

Windows laptops & PCs | Medium | 2 min read

How to start Windows in Safe Mode

Safe Mode starts Windows with only the basics. It is useful when something is stopping Windows working normally, because it helps us tell whether a program or driver is to blame. It will look plain, with a low-quality screen. This is normal.

Quick fixes to try first

- Restart normally first. Many problems vanish after a restart.
- If you can get into Windows normally, there is no need for Safe Mode.
- Make sure the laptop is plugged in, and unplug USB devices.

Step by step: if Windows opens

1. Open **Settings**, then **System**, then **Recovery** (Windows 11). In Windows 10, choose **Update & Security**, then **Recovery**.
2. Next to **Advanced startup**, click **Restart now**. Save your work first.
3. On the blue screen, choose **Troubleshoot**, then **Advanced options**, then **Startup Settings**, then **Restart**.
4. After the restart, press **4** or **F4** for Safe Mode, or **5** or **F5** for Safe Mode with Networking, which lets you use the internet.

Step by step: if Windows will not open

1. Switch the laptop on, and as soon as you see the logo or spinning dots, hold the power button until it switches off. Do this two or three times.
2. On the next start, Windows should show a **Recovery** or **Automatic Repair** screen.
3. Choose **See advanced repair options** (or **Advanced options**), then follow the same path as above.

If that did not work

- Once in Safe Mode, you can uninstall a recently installed program, or use **System Restore**.
- To get out of Safe Mode, just restart normally.
- If you are asked for a **BitLocker recovery key**, it is usually linked to your Microsoft account at account.microsoft.com/devices/recoverykey. Do not guess or try to bypass it.

Do not choose any option that says reset or remove everything without a backup.

When to get more help

Stop and email us if you cannot reach the blue recovery screen, you are asked for a key you do not have, or Safe Mode loops back to the same problem. Tell us what you have tried and what you can see.

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.