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## Create Windows Recovery USB

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### Introduction

If all the normal recovery options fail, (see Fact Sheet No 55) then Windows can be reinstalled using a Recovery USB, which was created at the time when the PC was working, eg. when purchased new) If you do not have previously created this USB, do it now!

### What You Need Before You Start

A USB stick

- Windows 11: at least 16 GB
- A working Windows PC

**The USB will be completely erased, so back up anything on it first**

#### 1. Plug in your USB stick

Make sure it's empty or that you've backed up its contents.

#### 2. Open the Recovery Drive tool

You can access it in two ways:

- Press **Start**, type "**Create a recovery drive**", and open it
- Or open **Control Panel** → **Recovery** → **Create a recovery drive**
- Windows may ask for admin permission—click **Yes**.

#### 3. Choose whether to back up system files

You'll see a checkbox:

- Back-up system files to the recovery drive
- Recommended
- Allows you to reinstall Windows even if your drive is wiped

- Requires a larger USB stick

Select it, then click Next.

#### 4. Select your USB drive

- Windows will show a list of removable drives.
- Choose your USB stick
- Click **Next** Windows will warn you that **everything on the USB will be deleted.**

#### 5. Click “Create”

Windows will:

- Format the USB
- Copy recovery tools
- (Optional) Copy system files
- Build the bootable recovery environment

This can take **5–30 minutes**, depending on your system.

#### 6. Label and store your recovery USB

Once finished:

- Safely eject the USB
- Label it **“Windows Recovery Drive”**
- Store it somewhere safe

#### This USB can now:

- Repair start-up issues
- Restore from a system image
- Reset or reinstall Windows
- Access advanced troubleshooting tools