setting that the monitor cannot display.

Note Safe mode and Safe mode with Networking load the Vga.sys driver instead.

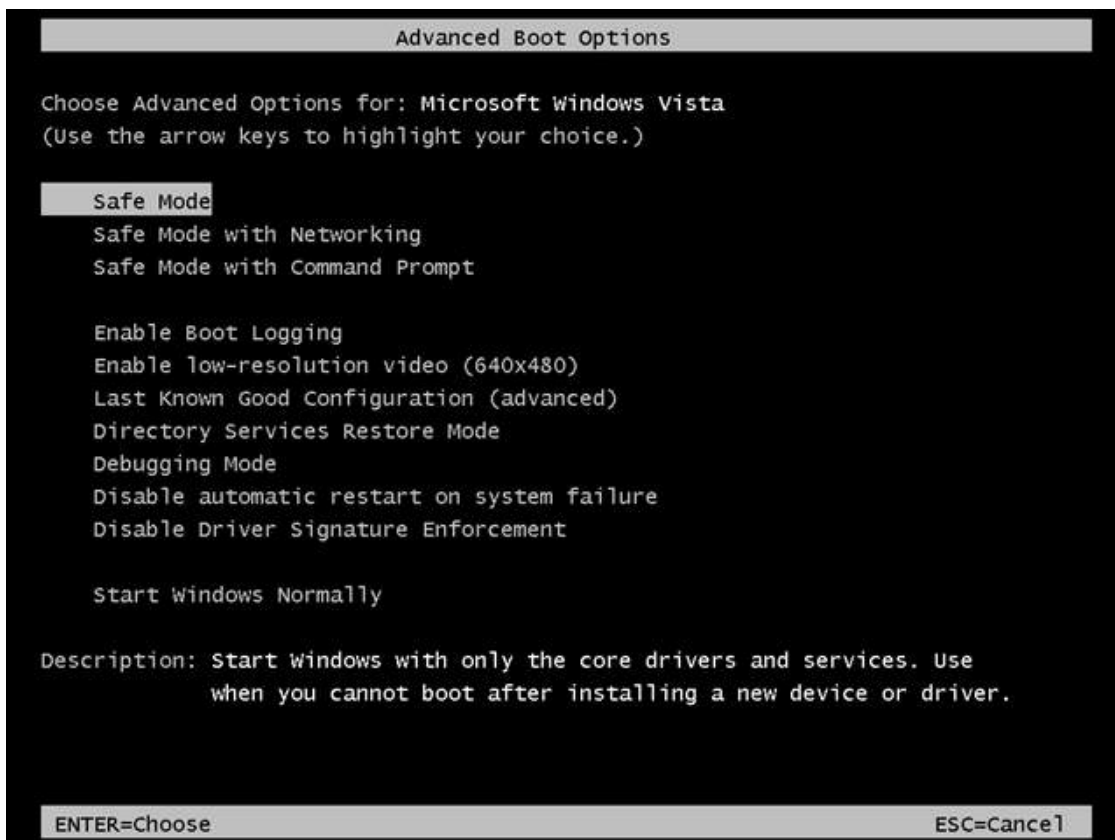
- Last Known Good Configuration: This option starts Windows by using the previous good configuration.
- Directory Service Restore Mode: This mode is valid only for Windows-based domain controllers. This mode performs a directory service repair.
- Debugging Mode: This option turns on debug mode in Windows. Debugging information can be sent across a serial cable to another computer that is running a debugger. This mode is configured to use COM2.
- Enable Boot Logging: This option turns on logging when the computer is started with any of the Safe Boot options except Last Known Good Configuration. The Boot Logging text is recorded in the Ntbtlog.txt file in the %SystemRoot% folder.
- Starts Windows Normally: This option starts Windows in its normal mode.
- Reboot: This option restarts the computer.
- Return to OS Choices Menu: On a computer that is configured to starting to more than one operating system, this option returns to the Boot menu.

More information from [Microsoft Windows](#).

