

System File Checker (SFC) & DISM Command Cheat Sheet

Fix Windows Errors Without Reinstalling

A complete troubleshooting and command-line reference for Windows XP to Windows 11

What is SFC?

System File Checker (SFC) is a built-in Windows tool that scans for corrupted or missing system files and replaces them with correct versions from a protected system cache.

It's available in Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10, and 11, making it one of the oldest and most reliable tools for fixing core system issues — without needing third-party software.

When Should You Use SFC?

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Apps crash or freeze

May be caused by corrupted system components

Windows fails to update

SFC can repair damaged files from incomplete installs

DLL or EXE errors

Fixes missing or corrupt files that prevent programs from running

Blue screen (BSOD)

Repairs core system issues that cause crashes

PC won't boot

Use advanced SFC in recovery to restore stability

How to Run SFC

Method 1 – Works in Windows 10/11:

1. Press **Windows + S**
2. Type cmd
3. Right-click **Command Prompt**, select **Run as Administrator**
4. Type:

sfc /scannow

5. Press **Enter**

Method 2 – XP to Windows 11 Compatible:

1. Press **Windows + R**
2. Type cmd, then press **Ctrl + Shift + Enter**
3. In the console, type:

sfc /scannow

Understanding SFC Results

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No integrity violations

System files are clean- No action needed

Found corrupt files and repaired them

All issues were fixed

Restart your PC

Found corrupt files but couldn't fix some

Some errors remain

Run DISM, then retry SFC

Could not perform the operation

Scan failed

Boot into Safe Mode and retry

Advanced SFC Commands

MORE SFC COMMANDS

sfc /scannow

--Scans all protected system files and repairs any corrupted ones automatically.

sfc /verifyonly

--Scans for file issues without making changes.

sfc /scanfile=C:\path\filename.dll

--Scans a specific file for corruption.

sfc /offbootdir=C:\ /offwindir=C:\Windows /scannow

--Run SFC from outside Windows (e.g., recovery).

What Is DISM ?

Deployment Imaging Service and Management Tool (DISM) is a built-in Windows utility used to repair and restore the system image that Windows relies on for updates and file integrity. It's available in Windows 8, 10, and 11, and is typically used when SFC can't repair system files on its own.

What If SFC Can't Fix It? Use DISM (Win 8+)

Command	What It Does
DISM /Online /Cleanup-Image /RestoreHealth	Repairs Windows image for future scans
DISM /Online /Cleanup-Image /ScanHealth	Deep check for corruption
DISM /Online /Cleanup-Image /CheckHealth	Quick status check

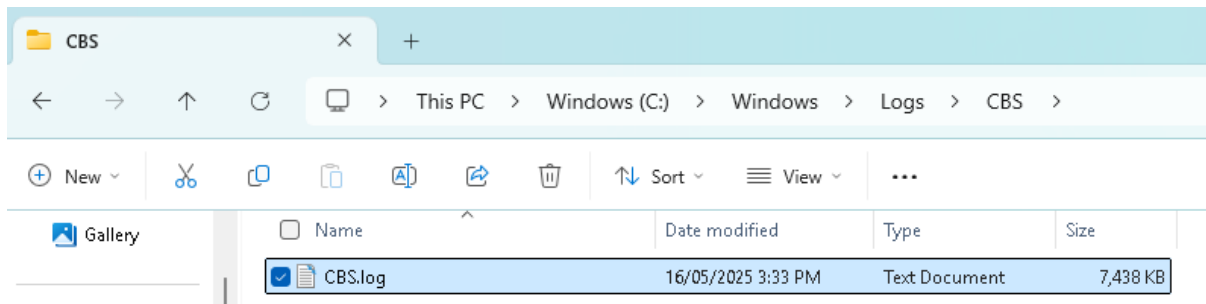
Bonus (If DISM fails):

DISM /Online /Cleanup-Image /RestoreHealth /Source:WIM:X:\sources\install.wim:1 /LimitAccess

- Use this with a mounted Windows ISO or USB
- Replace X: with the correct drive letter

