

Windows laptops & PCs | Medium | 2 min read

Windows Security: scans, exclusions and ransomware protection

Windows Security is the free protection built into Windows 10 and 11. Most of the time it looks after itself. Here is how to run a scan, what exclusions are and why you should avoid them, and how to turn on extra protection for your files.

Open it

Press the **Windows key**, type **Windows Security** and open it. A green tick on each item means all is well. If you installed another antivirus, Windows Security may show that the other one is in charge.

Run a scan

1. Click **Virus & threat protection**.
2. Click **Quick scan** for a fast check.
3. For a thorough check, click **Scan options**, choose **Full scan**, and click **Scan now**. It can take an hour or more, so leave the PC plugged in.
4. If you suspect something nasty is hiding, choose **Microsoft Defender Antivirus (offline scan)** and click **Scan now**. The PC restarts and scans before Windows loads.

Exclusions: please be careful

An exclusion tells Windows Security to ignore a file, folder or program. It is under **Virus & threat protection, Manage settings, Exclusions, Add or remove exclusions**.

Only add an exclusion if the software's maker tells you to, and you are certain the software is genuine. Never add one because a website, a pop-up or a caller tells you to. That is a common trick to let malware in.

Ransomware protection

Ransomware locks your files and demands money.

1. In **Virus & threat protection**, scroll to **Ransomware protection** and click **Manage ransomware protection**.
2. Switch **Controlled folder access** on.

It stops unknown programs from changing files in folders such as Documents and Pictures. Sometimes it will block a program you trust. If that happens, use **Allow an app through Controlled folder access** and add that program. If you have OneDrive, there is also an option to recover files after an attack.

Do not switch off real-time protection.

When to get more help

Get in touch if a threat is found and cannot be removed, if Windows Security will not open or is switched off and cannot be turned on, or if files have become unreadable or renamed. In that case switch off the PC from the network and contact us at once.

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.