

# How to log on to Windows XP if you forget your password or your password expires

This article describes how to log on to Windows XP if you forget your password or your password expires and you cannot create a new one.

**Note** If you have not created a password reset disk, and you have also forgotten the password for all user accounts, you cannot log on to your existing Windows installation for security reasons. This information applies to starting Windows XP typically, to safe mode, and to Recovery Console. In this case, you must perform a "clean" installation of Windows XP, re-create all user accounts, and then reinstall all your programs.

## Method 1: Use a password reset disk

If you created a password reset disk for Windows XP, reset your password by using the password reset disk.

For additional information about how to use a password reset disk, click the following article numbers to view the articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[305478](#) How to create and use a password reset disk for a computer that is not a domain member in Windows XP

[306214](#) How to create and use a password reset disk for a computer in a domain in Windows XP

## Method 2: Log on as an administrator to reset the password

If you cannot log on to Windows by using a particular user account (including the Administrator or Computer Administrator accounts), but you can log on to another account that has administrative credentials (including the Administrator or Computer Administrator accounts), follow these steps:

1. Log on to Windows by using the administrator account that has a password that you remember.

**Note** You cannot log on as usual by using the Administrator or Computer Administrator account to a Windows XP Home Edition-based computer or to a Windows XP Professional-based computer in a workgroup. To log on as the Administrator or Computer Administrator, you must start Windows XP in safe mode. For additional information, see the "[Windows XP Home Edition or Windows XP Professional in a workgroup](#)" section.

2. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.

3. In the **Open** box, type the following command, and then click **OK**:  
**control userpasswords2**

4. Click the user account that you forgot the password for, and then click **Reset Password**.

5. Type a new password in both the **New password** and the **Confirm new password** boxes, and then click **OK**.

**Warning** If you reset the password for a user account in this manner in Windows XP Professional, the following kinds of information for that user will be no longer available:

- Email messages that are encrypted with the user's public key.
- Internet passwords that are saved on or remembered by the computer
- Any files that the user has encrypted

You should now be able to log on to Windows with the user account and the new password. The following sections provide step-by-step instructions to reset the password for a typical user account in Safe Mode by using the Administrator (or Computer Administrator) account.

## Windows XP Home Edition or Windows XP Professional in a workgroup

To log on as Administrator and reset the password, follow these steps:

1. Restart the computer. After the Power On Self Test (POST), press the F8 key.

2. On the **Windows Advanced Options** menu, use the ARROW keys to select **Safe Mode**, and then press ENTER
3. When you are prompted to select the operating system to start, select **Microsoft Windows XP edition** (where *edition* is the edition of Windows XP that is installed), and then press ENTER.
4. On the **To begin, click your user name** screen, click **Administrator**.
5. Type the administrator password, and then press ENTER.

**Note** In some cases, the Administrator password may be set to a blank password. In this case, do not type a password before you press ENTER.

6. Click **Yes** to acknowledge that Windows is running in safe mode.
7. Click **Start**, and then click **Control Panel** (or point to **Settings**, and then click **Control Panel**).
8. Click **User Accounts**.
9. Click the user account whose password you want to change.
10. Click **Change the Password** if you want to keep a password, or click **Remove password** if you do not want to use a password. If you remove the password, go to step 11.
11. Type the new password for the user, and then click **Change Password**
12. Quit the User Accounts tool, and then restart the computer

### Windows XP Professional in a domain

To log on as Administrator to reset the password, follow these steps:

1. In the **Welcome to Windows** dialog box, press CTRL+ALT+DELETE.
2. Type the logon information for the Administrator account, including the password, and then click **OK**.

**Note** The Administrator password may be set to a blank password. In this case, do not type a password before you click **OK**.

3. Click **Start**, click **Run**, type **compmgmt.msc**, and then click **OK**.
4. In the **Computer Management (Local)** box, expand **Local Users and Groups**.
5. Click the **Users** folder.
6. In the right pane of the Computer Management window, right-click the user account whose password you want to reset, and then click **Set Password**.
7. Click **Proceed**.
8. In the **New password** box, type the new password for the user account.
9. Type the same password in the **Confirm password** box, and then click **OK**
10. Click **OK** to acknowledge that the new password has been set.
11. Quit the Computer Management snap-in, and then restart the computer

### Applies to XP Home Edition and XP Professional edition

## XP Password Expiration

After you have run Windows XP Pro for a while, you may receive this message when you log on: "Your password will expire in 14 days.....".

By default, Windows XP is set up with passwords which will expire after 42 days. 14 days in advance, Windows will start warning you of this fact. If you do not want your passwords to expire:

1. Go to **Start > Run** and in the **Open:** box type **control userpasswords2**
2. Select the **Advanced** tab in the **User Accounts** window
3. Press the **Advanced** button below the **Advanced user management** header
4. Select **Users** in the **Local Users and Groups**
5. In the right pane, right-click the user name for which you want to change the setting, and select **Properties**

6. On the **General** tab, check **Password never expires**
7. Click **Apply** and **OK** (all the way out)

NOTE: If you're using the XP HOME edition, at step 3 above, you will get a message "This computer is running Windows XP Home Edition. This snapin may not be used with that version of Windows. To manage user accounts for this computer, use the User Accounts tool in the Control Panel."

Revised 5/31/2009