



Start your computer in safe mode

Safe mode starts Windows with a limited set of files and drivers. Startup programs do not run in safe mode, and only the basic drivers needed to start Windows are installed.

Safe mode is useful for troubleshooting problems with programs and drivers that might not start correctly, or that might prevent Windows from starting correctly. If a problem does not reappear when you start in safe mode, you can eliminate the default settings and basic device drivers as possible causes. If a recently installed program, device, or driver prevents Windows from running correctly, you can start your computer in safe mode and then remove the program that is causing the problem.

1. Remove all floppy disks, CDs, and DVDs from your computer, and then restart your computer.

Click the **Start** button , click the arrow next to the **Lock** button , and then click **Restart**.

2. Do one of the following:
 - If your computer has a single operating system installed, press and hold the F8 key as your computer restarts. You need to press F8 before the Windows logo appears. If the Windows logo appears, you will need to try again by waiting until the Windows logon prompt appears, and then shutting down and restarting your computer.
 - If your computer has more than one operating system, use the arrow keys to highlight the operating system you want to start in safe mode, and then press F8.
3. On the **Advanced Boot Options** screen, use the arrow keys to highlight the safe mode option you want, and then press ENTER. For more information about options, see [Advanced startup options \(including safe mode\)](#).
4. Log on to your computer with a user account that has administrator rights.

When your computer is in safe mode, you'll see the words **Safe Mode** in the corners of the display. To exit safe mode, restart your computer and let Windows start normally.

Applies to all editions of Windows Vista.

 [Compare editions](#)

See also

- [What is safe mode?](#)
- [Diagnostic tools to use in safe mode](#)

