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Error message when you install or start an MS-DOS or 16-bit Windows-based program

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SYMPTOMS

If you try to start or install an MS-DOS-based or a 16-bit Windows-based program on your Windows XP-based computer, you may receive an error message that is similar to one of the following: 16-bit MS-DOS Subsystem

path to the program that you are trying to start or install

C:\Winnt\System32\config.nt The system file is not suitable for running MS-DOS and Microsoft Windows applications. Choose 'Close' to terminate the application. 16-bit MS-DOS Subsystem

path to the program that you are trying to start or install

config.nt The system file is not suitable for running MS-DOS and Microsoft Windows applications. Choose 'Close' to terminate the application. 16-bit MS-DOS Subsystem

path to the program that you are trying to start or install

C:\Windows\System32\Autoexec.nt The system file is not suitable for running MS-DOS and Microsoft Windows applications. Choose 'Close' to terminate the application. Although you may be prompted to quit the program or ignore the error message, either selection makes the program quit.

CAUSE

This issue may occur if one or more of the following files are missing or damaged:

- Config.nt
- Autoexec.nt
- Command.com

RESOLUTION

To resolve this issue, use one of the following methods.

Method 1

1. Insert the CD into the CD drive or DVD drive.
2. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
3. In the **Open** box, type **cmd**, and then click **OK**.
4. At the command prompt, type the following commands, pressing ENTER after each command:

```
expand CD-ROM Drive Letter:\i386\config.nt_ c:\windows\system32\config.nt
expand CD-ROM Drive Letter:\i386\autoexec.nt_ c:\windows\system32\autoexec.nt
expand CD-ROM Drive Letter:\i386\command.co_ c:\windows\system32\command.com
exit
```

5. Start or install the program. If the issue is resolved, do not complete the remaining steps. If the issue is not resolved, go to the next step.
6. **Note:** The Command.com file is not edited or created in the following process. Because of this, you may have to expand it from your Windows XP CD-ROM.

Start Notepad.

7. In Notepad, type the following entries:

```
dos=high, umb device=%SYSTEMROOT%\system32\himem.sys files=40
```

8. On the **File** menu, click **Save As**.
9. In the **File Name** box, type **Config.nt**, and then click **Save**. Close the Config.nt file.

10. On the **File** menu, click **New**.
11. In the new blank document, type the following entries:

```
@echo off lh %SYSTEMROOT%\system32\mscdexnt.exe lh %SYSTEMROOT%\system32\redir lh
%SYSTEMROOT%\system32\dosx SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 P330 T3
```

12. On the **File** menu, click **Save As**.
13. In the **File Name** box, type **Autoexec.nt**, and then click **Save**. Close the Autoexec.nt file.
14. Start Windows Explorer. Locate the Config.nt file, right-click the **Config.nt** file, and then click **Copy**.
15. Right-click the %SYSTEMROOT%\System32 folder, and then click **Paste**.
16. Locate the Autoexec.nt file, right-click the **Autoexec.nt** file, and then click **Copy**.
17. Right-click the %SYSTEMROOT%\System32 folder, and then click **Paste**.
18. Locate the Command.com file, right-click the expanded **Command.com** file, and then click **Copy**.
19. Right-click the %SYSTEMROOT%\System32 folder, and then click **Paste**. Restart your computer.

If the issue continues to occur, copy the Autoexec.nt and Config.nt files from the Repair folder in Windows to the System folder. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, click **Run**, type **c:\windows\repair**, and then click **OK**.
2. Right-click **Autoexec.nt**, and then click **Copy**.
3. Click **Start**, click **Run**, type **c:\windows\system32**, and then click **OK**.
4. Right-click anywhere in that folder, and then click **Paste**.
5. Right-click the **Autoexec.nt** file that you just copied, and then click **Properties**.
6. Click to select **Read-Only**, and then click **OK**.
7. Repeat steps 1 through 6 to copy the Config.nt file.

Note You must enable Read-Only permissions or the files will be removed after you restart Windows.

Method 2

1. Click **Start**, click **Run**, type **C:\windows\repair**, and then click **OK**.
2. Right-click the Autoexec.nt file, and then click **Copy**.
3. Click **Start**, click **Run**, type **%windir%\system32**, and then click **OK**.
4. In the System32 folder, press **Ctrl + V** to paste the Autoexec.nt file in this folder.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about MS-DOS-based programs in Windows, click the following article numbers to view the articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base: [305521](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/305521/) (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/305521/) "16-bit MS-DOS Subsystem" error message when you run an MS-DOS or 16-Bit Windows program in Windows Server 2003 or Windows 2000 Server [314106](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/314106/) (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/314106/) Troubleshooting MS-DOS-based programs in Windows XP

APPLIES TO

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- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition

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