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Backing up with File History and the Windows Backup app

A backup is a second copy of your files somewhere else. Windows has two built-in options for ordinary users: File History, which saves to an external drive, and Windows Backup, which saves to OneDrive on Windows 11.

File History (Windows 10 and 11)

It saves copies of your Documents, Pictures, Music, Videos and Desktop at regular intervals, and keeps older versions.

1. Plug in an external hard drive that is larger than the files you want to save. Make sure it has nothing on it that you need, because it will be used for backups.
2. Press the **Windows key**, type **File History settings** and open it. Another route is **Control Panel, System and Security, File History**.
3. Select your drive and turn on **Back up my files automatically**. In Windows 11, you may reach it from **Settings, System, Storage, Advanced storage settings, Backup options**.
4. Click **More options** to choose which folders are included and how often to save.

To get something back, search **Restore your files with File History** and browse through the saved versions.

Windows Backup app (Windows 11)

Search for **Windows Backup**. It can save your folders, settings, app list and some passwords to your Microsoft account's OneDrive, so a new PC can be set up like the old one. This needs enough OneDrive space. It is not a full image of the whole computer.

System image

Windows 10 and some Windows 11 PCs still have **Backup and Restore (Windows 7)** in **Control Panel**, which can make a full image. Microsoft treats this as an older tool, so ask us if you need one.

Good habits

- Keep the external drive unplugged when not in use. A permanent connection can be affected by ransomware too.
- Look occasionally to confirm backups are updating.
- Keep one copy away from home. The 3-2-1 rule is three copies, two kinds of storage, one off-site.

When to get more help

Get in touch if File History says the drive has been disconnected for a long time, if your files are very large, or if you are not sure whether your backup actually works. Test a restore of one file now and then.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.