



Microsoft® Windows® Operating System Licensing Guide for Refurbished Personal Computers (PC)

Using genuine Windows operating systems is as important for refurbished PCs as it is for new PCs. Only genuine Windows operating systems offer end users the quality they expect and additional benefits such as full access to downloads, updates, and enhanced features.

What is a Refurbished PC?

A refurbished PC is a used PC that has gone through the following processes that leave the PC ready for use by a new owner:

-  **Data wiping**
-  **Testing**
-  **Minor repair and/or replacement of defective PC components**

Refurbishment is considered to either leave the original motherboard as-is, or replace a defective motherboard with one of exactly the same make, model and specification. Otherwise, replacing a motherboard results in a “new” PC and not a “refurbished” PC.

When is a new Windows operating system license required and when is one not required?

A new Windows license is not required for a refurbished PC that has:

- (1) a Certificate of Authenticity (COA) for a Windows operating system affixed to the PC, **and**
- (2) the original recovery media or hard-disk based recovery image associated with the PC.

The COA constitutes proof that the PC is licensed for the version of Windows named on the COA and the refurbisher can use either:

- (1) the original recovery media **or**
- (2) the original hard-disk based recovery image to re-install the operating system software named on the COA.

If the refurbisher does not have the original recovery media, they may be able to obtain the recovery media from the original manufacturer of that PC.

A new Windows license is required for a refurbished PC if:

- (1) the refurbisher cannot obtain the original recovery media **or**
- (2) the PC does not have a hard-disk based recovery image.

Then, the refurbisher must purchase a new license in order to deliver a genuine Windows operating system experience with the refurbished PC.

Microsoft has a number of licensing programs for refurbished PCs. These include:

- The Fresh Start for Donated Computers program, visit www.microsoft.com/freshstart
- The Community Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (Community MAR) program, visit www.microsoft.com/communitymar
- The Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) program, visit www.microsoft.com/oem/mar

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What evidence indicates that a used PC has a genuine Windows operating system license?

A: The COA proves that a PC has a genuine Windows license and if a refurbisher has the image that came with the PC, they can re-install the original image. If the refurbisher does not have the original image and cannot acquire it as described above, a new license must be acquired.

Q: I have a PC without a Windows COA. Can I install Windows on the PC?

A: Yes, but because the PC does not have proof of a genuine Windows license you must acquire a license through either (1) the system builder channel or (2) the retail channel. If the PC is to be supplied to an educational establishment, non-profit charitable organization or other community user, you may be able to acquire the license through the Community MAR program. If the PC is to be supplied to a school, the school may be able to acquire the license through the Fresh Start for Donated Computers program.

Q: I have a PC with a Windows COA but there is no recovery media or image. Can I re-install the version of Windows indicated on the COA?

A: You may reinstall the Windows operating system indicated on the COA only if you can obtain the recovery media from the original manufacturer of the PC. If you cannot obtain the recovery media or the hard-disk recovery image for the PC, then a new license must be acquired.

Q: If I have a PC with a COA, but no recovery media or recovery image, can I buy media second hand, e.g., from an online auction site, or use some media I already have?

A: No. Only the original recovery media for that PC or the original hard-disk based recovery image for that PC can be used to reinstall the Windows operating system.

Q: I received a PC for refurbishment and the original owner has made a copy of their recovery CD. Can I use the copy to reinstall Windows?

A: No. Only the original recovery media for that PC or the original hard-disk based recovery image for that PC can be used to reinstall the Windows product.

Q: Can I create a library of recovery CDs and use them to restore operating systems? Can I share my library with other organizations and perhaps make them available for download online?

A: No. Only the original recovery media for a PC or the original hard-disk based recovery image for a PC can be used to reinstall the Windows product.

Q: I have recovery media from a manufacturer that will install Windows XP operating system on a different model from the one listed on the media. I also have recovery media from one manufacturer that works on PCs from another manufacturer. Can I use these for the PCs I am refurbishing?

A: No. Recovery media can only be used with the original PC that it accompanied when supplied by the OEM to the end user customer.

Q: I have a working system with no COA. I also have a system that has a faulty motherboard with an affixed COA on the case. I swap covers so that the working system now has a cover with an affixed COA. I have a recovery CD. Can I reinstall Windows legally?

A: No. The COA and recovery media were valid for the original PC in its entirety, not just the case. You may replace the faulty motherboard on the PC with the COA, provided that you replace it with one of the same specification as the original. You may then use the recovery media to reinstall the Windows software on the PC. You cannot move the COA (on the case) to a different PC.

Q: I have a used PC with a COA and recovery media, but the hard disk drive has failed. Can I replace the hard disk drive and reinstall Windows from the recovery media?

A: Yes, because you have both the COA and recovery media, you can reinstall even if you replace the faulty hard disk drive.

Q: Does Microsoft have programs for refurbishers who want to preinstall genuine software on refurbished PCs?

A: Yes, Microsoft has three programs.

- The Community MAR program allows participants to supply refurbished PCs preinstalled with Windows 2000 or Windows XP to eligible recipients which include educational establishments, non-profit charitable organizations and other eligible community users. Information about the Community MAR program can be found at www.microsoft.com/communitymar.
- The Fresh Start for Donated Computers program provides licenses directly to schools that have received donated PCs. Information about the Fresh Start for Donated Computers program can be found at www.microsoft.com/freshstart.
- The MAR licensing program allows eligible large refurbishers to supply refurbished PCs preinstalled with Windows XP Home Edition or Windows XP Professional Edition to all types of users. For information about the MAR program, please visit www.microsoft.com/oem/mar



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