EBOOK

NovaBACKUP

HOW TO PREPARE FOR
WINDOWS 10
END OF SUPPORT

A Technical Guide to a Smooth
Windows 11 Upgrade

Microsoft has officially announced that support for Windows 10 will end on **October 14, 2025**. For IT professionals and managed service providers (MSPs), this marks a critical transition point. Systems running Windows 10 will no longer receive security updates, bug fixes, or technical support, leaving organizations vulnerable to threats and compliance risks.

This guide provides a technical roadmap for upgrading to Windows 11, ensuring minimal disruption and maximum data integrity. Whether you're managing internal infrastructure or upgrading client environments, proactive planning is key.

Understanding the Impact of Windows 10 End of Support

Once Windows 10 reaches the end of support in October 2025, organizations still running it will be faced with:

- **Increased security risks:** Unpatched vulnerabilities make systems easy targets for ransomware and cyberattacks, making system management significantly more challenging.

> According to a CISA advisory, organizations running outdated software are at a significantly higher risk of cyber incidents.
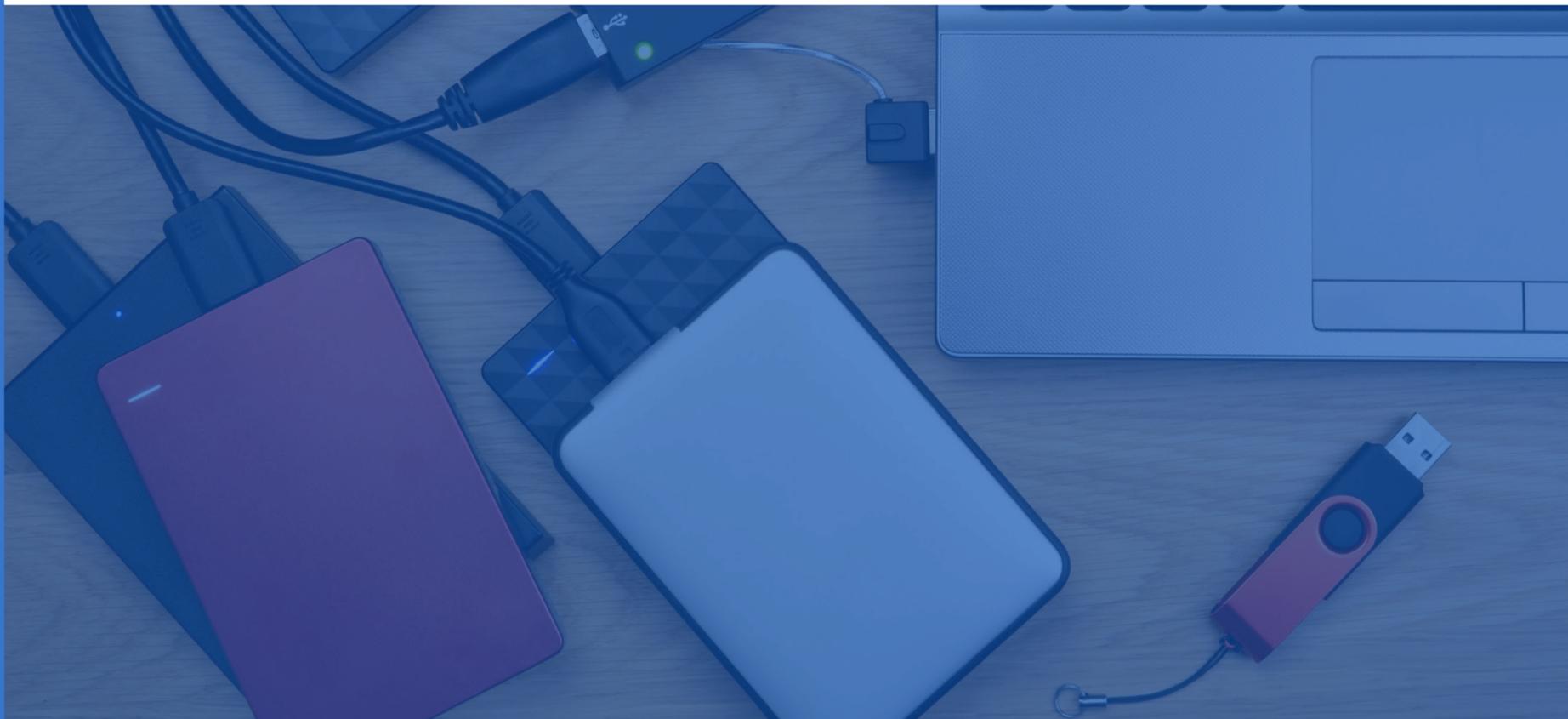
- **Compliance violations:** Industries such as healthcare (HIPAA) and finance (PCI DSS) can face penalties for using unsupported software. However, small businesses in any industry can also run into cyber insurance issues or violate internal policies.