Read SFC Log for Details

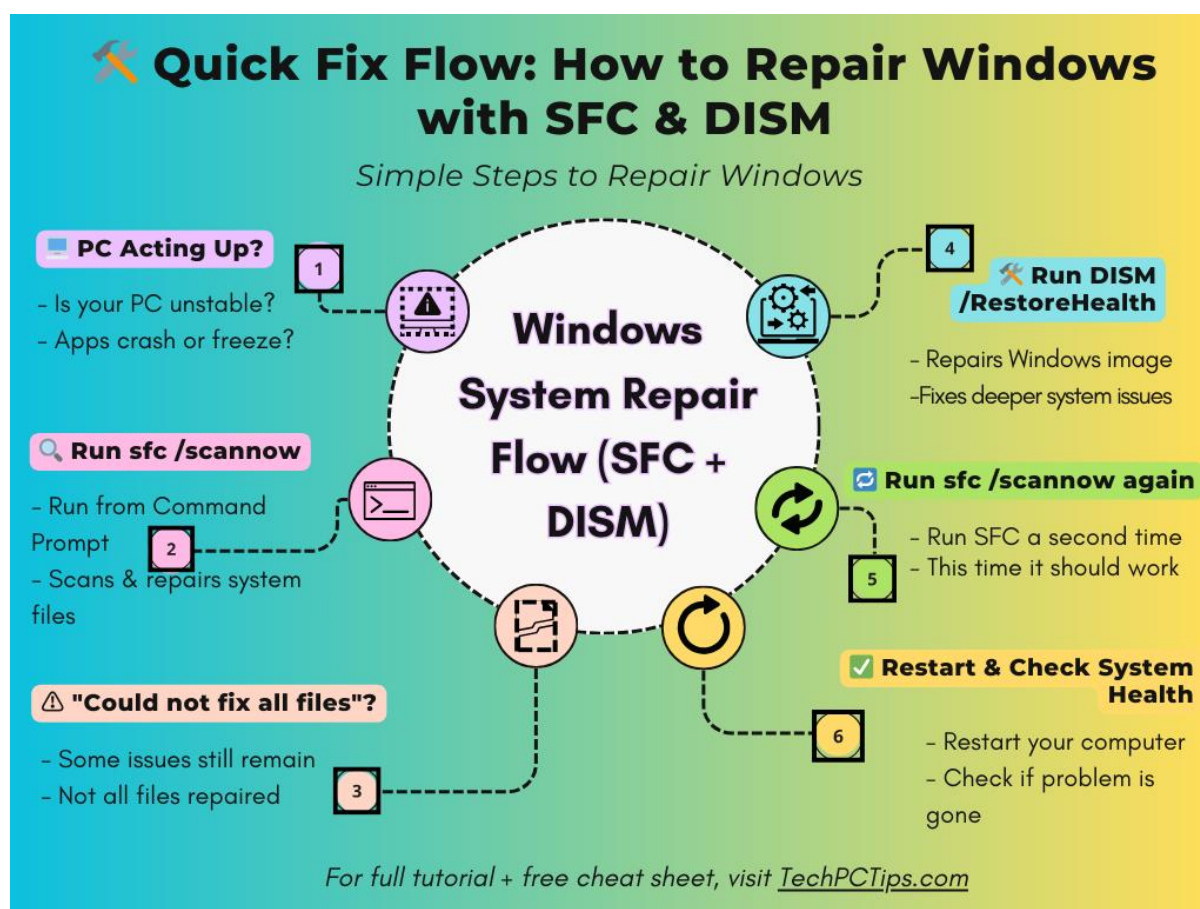
Some versions of Windows create their own log file and it will list its path. Mine was automatically stored in C:/Windows/log/cbs/cbs.log



Create a human-readable log:

```
findstr /c:"[SR]" %windir%\Logs\CBS\CBS.log > C:\sfcdetails.txt
```

Then open C:\sfcdetails.txt in Notepad.



Pro Tips

- ✓ Run CMD as Administrator
- ✓ Use Safe Mode if SFC won't run
- ✓ Restart your PC after using SFC/DISM
- ✓ DISM only works on Windows 8/10/11
- ✓ Always back up your files before deep repair

Tools & Resources

Tool	Use	Link
Windows ISO	Needed for advanced DISM repair	Microsoft Download Page
Autoruns	Check hidden startup items	Sysinternals Tools
SFCFix	Log analyzer for SFC errors	MajorGeeks

Need more help?

For more Windows repair tutorials and downloadable guides, visit my website:

 <https://techpctips.com/>

I regularly share free tips to help beginners take control of their computers — no tech jargon, just step-by-step help.

You Download this FREE cheat sheet from this page:

 <https://techpctips.com/system-file-checker-sfc>