

Common Problems and Solutions for Windows Operating Systems

Identify the Problem	Probable Causes	Possible Solutions
The OS locks up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The computer is overheating. • Some of the operating system files may be corrupted. • The power supply, RAM, hard drive, or motherboard may be defective. • The BIOS settings may be incorrect. • An unknown event has occurred that has caused the OS to lock up. • An incorrect driver has been installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean internal components. • Check the fan connections to ensure fans are operating properly. • Run the system file checker (SFC) to replace corrupt operating system files. • Test the power supply, RAM, hard drive, or motherboard with third party diagnostic software and replace as necessary. • Examine and adjust the BIOS settings. • Address any events in the Event Log. • Install or roll back updated drivers.
The keyboard or mouse does not respond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The computer has an incompatible or an out-of-date driver. • The cable has been damaged or disconnected. • The device is defective. • A KVM switch is being used and the active computer is not being displayed. • Wireless keyboard or mouse has failed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reboot the computer. • Install or roll back drivers. • Replace or reconnect the cable. • Replace the device. • Change the input on the KVM switch. • Replace the battery.

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<p>The operating system will not start.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hardware device failed to initialize. • Some of the operating system files may be corrupted. • The boot sector is corrupted. • The power supply, RAM, hard drive, or motherboard may be defective. • New hardware drivers did not install properly. • Windows updates have corrupted the operating system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reboot the computer. • Restore Windows using the System Restore tool. • Recover the system disk using the System Image Recovery tool. • Perform a Repair Installation on the operating system. • Use the Recovery Environment to fix the boot sector. • Replace the power supply, RAM, hard drive, or motherboard with one that works. • Disconnect any newly connected devices and use the Last Known Good Configuration option to start the operating system. • Boot the computer in Safe Mode and address all events in the Event Log.
<p>The computer displays an “Invalid Boot Disk” error after POST.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boot order is not set correctly in BIOS. • The hard drive is not detected. • The hard drive does not have an operating system installed. • The MBR is corrupted. • The GPT is corrupted. • The computer has a boot sector virus. • The hard drive is failing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the boot order in BIOS to start with the boot drive. • Reconnect the hard drive cables. • Install an operating system. • Using a system repair disc, run bootrec /FixMbr to repair the MBR. • Using a system repair disc, run DISKPART to repair the GPT (or the MBR). • Run antivirus software. • Replace the hard drive.
<p>The computer displays a “BOOTMGR is missing” error after POST.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOOTMGR is missing or damaged. • Boot Configuration Data is missing or damaged. • The boot order is not set correctly in BIOS. • The MBR is corrupted. • The hard drive is failing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore BOOTMGR from installation media. • Restore the Boot Configuration Data from installation media. • Change the boot order in BIOS to start with the boot drive. • Run bootrec /FixMbr from the Recovery Environment. • Run chkdsk /F /R from the Recovery Environment.

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A service failed to start when the computer booted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is not enabled. • The service is set to Manual. • The failed service requires another service to be enabled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the service. • Set the service to Automatic. • Re-enable the required service.
A device did not start when the computer booted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external device is not powered on. • The data cable or power cable is not connected to the device. • The device has been disabled in BIOS. • The device has failed. • The device has a conflict with a newly installed device. • The driver is corrupted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power on the external device. • Secure the data cable and power cable to the device. • Enable the device in BIOS. • Replace the device. • Remove the newly installed device. • Re-install or roll back the driver.
The computer continually restarts without displaying the desktop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The computer is set to restart when there is a failure. • A startup file has become corrupted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press F8 to open the Advanced Options Menu and choose Disable automatic restart on system failure. • Run chkdsk /F /R from the Recovery Environment. • Use the Recovery Environment to perform an Automatic Repair, or a System Restore.
The computer displays a black or blue screen of death (BSOD).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A driver is not compatible with the hardware. • The RAM is failing. • The power supply is failing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the STOP error and the name of the module that produced the error. • Replace any failing devices with known-good devices. • Perform a memory check.
The computer locks up without any error messages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPU or FSB settings are incorrect on the motherboard or in the BIOS. • The computer is overheating. • An update has corrupted the operating system. • The RAM is failing. • The power supply is failing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reset the CPU and FSB settings. • Check and replace any cooling devices as necessary. • Uninstall the software update or perform a System Restore. • Run chkdsk /F /R from the Recovery Environment. • Replace any failing devices with known-good devices.

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An application does not install.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The downloaded application installer contains a virus and has been prevented from installing by virus protection software. • The installation disk or file is corrupted. • The installer is not compatible with the operating system. • The hardware does not meet the minimum requirements. • The software on which the application relies is not installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a new installation disk or delete the file and download the installation file again. • Run the installer under compatibility mode • Install hardware that meets the minimum installation requirements. • Install any software on which the application relies.
A computer with Windows 7 installed does not run Aero.	The computer does not meet the minimum hardware requirements for running Aero.	Upgrade the processor, RAM, and video card to meet the minimum Microsoft requirements for Aero.
The UAC no longer prompts the user for permission.	The UAC has been turned off.	Turn on the UAC in the User Account applet in the Control Panel.
No Gadgets appear on the desktop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gadgets have never been installed or have been uninstalled. • The XML necessary to render the Gadget is broken, corrupted, or not installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-click the desktop > Gadgets > right-click a Gadget > Add. • Register the file msxml3.dll by entering regsvr32 msxml3.dll > Enter at the command prompt.
The computer is running slowly and has a delayed response.	A process is using most of the CPU resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restart the process using the Services console (services.msc). • If the process is not needed, end the process with Task Manager. Restart the computer.
The computer displays a “Boot Configuration Data missing” error while booting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improperly shutting down computer. • Unsuccessful Windows update. 	Boot from Windows 10 installation/recovery media and run the Bootrec tool.
Cannot print from Windows.	Printer hardware or software connectivity issues or Windows settings	Check for connectivity and correct Windows settings.

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Computer is slow to boot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unnecessary services and programs running at startup.• Virus or malware.• Corrupt user profile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove unnecessary services from startup and use a delayed or manual startup option of necessary services.• Scan the computer for viruses and malware.• Rebuild user profile.