

# Windows Safe Mode

Excerpts from: One trick the tech pros know about Windows 10 By Kevin Downey, Komando.com, September 4, 2017  
Howtogeek.com: How to Use Safe Mode to Fix Your Windows PC (and When You Should)

## Windows Safe Mode

Simply, Safe Mode is a way to figure out what's wrong with your computer by opening a bare bones version of it. It's particularly helpful if you suspect your computer is infected with a virus. If it is, you may not be able to move your cursor or restart your computer. If something's wrong with your computer, you may not be able to click on the apps that you use every day. You may not be able to open files you've already created. It's frustrating and a little scary.

Windows Safe Mode is one way to fix what's wrong with it, without viruses or other problems getting in the way. In Safe Mode, your computer doesn't turn on some hardware like your scanner or printer, for instance. Your computer doesn't run autoexec.bat. It doesn't run config.sys either. Your computer's graphics are also bare bones, without the images or colors that you usually see. You'll just have a black screen with words like "safe mode" on it.

## Safe Mode on Windows 10

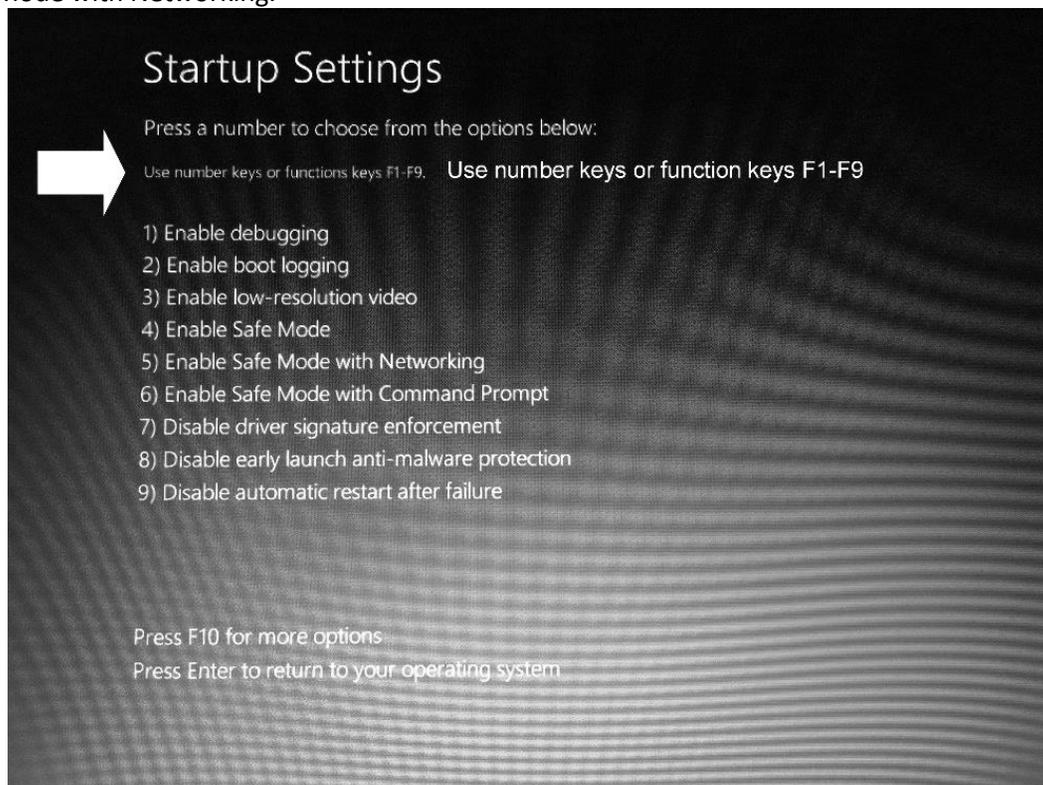
There are several ways to start your computer in safe mode or Safe Boot. You can click on Start, then Power, then hold the Shift down and click on Restart. Then Select Troubleshoot>Advanced Options>Startup Settings. In the Startup Settings Screen, tap the Restart Button. The PC will reboot and bring up the Startup Settings screen.

