

# Smart App Control Frequently Asked Questions

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## ► Applies To

When you try to run an app on Windows, Smart App Control will check to see if our intelligent cloud-powered security service can make a confident prediction about its safety. If the service believes the app to be safe, Smart App Control will let it run. If the app is believed to be malicious or potentially unwanted, then Smart App Control will block it.

If the security service is unable to make a confident prediction about the app, then Smart App Control checks to see if the app has a valid signature. If the app has a valid signature, Smart App Control will let it run. If the app is unsigned, or the signature is invalid, Smart App Control will consider it untrusted and block it for your protection.

Essentially, we're looking to see if Smart App Control is a good fit for your device or if it is going to get in your way too often. In most cases Smart App Control will automatically turn on to protect against untrusted or malicious apps. However, there are some legitimate tasks that corporate users, developers, or others may do regularly that may not be a great experience with Smart App Control running. If we detect that you're one of those users, we'll automatically turn Smart App Control off so you can work with fewer interruptions.

Yes, if it's available for your device, you are able to turn on Smart App Control in the Windows Security App settings.

Smart App Control is only available on clean installs of Windows 11. Also, there are other reasons why Smart App Control could be turned off.

- Your device is enterprise-managed or developer-mode has been configured.
- During [evaluation mode](#) we determined that you weren't a good candidate for Smart App Control.
- It was turned off manually by you or another user signed into your machine.
- Your device is running Windows in S mode. You'll need to turn S mode off, then reset your PC, to enter evaluation mode.
- You have [optional diagnostic data](#) in Windows turned off. If you want to turn Smart App Control on, you'll need to reset this PC, or reinstall Windows, and select **Send optional diagnostic data** during the setup process.

In order to ensure a more secure experience, we only enable Smart App Control on clean installs of Microsoft Windows 11. We want to be sure that there aren't already untrusted apps running on the device when we turn Smart App Control on.

**Tip:** If you want to turn Smart App Control on after it's been turned off, you can reset Windows 11 by tapping the **Start** button, typing Reset in the search box, selecting **Reset this PC** from the search results, and starting a reset from the **Recovery** menu. You can choose the **Keep my files** reset that keeps your personal files and only removes apps and settings. For more information, see [Recovery options in Windows](#).

Smart App Control works alongside your other security software, such as Microsoft Defender or non-Microsoft antivirus tools, for added protection.

There is currently no way to bypass Smart App Control protection for individual apps. You can turn Smart App Control off, or (better yet), contact the developer of the app and encourage them to sign their app with a valid signature.

When a developer creates an app, they are encouraged to "sign" the app using a digital certificate that verifies their identity, that the app is really published by them, and that the app hasn't been tampered with by somebody else after the developer published it. You can think of it a bit like a painter signing a piece of art, except harder to fake.

Signing is one part of what can make an app trusted or untrusted. The other part is experience. Our intelligent cloud-powered security service sees a huge number of apps every day and uses that knowledge to predict if an app is safe or not safe — even apps we've never seen before. However, in some cases, the service is unable to make a confident prediction either way.

If the security service can't make a confident prediction about the app, and the app doesn't have a valid signature, it's considered untrusted.

We'd love your feedback on Smart App Control. To let us know what you think or offer feature suggestions:

1. In Windows, go to the **Feedback Hub**. (from the Start menu or press Windows key + F)
2. When you get to **Step 2 - Choose a category**, select **Security and Privacy - Smart App Control**

## Need more help?

## Want more options?

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