- **Operational disruptions:** Without Microsoft's support, troubleshooting becomes more difficult. As an MSP or IT professional, you will likely still be able to help, but without Microsoft's support, resolving potential issues could take more time, leading to frustration for you or your customers.

Why Preparing for the Upgrade is Critical

While upgrades of this nature generally run smoothly, every environment is unique. Some of the most common problems encountered after attempting an upgrade, as reported by IT professionals around the world, include:

- **Data Loss or Corruption:** Whether it's a software glitch, a power interruption, or a lack of disk space, it's possible that important data could be lost during your upgrade. Make sure to perform the backups described in this guide before you upgrade.

- **Loss of Performance:** There's always a chance that your expectations for an upgrade do not live up to reality when it comes to performance. In some cases, where it's unacceptable, reverting to the previous OS may be required.

- **Driver Problems:** Various hardware may require driver updates to perform under the new operating system. If these are untested, then the possibility of incompatibility or unavailability remains.

- **Customization Issues:** If your PC has been heavily customized or relies greatly on third-party software, major upgrades may pose a challenge. Research accordingly so that proper precautions can be taken.

Making sure you have a working backup in place before you begin the migration process is your primary defense against these risks. A backup always allows you to go back to the original state, so your customers and colleagues can keep working while you figure out how to fix the problem.

UPGRADE GUIDE

Your Step-by-Step Windows 11 Upgrade Plan

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STEP 1

Check System and Software Compatibility

Before you migrate to a new Windows PC operating system, verify your PC's Windows 11 compatibility, as well as the compatibility of any applications you and your customers are running on the computer you're planning to upgrade

STEP 2

Back Up All Data

A reliable backup solution, such as NovaBACKUP, is essential to ensure data protection during this or any other migration. Whether upgrading to Windows 11 or exploring alternatives, a failsafe backup strategy prevents data loss and reduces downtime.

There are two ways you can approach this:

1. If you're transitioning to new hardware, have a backup of all the files, folders, and the system state ready.
2. If you're upgrading the operating system on the same PC, have an image backup ready as well.

NovaBACKUP supports both backup options, allowing you to easily combine file and system backups for convenient data recovery.

NOTE:

NovaBACKUP in its latest iteration supports Windows 10 and all newer Windows operating systems, including Windows 11.

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Create a File Backup --

A file backup is commonly utilized in the event that some of your files are lost or corrupted during the upgrade process. We recommend conducting at least a file backup for fast access to important files.

Using NovaBACKUP to Create a File Backup

If you use NovaBACKUP, create a backup job via the backup tab. Select the files you'd like to back up as well as the backup storage destination. Our recommendation is to select a local storage first and then add a cloud destination in the backup job settings for a Hybrid Backup, so you have two copies for added protection. Then run a one-time backup.

You can find more information about this process here:

- Quick Start Guide
- How to create a Hybrid Backup job

Create a System Backup --

A system backup—or image backup—of your current Windows 10 system will enable a restore of the entire system, including applications and the operating system. For a pre-migration preparation, a one-time image backup should be sufficient.

Using NovaBACKUP to Create a Image Backup

If you use NovaBACKUP as your backup solution, you can create your Disaster Recovery Image very easily.

Start by clicking on "Image Backup," then select "Launch Image Backup Tool for Backup/ Restore/Boot CD Creation" and follow the prompts. When it comes to selecting the Backup Type, there are two options:

1. You can create a Full Backup with a Boot Disk. This will enable you to boot up and restore your system to the same physical PC (in the event of a corrupt or missing operating system).

Make a Boot Disk

If you have chosen to do an Image Backup with a boot disk, you will need to create a boot disk. This can be found under "Image Backup" - "Boot Disk". Please follow the step-by-step instructions found here.

A boot disk can be stored on several different types of media, including a USB drive or an external hard drive.

2. You can create an image backup as a VHD or VHDx file to be able to mount the system within a Hyper-V virtual machine. This can simplify your restore process tremendously, and it frees you from relying on any old hardware. For example, you can temporarily restore your old Windows 10 system in a virtual machine while running Windows 11 on physical hardware. For more details see our knowledgebase.

Test Your Backup

Before you start migrating your operating system, make sure your backups are working by testing them. You don't need to perform a full restore, though. With NovaBACKUP, simply mounting the backup is sufficient to verify that all files are included.

STEP 3

Perform the Upgrade

Once all your backups have been completed, prepare the actual upgrade of your Windows PC according to Microsoft's recommendations. Microsoft provides excellent guidelines for the best results when upgrading your Windows operating system.

