

Windows laptops & PCs | Medium | 2 min read

Black screen with only a mouse pointer after sign-in

If you sign in and see a plain black screen with a mouse pointer you can move, Windows has started but the desktop (the taskbar, icons and Start button) has not loaded. This is usually fixable without losing anything.

Try these quick things

1. Press **Ctrl + Shift + Windows key + B** together. You may hear a beep. This restarts the graphics driver, which fixes many black screens.
2. Press **Windows key + P** and choose **PC screen only**, in case the picture is going to a screen that is not connected.
3. Unplug any extra monitors, TVs, docks and USB devices, then wait a minute.

Restart the desktop

1. Press **Ctrl + Alt + Delete** and choose **Task Manager**. If it looks small, click **More details**.
2. Click **File**, then **Run new task**.
3. Type **explorer.exe** and press **Enter**.

The taskbar and desktop should come back. This is a Windows program that is meant to be there, so it is safe to start it this way. If it works, restart the PC normally afterwards.

If the desktop keeps failing

- Restart the PC and sign in again. A fast restart does not always clear the problem, so choose **Restart** rather than **Shut down**.
- Try signing in with a different account if you have one. If that works, your own profile may be damaged.
- Start in Safe Mode, then restart to see if it clears. We have a separate guide for this.

Check for a recent change

Think about what you did just before it began: a Windows update, a new graphics driver, a new programme or a new device. Using **System Restore** can undo the last change without touching your files.

When to get more help

Get in touch if **Task Manager** will not open, if the problem returns every time you start the PC, or if it only affects one user account. Tell us whether the screen is black before or after the sign-in screen, and any message you saw. Do not reset or reinstall Windows without backing up first.

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.