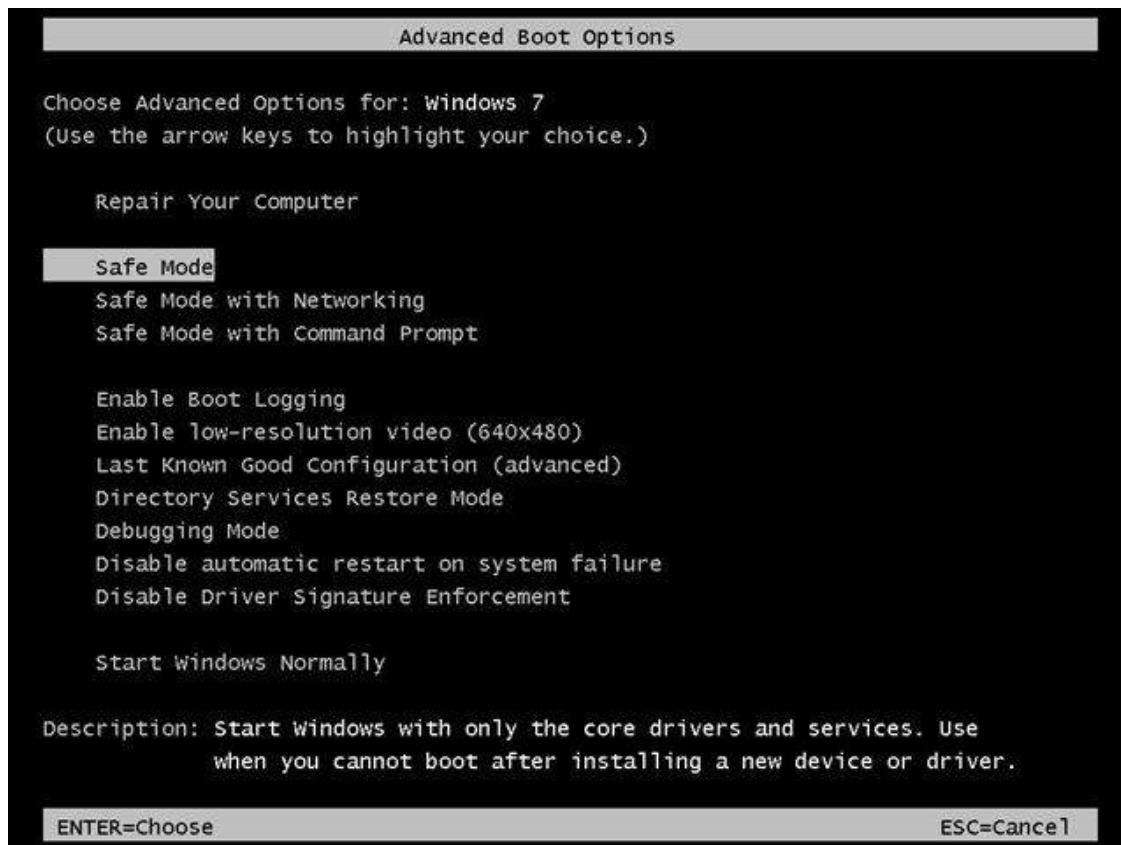
Picture of the Windows XP advanced boot options menu



Picture of the Windows Vista advanced Boot options menu



Picture of the Windows 7 advanced boot options menu



Handy keyboard shortcuts

Open the run box: Win key + R

Open task manager: CTRL + ALT + DEL

Commands to use

sfc /scannow

System File Checker tool (SFC.exe) to troubleshoot missing or corrupted system files on Windows Vista or on Windows 7. You can run this command by typing it into the run box. This command can only be used if you are logged into Windows, or you can get to the command prompt.

If you have Windows XP you can still use this command but you will have to insert your operating CD first.

If **sfc** discovers that a protected file has been overwritten, it retrieves the correct version of the file from the %systemroot%\system32\dllcache folder, and then replaces the incorrect file.

Sfc /scanonce

Scans all protected system files once.

Sfc /scanboot

Scans all protected system files every time the computer is restarted.

Regedit.exe

Opens the Windows registry

Mscconfig

This is the command to enter the [System Configuration Utility](#).

Explorer.exe

Opens Windows Explorer which includes your desktop, taskbar and start menu.

Resource links

[Windows Updates](#)

[Windows Memory Diagnostic](#)

[How to recover from a corrupted registry that prevents Windows XP from starting](#)

When you have no operating system disc!

If you do not have an operating system disc then this is not the end of the world. You can [buy a boot disc](#) that will:

- Boot up ANY desktop or laptop.

- Repair missing files from this your hard drive such as "bootmgr" "ntldr" .
- It will repair corrupt registry.
- Repair registry values infected by by viruses.
- Repair MBR even if it is infected with a virus.
- Rescue Windows 98/ME/2K/HOME/2003/XP/NT/Vista/7.
- And so much more..

I would not be without a [Boot disc](#) like this one! I often fix friends computers within minutes with this disc. This is also great if you are not technically minded.



Kind Regards

Mitz Pantic <http://tips4pc.com>