Here's another way, easier if you know what options you want in Safe Mode. You can use your Cortana task bar on the lower left side of your computer screen. If you use the voice-activated version of it, say "system configuration." Or just type in those words. System Configuration >> click on System Configuration desktop app >> select Boot >> Safe Boot >> select Minimal unless you know that you need another option >> OK >> select either Restart or Exit Without Restart.

## Safe Mode in previous versions of Windows

Try this to get into Safe Mode: Start >> Restart >> hold down the F8 key as your computer is restarting. But, do it before you see the Windows logo. Otherwise, you'll need to try again.

**When you start up in Safe Mode**, you'll see multiple options for Safe Mode. If you're not sure which mode you need, start with Safe Mode with Networking.



- 1. Debugging Mode.** Starts Windows in an advanced troubleshooting mode intended for IT professionals and system administrators.
  - 2. Enable Boot Logging.** Creates a file, nbtlog.txt, that lists all the drivers that are installed during startup and that might be useful for advanced troubleshooting.
  - 3. Enable low-resolution video (640×480).** Starts Windows using your current video driver and using low resolution and refresh rate settings. You can use this mode to reset your display settings. For more information, see [Change your screen resolution](#).
  - 4. Enable Safe Mode.** Basic safe mode without networking
  - 5. Safe Mode with Networking.** Starts Windows in safe mode and includes the network drivers and services needed to access the internet or other computers on your network.
  - 6. Safe Mode with Command Prompt.** Starts Windows in safe mode with a command prompt window instead of the usual Windows interface. This option is intended for IT professionals and administrators.
  - 7. Disable Driver Signature Enforcement.** Allows drivers containing improper signatures to be installed. 64-bit versions of Windows 10 and 8 include a “driver signature enforcement” feature. They'll only load drivers that have been signed by Microsoft. To install less-than-official drivers, old unsigned drivers, or drivers you're developing yourself, you'll need to disable driver signature enforcement.
  - 8. Disable early launch anti-malware protection.** Windows 10 include a feature called Secure Boot, which protects the Windows boot configuration and components, and loads an Early Launch Anti-malware (ELAM) driver. This driver starts before other boot-start drivers and enables the evaluation of those drivers and helps the Windows kernel decide whether they should be initialized.
  - 9. Disable automatic restart on system failure.** Prevents Windows from automatically restarting if an error causes Windows to fail. Choose this option only if Windows is stuck in a loop where Windows fails, attempts to restart, and fails again repeatedly.
- Press PF10 for more options**  
**Press Enter to return to your operating system.** Starts Windows in its normal mode.

#### **Next set of options (PF10 from previous screen)**

**1. Launch recovery environment.** Windows Recovery Environment (WinRE) is used primarily to help save or salvage your Windows operating system. ... It can also be used to fix, repair or salvage Windows XP. The following features are available in WinRE: Startup Repair. System Restore.

**After starting Windows in Safe Mode,** you can perform most of the regular system maintenance and troubleshooting tasks to fix your computer:

- 1-Scan for Malware:** Use your antivirus application to scan for malware and remove it in Safe Mode. Malware that may be impossible to remove in normal mode—because it's running in the background and interfering with the antivirus—may be removable in Safe Mode. If you don't have an antivirus installed, you should be able to download and install one in Safe Mode.
- 2-Run System Restore:** If your computer was recently working fine but it's now unstable, you can use System Restore to restore its system state to the earlier, known-good configuration. Assuming your computer is unstable and crashing, it may be possible to run System Restore without crashing in Safe Mode.
- 3-Uninstall Recently Installed Software:** If you recently installed software (such as a hardware driver or a program that includes a driver) and it's causing your computer to blue-screen, you can uninstall that software from the Control Panel. Your computer should hopefully start normally after you've uninstalled the interfering software.
- 4-Update Hardware Drivers:** Assuming your hardware drivers are causing system instability, you may want to download and install updated drivers from your manufacturer's website and install them in Safe Mode.
- 5-See Whether a Crash Occurs:** If your computer is unstable normally but works fine in Safe Mode, it's likely that there's a software problem causing your computer to crash. However, if the computer continues to crash in Safe Mode, this is often a sign that there's a hardware problem with your computer.

**One caution:** If you use something other than a password to sign on to Windows (Pin number, picture), you will not be able to use that alternate signon method. Be sure you know your password!