Fix printer connection and printing problems in Windows – Microsoft Support

Windows 11 · https://cleversupport.ca/docs/windows-11/fix-printer-connection-and-printing-problems-in-windows-microsoft-support-2/

Step 1. Unplug and restart your printer

Sometimes power cycling your printer can resolve the issue. Turn off your printer and unplug it, wait 30 seconds, plug your printer back in, and then turn the printer back on.

If your printer still doesn’t work, continue to step 2.

Step 2. Check cables or wireless connection

Check the cables (for wired printers). Make sure that the printer's USB cable is properly connected from the printer to your PC. If your USB isn’t recognized, see Automatically diagnose and fix Windows USB problems.

Check the wireless connection (for wireless printers). Do one of the following:

- Make sure the printer’s wireless option is turned on and available. Many printers have a button that displays a blue wireless icon when a wireless connection option for the printer is available. To learn where this button is located on your printer and to find instructions about how to turn it on, see the instructions that came with the printer or check the manufacturer's website for instructions.
- Run the printer’s wireless connectivity test. Many printers have a menu option to test the printer’s wireless connectivity. Read the instructions that came with the printer or check the printer manufacturer’s website for instructions about how to do this.
- If those check out and you’re still having problems, your PC may not be connecting to your wireless network. To learn more, see Why can't I get online? For more advanced help, see Fix network connection issues in Windows.
- If you're having trouble connecting to a Bluetooth printer, see Fix Bluetooth problems in Windows.

Notes:

- If you use wireless access points, extenders, or multiple wireless routers with separate SSIDs, make sure you're connected to the same network as the printer for your PC.
- If your printer's status displays "Printer in error state," there may be a problem with the printer itself. If these first two steps did not resolve the error, check the printer for low paper or ink, and be sure the cover isn't open and the paper isn't jammed.

If your printer still doesn’t work, continue to step 3.

Step 3. Uninstall and reinstall your printer

Try removing and reinstalling the printer.

Remove your printer

1. Select the **Start** button, then select **Settings** > **Bluetooth & Devices** > **Printers & scanners** .
   Open Printers & scanners settings
2. Select the printer you want to uninstall.
3. Select the **Remove** button. Then confirm you're sure you want to remove this device by selecting **Yes**.

Reinstall your printer

If your printer is turned on and connected to the network, Windows should find it easily. Available printers can include all printers on a network, such as Bluetooth and wireless printers, or printers that are plugged into another computer and shared on the network. You might need permission to install some printers. To reinstall your printer, follow these steps:

1. Select the **Start** button, then select **Settings** > **Bluetooth & Devices** > **Printers & scanners** .
   Open Printers & scanners settings
2. Make sure your printer is turned on and connected. Then select the **Add device** (or **Refresh**) button.
3. Please wait a moment while Windows searches for the printers that are connected to the device (locally or wirelessly). Windows will then display a list of printers connected to your device. If you

see your printer listed, select the **Add device** button for your printer. If you don't see your device listed, select **Add manually**.

Notes:

- If you use wireless access points, extenders, or multiple wireless routers with separate SSIDs, make sure you're connected to the same network as the printer for your PC to find and install it.
- If you have a new wireless printer that hasn’t been added to your home network, read the instructions that came with the printer and check the printer manufacturer’s website to learn more and to get up-to-date software for your printer.

Tip: You can print a test page to make sure the printer is working correctly. If you've installed the printer but it doesn't work, check the manufacturer's website for troubleshooting information or driver updates.

Reinstall your printer manually

If the system cannot install the printer automatically, you can reinstall it manually. When you select **Add manually**, you will then see five options to **Find a printer by other options**. Select the option that applies best for your situation and then follow the steps provided. All of the options can apply for a printer that is connected wirelessly or through your network. However, if your printer is connected directly to your computer locally, select **Add a local printer or network printer with manual settings** and then select **Next**.

Reinstall a local printer manually

After selecting **Add a local printer or network printer with manual settings**, follow these steps:

1. Select **Use an existing port** and then select the port the printer is connected to. Then select **Next.** If the printer is connected via USB, select it from the list. There are also options for parallel (LPT) and serial (COM) ports.
2. You will now see options to install the printer driver. If the printer came with a disc that includes the driver, select **Have Disk**. Otherwise, select **Windows Update**.
3. Please wait while Windows updates the list of printers. Then select the printer manufacturer from the left column, and the printer model from the right column. Then select **Next**.**Note:** If there are multiple versions of a driver for your device, you might be asked which version of the driver to

use. In most cases, you should select **Replace the current driver**. However, if you're confident the installed driver is correct, select **Use the driver that is currently installed**.

4. Type a name for your printer, and then select **Next**. This name is only for your personal reference, so you can choose any name you prefer.
5. Select **Do not share this printer.** (If you want to share your printer with other devices on your network, select **Share this printer** and enter the name and location.) Select **Next**.
6. Select **Print a test page** to confirm that the printer is working and then select **Finish**.

If your printer still doesn’t work, continue to step 4.

Step 4. Install the latest driver for your printer

Most printers require the latest driver to work well. To learn more, read How to download and install the latest printer drivers.

If your printer still doesn’t work after you install the latest driver for your printer, continue to step 5.

Step 5. Clear and reset the print spooler

If the previous troubleshooting step is not successful, you may need to clear spooler files and restart the spooler service. The print spooler is a file that manages the printing process. To clear and reset the print spooler:

1. In the search box on the taskbar, type **services**, and then select **Services** in the list of results.
2. Select the **Standards** tab, and then double-click **Print Spooler** in the list of services.
3. Select **Stop**, and then select **OK**.
4. In the search box on the taskbar, enter **%WINDIR%\system32\spool\printers**, select **%WINDIR%\system32\spool\PRINTERS** in the list of results, and then delete all files in the folder.
5. In the search box on the taskbar, search for **services**, and then select **Services** in the list of results.
6. Select the **Standards** tab, and the double-click **Print Spooler** in the list of services.
7. Select **Start**, select **Automatic** in the **Startup Type** box, and then select **OK**.

If your printer still doesn’t work, continue on to step 6.

Step 6. Change a printer's status to "online"

If your printer displays an "offline" status, check out Troubleshooting offline printer problems.