

Reimaging licensed Microsoft software using Volume Licensing media

This brief applies to all Microsoft Volume Licensing programs.

Table of contents

Summary.....	1
What's new.....	1
Details	1
Benefits	1
Reimaging eligibility	2
OEM-specific information	4
Frequently asked questions.....	4

Summary

Reimaging is the copying of software onto multiple devices from one consistent image. Reimaging rights are granted to all Microsoft Volume Licensing customers. Under these rights, customers can reimage original equipment manufacturer (OEM) or full packaged product (FPP) licensed devices by using media provided under their Volume Licensing agreement. However, certain conditions exist for using the Volume Licensing media for reimaging software that is previously installed either by the OEM or from FPP.

What's new

This brief replaces a previous version published in April 2014. It has been updated to reflect Windows Software Assurance per User licensing.

Details

Benefits

One key benefit of licensing Microsoft software under a Microsoft Volume Licensing program is the right for customers to use Volume Licensing media to deploy the same standard image of software across multiple licensed devices. It does not matter whether those devices are licensed under that particular Volume Licensing program, through an OEM, or through retail channels, so long as certain eligibility rules are followed. Using standard images can help with the following:

Reimaging licensed Microsoft software using Volume Licensing media

- ▶ More timely software deployment
- ▶ Reduced total cost of ownership (TCO) through easier deployment
- ▶ Standardization of software on multiple devices and streamlined product activation

Reimaging eligibility

Reimaging is permitted if the licenses granted to use Volume Licensing media are identical to those granted to use the originally licensed product. Volume Licensing customers who have licensed Microsoft software products from an OEM, through a retail source, or under an agreement other than their Microsoft Volume Licensing agreement can use copies made from Microsoft Volume Licensing media. This brief addresses the right for customers to use copies from Volume Licensing media only if they are the same product and version, contain the same components, and are in the same language. Rights to reimage a device using a different version or edition of software than what was originally licensed may be granted in some programs through downgrade rights and/or license migration rights. Rights to image a device with different versions/editions of software can be found in the [Product List](#).

The following are examples that do not meet the eligibility criteria for reimaging with exceptions noted:

- ▶ **Different products:** Windows Server 2012 R2 Standard and Windows Server 2012 R2 Essentials are not the same product and cannot be reimaged. This also applies to the Windows 8.1 and Windows 8.1 Pro operating systems.
- ▶ **Different components:** The Microsoft Office system suites must have exactly the same component products. For instance, Microsoft Office Professional 2013 licensed through the OEM, system builder, or FPP channel and Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2013 licensed through Microsoft Volume Licensing are not the same product. They also do not share the same components. Therefore, you cannot reimage in this example.
- ▶ **Different languages:** English and Multilingual User Interface (MUI) Packs are not the same language. Also, different languages such as English and French do not meet the criteria. Therefore, you cannot reimage in these examples.
- ▶ **Different versions:** Windows Server 2012 R2 and Windows Server 2012 are not the same version, just as the Windows 7 Professional and Windows 8.1 Enterprise operating systems are not the same version or edition. Therefore, you cannot reimage among these examples. (See Windows Desktop Operating System section below.)

Volume Licensing: Reimaging in Open License and Open Value Programs

You must purchase at least one license of the Microsoft software that you want to reimage under your Open License authorization number or Microsoft Open Value or Microsoft Open Value Subscription Agreement number. This purchase is required to obtain the media and necessary Volume Licensing Keys (VLK[s]). You may use this media to reimage as many devices as you have licenses for, subject to the reimaging eligibility requirements described above.

Reimaging of the Windows Desktop operating system

Microsoft Volume Licensing programs do not offer licenses for the full version of the Windows desktop operating system. However, the *media* for the full version is available to customers who license Windows through a Windows Upgrade license in any Volume Licensing program. Reimaging by using Volume Licensing full version media requires that customers have licensed a Qualifying Windows desktop operating system either preinstalled through an OEM or System Builder, as an FPP retail product, or through other Microsoft programs. Volume Licensing customers can use their Volume Licensing full version media to reimage their Windows desktop operating system from an OEM only if it is the same product and version that came with the PC. Rights to reimage using a different version or edition may be granted in the EULA that came with your OEM version of Windows, your Volume Licensing agreement, or in some Volume Licensing programs specified in the [Product List](#).

