

What does it mean if Windows isn't supported?

Archived: 2026-04-06 01:27:37 UTC

► Applies To

An unsupported version of Windows doesn't receive software updates from Microsoft. These updates include security updates that protect your PC from harmful viruses, spyware, and other malicious software, which can steal your personal information. Windows Update also installs the latest software updates to improve the reliability of Windows, which includes new drivers for your hardware.

If you have devices running an unsupported version of Windows, we recommend upgrading them to a more current, in-service, and supported Windows release. If your devices don't meet the technical requirements to run a more current release of Windows, we recommend that you replace the device with one that supports Windows 11. For more information, see [Windows 11 system requirements](#).

When does support end for my version of Windows?

Windows version	End of support date
Windows 10	October 14, 2025
Windows 8.1	January 10, 2023
Windows 10 Mobile	January 14, 2020
Windows 7	January 14, 2020
Windows Vista	April 11, 2017
Windows 8	January 12, 2016
Windows XP	April 08, 2014

To check the end-of-support dates for all versions of Windows, see the [product lifecycle information for Windows](#).

If your version of Windows is still supported, you should always [install the latest updates for Windows](#). To download and install these updates, use Windows Update in the Settings app.

Devices running an unsupported version of Windows will still function, but Microsoft doesn't provide the following:

- Technical support of any issue
- Software updates
- Security updates or fixes

While you could continue to use your PC, without continued software and security updates your PC is at greater risk for viruses and malware. We recommend upgrading to a version of Windows that's still supported. A new device that can run Windows 11 makes for an easy transition and a great experience.

Yes. If you continue to use an unsupported version of Windows, your PC will still work, but it's more vulnerable to security risks and viruses. Your PC will continue to start and run, but you won't receive software updates, including security updates, from Microsoft.

For more information about the support policy, see the [Microsoft support lifecycle policy FAQ](#).

There are a few options for using a supported version of Windows:

- **Recommended: New PC with Windows 11** - Windows 11 is the most current version of Windows. If you have an older PC, we recommend you move to Windows 11 by buying a new PC. Hardware and software have improved a lot, and today's computers are faster, more powerful, and more secure. [View Windows 11 PCs](#)
- **Installing Windows 11 on your current PC** - You can also see if your current PC meets the [minimum system requirements for Windows 11](#). PCs that are running an unsupported version of Windows are unlikely to meet these requirements, but if yours does, you can purchase and download a full version of [Windows 11 Home](#) or [Windows 11 Pro](#) or buy from a retailer. If you do choose this path, you'll need to reinstall your apps. In some cases, a newer version of the app may be required. You also need to transition files, data, and settings. The installation overwrites the contents of your existing hard drive. It may be easier for you to first upgrade to Windows 10 and then upgrade to Windows 11.
- **Installing Windows 10 on your current PC** - Windows 10 is still available and will be supported until October 14, 2025. You can check if your current PC meets the [minimum system requirements for Windows 10](#). If it does, you can check with retailers to see if they still offer Windows 10 for sale.

There are two ways you can get Windows 11:

- **Recommended: New PC with Windows 11** - Windows 11 is the most current version of Windows. If you have an older PC, we recommend you move to Windows 11 by buying a new PC. Hardware and software have improved a lot, and today's computers are faster, more powerful, and more secure. [View Windows 11 PCs](#)

- **Installing Windows 11 on your current PC** - You can also see if your current PC meets the [minimum system requirements for Windows 11](#). If it does, you can purchase and download a full version of [Windows 11 Home](#) or [Windows 11 Pro](#) or buy from a retailer. If you do choose this path, you'll need to reinstall your apps. In some cases, a newer version of the app may be required. You also need to transition files, data, and settings. The installation overwrites the contents of your existing hard drive. It may be easier for you to first upgrade to Windows 10 and then upgrade to Windows 11.

There currently aren't free upgrade paths from unsupported versions of Windows to either Windows 10 or Windows 11. You can purchase Windows 11 from Microsoft or contact a retailer to learn about more options. You can upgrade from Windows 10 to Windows 11 for free.

It's easy to bring your files and photos to a new PC using OneDrive, a cloud storage service. You can back up and protect your files online in the cloud and then sync onto a new PC. Syncing the files between your new PC and the cloud allows you to store the file locally for offline use when you don't have internet access. They're also stored on the OneDrive service in the cloud where you can restore them if something happens. OneDrive can automatically keep the two versions in sync as changes are made.

[Learn how to move files with OneDrive](#)

If OneDrive isn't the best fit for you, you can also use an external hard drive or USB key to copy over files.

Need more help?

Want more options?

Explore subscription benefits, browse training courses, learn how to secure your device, and more.

Source: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/18539/windows-7-change-default-programs>