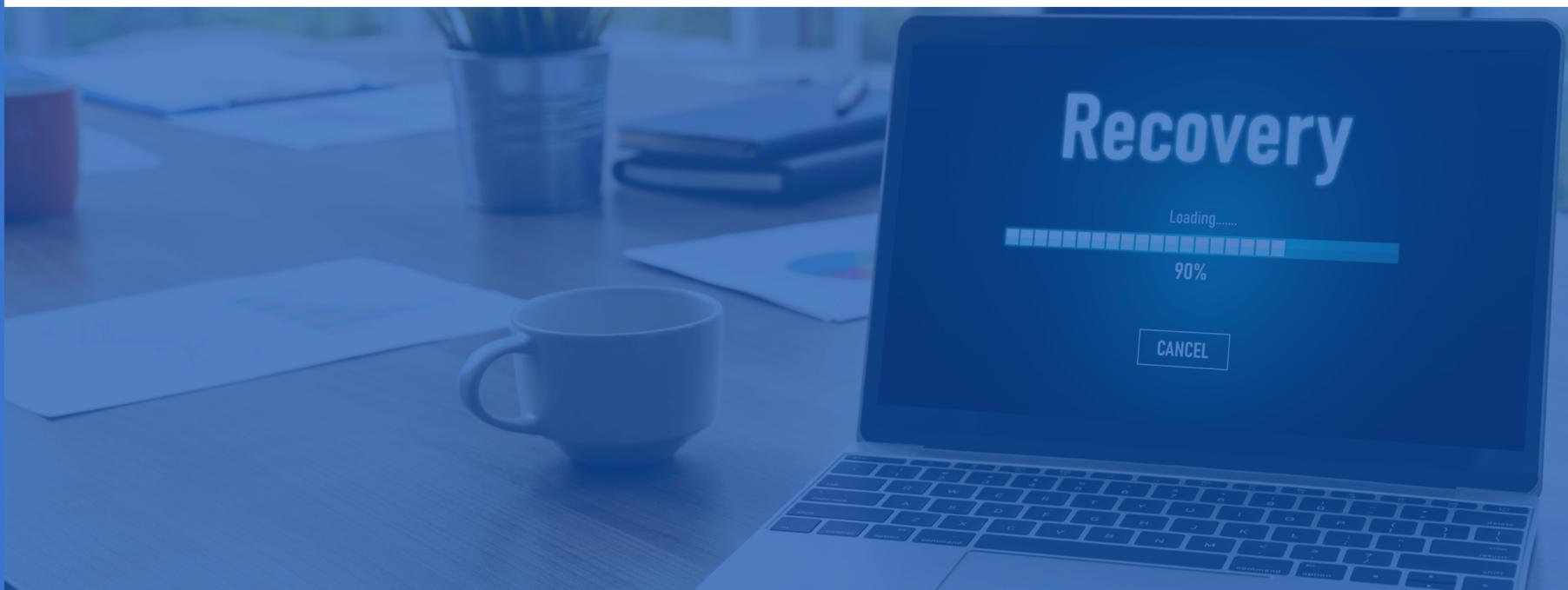# If You Encounter a Problem During Migration

A reliable backup of your PC, stored in a secure location, can help return you to a prior state of functionality. The backups described earlier in this guide are your safety net should you encounter any unforeseen upgrade problems.

If one or more files have been lost or corrupted:

- Review our how-to video if your system is running properly but specific files must be recovered from your previous environment.

If the entire PC environment must be restored:

- If you opted to create an image with a boot disc, follow the standard Windows guidelines on recovering your system using a recovery drive.

- If you created an image backup to a VHD or VHDx file format, simply mount this file within a Hyper-V virtual machine environment.

Upgrading an operating system doesn't need to be stressful. With a solid plan, verified backups, and the right support, you can confidently move forward knowing your systems—and your clients—are protected.

Don't miss our blog post that highlights the importance of upgrading from Windows 10 to Windows 11 and includes a practical checklist specifically for MSPs. Read the blog post here.

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ABOUT NOVABACKUP

For more than a decade, NovaBACKUP has been a trusted provider of flexible, all-inclusive data protection solutions for Managed Service Providers (MSPs) and professional offices worldwide. As industry leaders in Backup and Disaster Recovery, we bring extensive experience in helping specialized industries meet strict data protection goals.

At NovaBACKUP, our primary goal is to simplify and enhance data protection for our clients. More than just powerful backup technology, our team of backup experts is dedicated to providing unparalleled support. We take a people-first approach to backup, understanding that every unique environment requires a personalized approach to data protection.

With NovaBACKUP, our commitment to exceptional support ensures that you have a reliable partner in data protection. Learn more about NovaBACKUP and explore our comprehensive range of data protection solutions by visiting our website at www.novabackup.com.

Our Service Promise

We promise to treat the protection and safety of your data like we do our own. Our mission is to make data protection as simple and reliable as possible. You can count on us to provide professional, knowledgeable support that meets your data protection needs. Feel free to reach out to our team if you need assistance with your backup and recovery needs.

NovaBACKUP
29209 Canwood Street
Agoura Hills, California
91301

Tel.: (805) 579-6700
Fax: (805) 579-6710

M-F 9am-5pm PT

Email: ols@novabackup.com

www.novabackup.com