Reimaging licensed Microsoft software using Volume Licensing media

The following summarizes differences between OEM, FPP, and Volume Licensing Windows operating system licenses:

Reimaging Rights – Using media to image multiple PCs	
OEM	Yes, you may use an OEM recovery image on devices shipped by that OEM provided that the device is appropriately licensed.
FPP (retail)	No, you are allowed to use FPP media only on the device licensed with the FPP license.
Volume Licensing	Yes, you may use Volume Licensing media to reimage any device properly licensed to run what it is being reimaged with.

The following clarifies reimaging rights for the Windows Desktop OS:

- ▶ **Using Volume Licensing media to reimage.** Volume Licensing Windows Desktop operating system media may be used to reimage devices as long as all devices being reimaged are licensed for the edition and version of Windows being reimaged onto them. (Note: Each device being reimaged does *not* need to be licensed under Volume Licensing as long as they are properly licensed for the edition and version being reimaged onto them.)
 - **Downgrade Rights: Using Volume Licensing media to reimage a device with an OEM license.** OEM devices imaged with a Pro version of the Windows Desktop operating system generally include limited downgrade rights. For example, customers purchasing a PC from an OEM with Windows 8.1 Pro have the right to downgrade to Windows 7 Professional. If a Volume Licensing customer wants to take advantage of these downgrade rights, they may do so and use Volume Licensing media. In this example, Volume Licensing Windows 7 Professional bits may be used to reimage any of the customer's devices licensed for Windows 7 Professional (either with an OEM Windows 7 Professional license or through OEM downgrade rights granted in the Windows 8 Pro and Windows 8.1 Pro OEM EULAs).
 - **Downgrade Rights: Using Volume Licensing media to reimage a device with a Volume Licensing license.** Devices assigned a Volume Licensing Windows Pro or Enterprise Upgrade license have full downgrade rights. If a Volume Licensing customer wants to take advantage of these downgrade rights, they may do so and use Volume Licensing media. A chart depicting downgrade rights for the Pro and Enterprise editions of Windows can be found in the [Windows 8.1 Volume Licensing Guide](#).
- ▶ **Using OEMs or other third parties to reimage devices with Volume Licensing media.** Many organizations want to deploy a standard image across multiple devices shipped from different OEMs. OEM media (including custom OEM images) may be used to reimage devices, but only those that were originally imaged with such media. Thus, OEM images cannot be used in the scenario in which an organization wants to deploy a standard image across multiple devices shipped from *different* OEMs. You may contract with an OEM (or other third parties) to reimage devices with Windows Desktop operating system media licensed and procured through Volume Licensing on your behalf as long as the devices are licensed with a Qualifying Operating System. Details are available on the [Product Licensing Search page](#) (under **Document Type**, select **Windows License Verification**). If a customer contracts with an OEM to install Volume Licensing media on its behalf, the devices procured from the OEM still have underlying OEM licenses and should come with OEM recovery media (even though the customer never had possession of the devices with the original OEM media installed on them). The customer is free to contract with multiple OEMs and/or third parties to use Volume Licensing reimaging rights in this manner. The customer is thus able to create a standard Windows Desktop operating system image that can be deployed across multiple device types.

Note: Any Microsoft software contained in the product pool media received under your Volume Licensing agreement and licensed through sources outside Volume Licensing is covered by these reimaging rights subject to the eligibility requirements.

Reimaging licensed Microsoft software using Volume Licensing media

OEM-specific information

Reimaging is the copying of software onto multiple devices from one standard image. Organizations that want to recover their systems by using OEM media or OEM custom images may do so only as follows: OEM media may be used to individually recover an image to a device by using recovery media provided by the OEM. The OEM recovery media (1) should match the product version originally preinstalled on the system, (2) may only be used to image devices that came with it, and (3) may not be modified prior to recovering an image to a device.

- ▶ **Using OEM media to reimage:** You may use OEM media (including custom OEM images) to reimage devices, but only those that were originally imaged with such media.
- ▶ **Downgrading and reimaging:** The EULA that came with your OEM version of Windows may include the right to use a prior version of the software. For example, instead of using the Windows 8.1 Pro software, you may use one of the following earlier versions: Windows 7 Professional or Windows Vista Business. If the earlier version includes different components, any terms for those components in the agreement that come with the earlier version apply to your use of such components. Neither the manufacturer or installer, nor Microsoft, is obligated to supply earlier versions to you. You must obtain the earlier version separately. Note: The right to use a prior version of the software must be in accordance with all other reimaging terms.

