

### How to Start your Computer in Safe Mode

Safe mode is the Windows diagnostics mode. When you start the computer in Safe mode, only the specific components that are needed to run the operating system are loaded. Safe mode does not allow some functions, such as a connection to the Internet. Safe mode also loads a standard video driver at a low resolution. Due to the low resolution, your programs and the Windows desktop may look different than usual and the desktop icons may have moved to different locations on the desktop.

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#### Notes:

- This information is provided for your convenience. Safe mode is a feature of the operating system. If you need additional help with starting the computer in Safe mode, or if you want to start the computer in Safe Mode for an operating system that is not listed here, please contact Microsoft or the computer manufacturer.
- All Windows operating systems except Windows 3.1 and Windows NT can be started in Safe mode.

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This document provides two methods for starting the computer in Safe Mode. One method uses the F8 key during system startup, and the other method uses the System Configuration Utility, which is a feature of some Windows operating systems. Please note the following:

- **System Configuration Utility:** If you try the System Configuration Utility and cannot start its dialog box, use the F8 method instead. If the System Configuration Utility method is not listed for your operating system, the utility is not available in that operating system.
- **F8 key:** Using the F8 key can be more difficult than using the System Configuration Utility because you must press the F8 key at just the right time. If the F8 method does not work, repeat the steps, but press the F8 key more quickly, or press it several times. If the F8 key still does not work, use the System Configuration Utility method instead. On some older computers, the F8 key method does not work because the computer has disabled the F8 key for this purpose or the computer is designed to use a different key.

(If your computer has been infected with some worms and Trojans, the System Configuration Utility will not work. In this case, using the F8 key will be the only option.)

### Windows 95

Windows 95 does not include the System Configuration Utility.

#### To use the F8 method

1. Restart the computer.
2. Watch the screen while it is black. When you see "Starting Windows 95," immediately press the F8 key. Windows starts in Safe mode.

### Windows 98/Me

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Windows 98/Me includes the System Configuration Utility. If you can start the computer normally into Windows, this is the easiest--and the recommended way--to restart the computer in Safe mode.

### To use the System Configuration Utility method

1. Close all open programs.
2. Click Star > Run. The Run dialog box appears.
3. As shown in this illustration, type `msconfig` and then click OK.
4. In the System Configuration Utility, click "Advanced." (Windows Me will look a bit different than the illustration.)
5. In the Advanced Troubleshooting Settings dialog box, check Enable Startup Menu, as is shown here. Click OK. Click OK again when the System Configuration Utility reappears.
6. You will be prompted to restart the computer. Click Yes. The computer will restart in Safe mode. (This can take several minutes.)
7. Perform the troubleshooting steps for which you are using Safe Mode.
8. When you are finished with troubleshooting in Safe mode repeat steps 1-6, but in step 5, uncheck "Enable Start-up Menu."
9. Close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would.

### To use the F8 method

1. Restart the computer.
2. As the computer restarts, press and hold down the F8 key until the Windows 98 startup menu appears.
3. Choose Safe mode from the startup menu, and then press Enter. Windows starts in Safe mode.

## Windows 2000

Windows 2000 does not include the System Configuration Utility.

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**Note:** Some IT departments or computer manufacturers may include the System Configuration Utility as part of a custom Windows 2000 installation. They could include either Windows 98/Me or Windows XP version as either will run on Windows 2000. (This use of the System Configuration Utility is not supported by Microsoft.) If you can start Windows 2000 normally, *and* the System Configuration Utility is installed on your computer, follow the instructions for Windows 98/Me or XP (depending on your version). Otherwise, continue with the instructions in this section.

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### To use the F8 method

1. If the computer is running, shut down Windows, and then turn off the power.

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2. Wait 30 seconds, and then turn the computer on.
3. When you see the black-and-white Starting Windows bar at the bottom of the screen, start tapping the F8 key. The Windows 2000 Advanced Options Menu appears.
4. Ensure that the Safe mode option is selected. In most cases, it is the first item in the list and is selected by default. (If it is not selected, use the arrow keys to select it.)
5. Press Enter. The computer then begins to start in Safe mode. This can take a few minutes.
6. When you are finished with all troubleshooting, close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would.

## Windows XP

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### Note:

- Due to the nature of Safe mode in Windows XP, it is not possible to install software while in Safe mode.
  - When you finish the troubleshooting or removal procedure, if you are using the first (recommended) method, you must re-enable Normal mode. Until you do this, the computer will continue to start in Safe mode.
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Windows XP includes the System Configuration Utility. If you can start the computer normally and get into Windows, this is the easiest--and the recommended way--to restart the computer in Safe mode.

### To use the System Configuration Utility method

1. Close all open programs.
2. Click Start, and then click Run. The Run dialog box appears.
3. As shown in this illustration, type `msconfig` and then click OK.
4. The System Configuration Utility appears, check the `"/SAFEBOOT"` option, and then click OK.
5. You then see the prompt to restart the computer. Click Restart.

The computer restarts in Safe mode. (This can take several minutes.)

6. Perform the troubleshooting steps for which you are using Safe Mode.
7. When you are finished with troubleshooting in Safe mode repeat steps 1-5, but in step 4, uncheck `"/SAFEBOOT"`
8. Close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would.

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### **To use the F8 method**

Use this method only if Windows XP is the only operating system installed on your computer.

1. Start Windows, or if it is running, shut Windows down, and then turn off the computer.
2. Restart the computer. The computer begins processing a set of instructions known as the Basic Input/Output System (BIOS). What is displayed depends on the BIOS manufacturer. Some computers display a progress bar that refers to the word BIOS, while others may not display any indication that this process is happening.
3. As soon as the BIOS has finished loading, begin tapping the F8 key on your keyboard. Continue to do so until the Windows Advanced Options menu appears. If you begin tapping the F8 key too soon, some computers display a "keyboard error" message. To resolve this, restart the computer and try again.
4. Using the arrow keys on the keyboard, scroll to and select the Safe mode menu item, and then press Enter.