

Learn how to create a Windows 10 Recovery Drive

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This is an excerpt from “Learn to use the Windows 10 Recovery Drive”

Sooner or later, nearly every Windows user powers up the machine — and Windows simply refuses to start.

Every current version of Windows lets you create and run a self-booting rescue disc, but Win10 takes that tool to a new level. The Windows 10 Recovery Drive comes with multiple tools for repairing and reinstalling Windows. You can, for example, use a system restore point to restore an image backup, run an automated Startup Repair tool, refresh Windows (either keeping or removing your data), or completely reinstall the operating system. If you're lucky, you'll never need your Win10 recovery drive. But when things go serious wrong with Windows 10, you'll be extremely relieved to have it. Here's how to create and use a recovery drive.

Preparing the Recovery Drive — on a flash drive

The changes to the self-booting, Windows-recovery system start with the name. Bowing to changes in PC technology, it's no longer a rescue disc, it's now a rescue drive. In fact, creating a bootable CD or DVD is no longer an option; you must use a spare USB flash drive with a capacity of at least 512MB. But for a recovery drive with a complete set of tools, you'll need an 8GB or larger drive.

If your internal drive crashes, and you need to install Windows on a replacement drive, you'll be glad you splurged on the 8GB drive.

Note that everything currently on the flash drive will be lost when you turn it into a Win10 recovery drive.

Most important, you'll want to create your new recovery drive now, while your Win10 setup is healthy. (Note: A recovery drive created on one PC might not work perfectly on another machine.)

Once you have a suitable flash drive plugged into your system, it's time to run Win10's Create a recovery drive option. There are two ways to do it:

- In the Win10 search box, enter "recovery" and select the option under Settings.
- Open Control Panel/Recovery (in the icon view).

Click **Create a recovery drive (Figure 1)** and follow the prompts. If your flash drive has a capacity of less than 8GB, uncheck the **Back up system files to the recovery drive** option. Otherwise, the drive-creation process will fail, possibly with a generic error message.

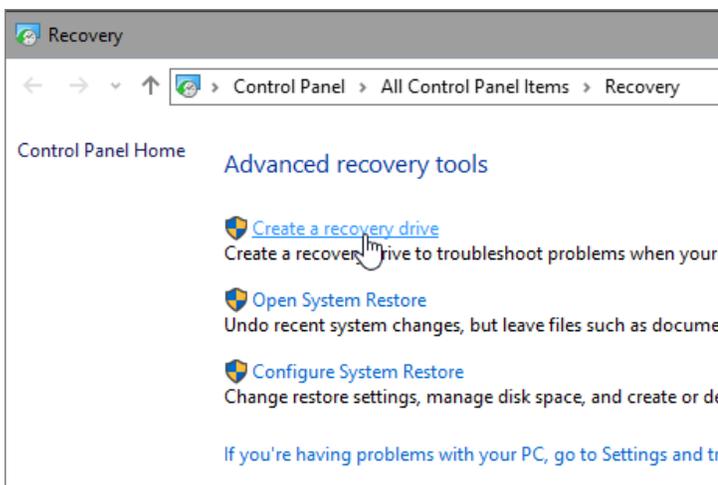


Figure 1.

Keep in mind that the actual drive creation can take considerable time — especially if you're backing up system files. When the process is done, label the flash drive with something like "Recovery" plus the make and model of the PC. Store it securely, so it doesn't get used for some other purpose and you'll be able to find it in an emergency.