

WINDOWS REGISTRY REPAIR PROCEDURE

By Mark E. Donaldson

THIS PROCEDURE IS FOR WINDOWS SYSTEMS PRIOR TO VISTA

Your system displays the error message:

**Windows could not start because the following file is missing or corrupt:
\\WINDOWS\\SYSTEM32\\CONFIG\\SYSTEM**

That means the System Registry Hive has become corrupted.

There are two ways to get back up and running. The easy way which doesn't always work, and then there is the hard way.

Easy Way (This doesn't always work)

When you are booting your system, press the F8 key during the start of the bootup sequence, meaning after it does the Power On Self Test.

Once you press the F8 key, you will be taken to a Menu. Select "Boot Using Last Known Good Configuration".

It will now attempt to load Windows XP using a past set of configuration files.

If that doesn't work, there is the next step....the hard way.

Hard Way

Boot your system with the Windows XP Install CD, let the system boot into the Setup. Once in the Setup, choose to run the Recovery Console.

You will now be presented with a screen similar to good old DOS.

First, we will recover the System Hive.

Now, type in the following commands with pressing Enter after each line.

```
md tmp
copy C:\windows\system32\config\system C:\windows\tmp\system.bak
delete C:\windows\system32\config\system
copy C:\windows\repair\system C:\windows\system32\config\system
```

Be very careful when you are typing in these commands, one wrong move, and you know, broken Windows XP.

Also, change the C in the commands to whatever your Windows XP drive letter is.

Attempt to boot the system, if it doesn't boot, get back into the Recovery Console and do the following commands.

```
md tmp
copy C:\windows\system32\config\software C:\windows\tmp\software.bak
delete C:\windows\system32\config\software
```

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copy C:\windows\repair\software C:\windows\system32\config\software

Note

The full Microsoft Support Knowledge Base Article that I based this FAQ entry on can be found [here \(Q307545\)](#).

This may also be scripted for use with the Recovery Console as follows:

```
:: #####
:: PART ONE
:: #####
:: #####
:: regcopy1.txt
:: For use with Microsoft KB307545 Part One
:: In Recovery Console run: batch regcopy1.txt
:: #####
:: md tmp
:: copy c:\windows\system32\config\system c:\windows\tmp\system.bak
:: copy c:\windows\system32\config\software c:\windows\tmp\software.bak
:: copy c:\windows\system32\config\sam c:\windows\tmp\sam.bak
:: copy c:\windows\system32\config\security c:\windows\tmp\security.bak
:: copy c:\windows\system32\config\default c:\windows\tmp\default.bak

:: delete c:\windows\system32\config\system
:: delete c:\windows\system32\config\software
:: delete c:\windows\system32\config\sam
:: delete c:\windows\system32\config\security
:: delete c:\windows\system32\config\default

:: copy c:\windows\repair\system c:\windows\system32\config\system
:: copy c:\windows\repair\software c:\windows\system32\config\software
:: copy c:\windows\repair\sam c:\windows\system32\config\sam
:: copy c:\windows\repair\security c:\windows\system32\config\security
:: copy c:\windows\repair\default c:\windows\system32\config\default

:: #####
:: PART TWO
:: #####
:: 1. Open the System Volume Information folder.
::      This folder is unavailable and appears dimmed because it is set as a super-hidden folder.
::      Note: This folder contains one or more _restore {GUID} folders such as "_restore{87BD3667-3246-476B-923F-F86E30B3E7F8}".
:: 2. Open a folder that was not created at the current time.
::      You may have to click Details on the View menu to see when these folders were created.
::      There may be one or more folders starting with "RPx" under this folder. These are restore points.
:: 3. Open one of these folders to locate a Snapshot subfolder.
::      The following path is an example of a folder path to the Snapshot folder:
::      C:\System Volume Information\_restore{D86480E3-73EF-47BC-A0EB-A81BE6EE3ED8}\RP1\Snapshot
:: 4. From the Snapshot folder, copy the following files to the C:\Windows\Tmp folder:
::      _REGISTRY_USER_DEFAULT
::      _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SECURITY
::      _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SOFTWARE
::      _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SYSTEM
::      _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SAM
:: 5. Rename the files in the C:\Windows\Tmp folder as follows:
::      Rename _REGISTRY_USER_DEFAULT to DEFAULT
::      Rename _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SECURITY to SECURITY
::      Rename _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SOFTWARE to SOFTWARE
```

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```
::          Rename _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SYSTEM to SYSTEM
::          Rename _REGISTRY_MACHINE_SAM to SAM

:: #####
:: PART THREE
:: #####
:: #####
:: regcopy2.txt
:: For use with Microsoft KB307545 Part Three
:: In Recovery Console run: batch regcopy2.txt
:: #####
:: del c:\windows\system32\config\sam
:: del c:\windows\system32\config\security
:: del c:\windows\system32\config\software
:: del c:\windows\system32\config\default
:: del c:\windows\system32\config\system
:: copy c:\windows\tmp\software c:\windows\system32\config\software
:: copy c:\windows\tmp\system c:\windows\system32\config\system
:: copy c:\windows\tmp\sam c:\windows\system32\config\sam
:: copy c:\windows\tmp\security c:\windows\system32\config\security
:: copy c:\windows\tmp\default c:\windows\system32\config\default

:: #####
:: PART FOUR
:: #####
:: 1. Click Start, and then click All Programs.
:: 2. Click Accessories, and then click System Tools.
:: 3. Click System Restore, and then click Restore to a previous RestorePoint.
```