

Blue Screen of Death

A sudden blue screen popping up with white writing...is known as the Blue Screen of Death and announces the impending death of your computer unless you find and fix the problem.

What were you doing just before the blue screen appeared? Has it appeared before.

1. Uninstall that new program.

If your PC crashes or locks up after you install a new program, uninstall it; your computer may return to normal.

2. Check the DLLs.

Dynamic link libraries are small programs used--and often shared--by many Windows applications.

Rightclick START...SEARCH or FIND. In the NAMED box type *.dll. In the LOOK IN box click the down arrow and select the C:\ drive. Sort them by selecting *View, Details* and clicking the *Name* column heading.

Search tip: To ease your search, first look for DLLs that cause the most trouble. These are files that begin with the following letters: BWCC, CO, CTL, MFC, MSV, and OLE. Type *MFC*.dll* will find all DLLs that start with MFC.

3. Compare duplicate versions.

Right-click each duplicate file, select *Properties*, and click the Version tab. The date isn't important--it's the version number that is critical. The dll with the latest version number will most likely be found in the Windows system folder or if using XP, the Windows System32 folder.

4. Rename the DLLs.

If you discover a DLL with a lower version number in an application's folder and in the Windows System folder, *don't* delete it. Instead, rightclick the application file and select RENAME to rename the file extension to .d_l. Doing so keeps the old DLL version from loading and forces the program to look in the System folder for the right DLL. After each DLL renaming ceremony, reboot your PC. If all's well, rename more old DLLs.

Shortcut: Download a copy of [DLL Checker](#) at [Click here: PCWorld.com - DLL Checker](#) a shareware program that finds and highlights duplicate DLLs; it makes renaming DLLs quick and easy.

Sometimes something as simple as restarting your computer or a System Restore can fix the problem.

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More from Steve Bass' newsletter

Tech Tip of the Week: Stop Errors [\[top\]](#)

Pop quiz: It's fast, it's blue, and it stops your computer cold. I get one every so often -- a blue screen loaded with dire warnings, a list of letters and numbers, and an obscure stop error. (see one [here](#).) Actually, the stop error codes offer valuable info about what caused your system to come to a complete halt. The message might let you know your RAM is on its last legs, a driver is missing, or a hard drive is infected with spyware or damaged. Microsoft has a list of [stop errors](#), along with an explanation and details that are written in somewhat readable English.

Resolving a stop error can be an enjoyable weekend project (ha!). My favorite stop (sorry) for help is [UpdateXP](#), run by Microsoft Windows MVP Marc Liron. The site has the most commonly seen stop errors with possible resolutions.

```
Technical information:  
*** STOP: 0x00000050 (0xFD3094C2, 0x00000001, 0xFBFE7617, 0x00000000)  
*** SPCMDCON.SYS - Address FBFE7617 base at FBFE5000, DateStamp 3d6dd67c
```

Seen one of these lately? It's a stop error that's likely to ruin your entire day.

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