Frequently asked questions

1. What is Microsoft Volume Licensing media?

Microsoft Volume Licensing media means a web-based download of Microsoft Volume Licensing Products from the Microsoft [Volume Licensing Service Center](#) (VLSC) portal or Microsoft Volume Licensing CD/DVD Disk Kits.

2. What happens to support and warranty coverage for Microsoft software licensed through a finished goods channel that is reimaged with Volume Licensing media?

Microsoft Volume Licensing programs are separate from the support offerings available from Microsoft and its sales partners. You should investigate the contractual and support implications with your OEM before reimaging and make arrangements accordingly. You are not entitled to Microsoft support as a result of reimaging using Microsoft Volume Licensing media. In addition, you should discuss any impact to your existing warranty and support coverage with your current warranty and support provider.

3. Why is Microsoft Office licensed through Microsoft Volume Licensing different from the Microsoft Office licensed through OEM, retail (FPP), or other sales channels?

Microsoft Office products licensed through Microsoft Volume Licensing programs are enterprise products with a different user interface, bypass enablement, and IT management tools. For example, Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2013 is designed for enterprises and licensed through Volume Licensing to empower IT administrators with tools for deploying, managing, and customizing the product. It also provides users with additional functionalities that are not available in OEM and retail channels.

4. May I use my Windows 8.1 Enterprise Volume Licensing media to reimage an OEM PC licensed for Windows 8.1 Pro that is not covered by Microsoft Software Assurance or a Windows 8.1 Enterprise Upgrade license?

No. To be eligible to reimage a PC with Windows 8.1 Enterprise requires one of the following:

- a) The PC is licensed for Windows Enterprise Upgrade through Volume Licensing
- b) The PC licensed for Windows Software Assurance
- c) The primary user of the PC is licensed for Windows Software Assurance per User

Reimaging licensed Microsoft software using Volume Licensing media

5. What if I reimage a PC with Windows Enterprise under Software Assurance and the Software Assurance coverage expires or the licensed user (in the case of Windows Software Assurance per User) leaves the company?

You are required to revert the PC back to its original licensed operating system.

6. Do I have the right to reimage if I do not have Software Assurance?

Yes. All Microsoft Volume Licensing customers, regardless of whether they have Software Assurance, can reimage as long as the eligibility requirements for reimaging are met.

7. How do I get the VLKs needed to reimage my product?

As a Volume Licensing customer, the VLKs you need should be automatically assigned through the [Volume Licensing Service Center](#). If not, you can request your key through Microsoft [Activation Call Centers](#). Note that if you are an Open License or Open Value customer, you must purchase at least one unit of the licensed product that you want to reimage to obtain access to the product media and receive a key.

8. I want to reimage my OEM Windows 8.1 Pro PCs by using the Multiple Activation Key (MAK) rather than the Key Management Service (KMS). How do I obtain more activation keys, if needed?

First, check how many activations are associated with the Windows 8 MAK by going to the VLSC, product key page, or by using the [Volume Activation Management Tool](#) (VAMT). If you need more activations, call the Activation Call Center and state the reason why or email makadd@microsoft.com and include your agreement information, customer name and contact information, business justification for the additional activations requested (for example, reimaging), the product key, and the number of additional activations you would like to add to the key. For more details on Volume Activation, visit www.microsoft.com/licensing/products/products.aspx.

9. Do I have the right to reimage with a prior version of my licensed product?

You can reimage using a prior version if the license terms for the software that you want to reimage permit you to use a prior version in place of the licensed version. The eligibility requirements as stated above regarding product and version, components, and language apply.

10. I have a 32-bit OEM PC running Windows 8.1 Pro. Can I reimage it to 64-bit Windows 8.1 Pro with 64-bit Volume Licensing media?

Yes. You can reimage between a 32-bit and 64-bit platform if they are the same product and version, contain the same components, and are in the same language.

© 2014 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

This document is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS DOCUMENT. This information is provided to help guide your authorized use of products you license; it is not your agreement. Your use of products licensed under your volume license agreement is governed by the terms and conditions of that agreement. In the case of any conflict between this information and your agreement, the terms and conditions of your agreement control. Prices for licenses acquired through Microsoft resellers are determined by the reseller.