How to set the path and environment variables in Windows

Updated: 12/05/2021 by Computer Hope

Setting the path and environment variables differs depending on the Windows operating system version on your computer. Select a link below for your version of Windows and follow the steps.

Tip: Administrator privileges are required to modify the path and environment variables.

Setting the path and variables in Windows 11

- 1. Press the **Windows key ■**+**X** to access the Power User Task Menu.
- 2. In the Power User Task Menu, select the **System** option.
- 3. In the *System* window, scroll to the bottom and click the **About** option.
- 4. In the *System > About* window, click the **Advanced system settings** link at the bottom of the *Device specifications* section.
- 5. In the *System Properties* window, click the **Advanced** tab, then click the **Environment Variables** button near the bottom of that tab.
- 6. In the *Environment Variables* window (pictured below), highlight the **Path** variable in the *System variables* section and click the **Edit** button. Add or modify the path lines with the paths you want the computer to access. Each directory path is separated with a semicolon, as shown below.

C:\Program Files;C:\Winnt;C:\Winnt\System32

	Value		
OneDrive	C:\Users\	\OneDrive	
Path	C:\Users\	\AppData\Local\Microsoft\WindowsApps;	
TEMP	C:\Users\	\AppData\Local\Temp	
TMP	C:\Users\	\AppData\Local\Temp	
ystem variables		New Edit Delete	0
Variable	Value		
asllog	Destination	n=file	
ComSpec	C:\WINDO	/WS\system32\cmd.exe	
DriverData	C:\Window	vs\System32\Drivers\DriverData	
NUMBER_OF_PROCESS	SORS 4		
OS	Windows_		
		n Files (x86)\Intel\iCLS Client\;C:\Program Files\Intel\iCL.	-
	COME FAIL	:BAT; CMD; VBS; VBE; JS; JSE; WSF; WSH; MSC	
PATHEXT			
Path PATHEXT PROCESSOR_ARCHITED			-

6. After creating or modifying the environment variables, restart the computer for those changes to take effect in Windows.

Tip: You can edit other environment variables by highlighting the variable in the *System variables* section and clicking **Edit**. If you need to create a new environment variable, click **New**, and enter the variable name and value.

Tip: To view and set the path through the Windows command line, use the path command.

Setting the path and variables in Windows 10

- 1. Press the **Windows key #**+**X** to access the Power User Task Menu.
- 2. In the Power User Task Menu, select the **System** option.
- 3. In the *About* window, click the **Advanced system settings** link under *Related settings* on the farright side.
- 4. In the *System Properties* window, click the **Advanced** tab, then click the **Environment Variables** button near the bottom of that tab.

5. In the *Environment Variables* window (pictured below), highlight the **Path** variable in the *System variables* section and click the **Edit** button. Add or modify the path lines with the paths you want the computer to access. Each directory path is separated with a semicolon, as shown below.

C:\Program Files;C:\Winnt;C:\Winnt\System32

	Value				
OneDrive	C:\Users\	\OneDriv	ve		
Path	C:\Users\	VAppDat	ta\Local\Microso	oft\WindowsApp	5;
TEMP	C:\Users\	VAppDat	ta\Local\Temp		
TMP	C:\Users\	\AppDat	ta\Local\Temp		
			New	Edit	Delete
stem variables					
Variable	Value				^
asllog	Destination				
ComSpec			n32\cmd.exe		
DriverData		/s\System3	2\Drivers\Drive	rData	
NUMBER_OF_PROCESSORS	4				
OS .	Windows_				_
				nt\;C:\Program Fi	
Path	COLUMN STATE	BAT: CMD	VBS: VBE: JS: JS	E: WSF: WSH: MS	SC
Path PATHEXT	COM; EXE;				
					v

6. After creating or modifying the environment variables, restart the computer for those changes to take effect in Windows.

Tip: You can edit other environment variables by highlighting the variable in the *System variables* section and clicking **Edit**. If you need to create a new environment variable, click **New**, and enter the variable name and value.

Tip: To view and set the path through the Windows command line, use the path command.

Setting the path and variables in Windows 8

- 1. Press the **Windows key ∉**+**X** to access the Power User Task Menu.
- 2. In the Power User Task Menu, select the **System** option.
- 3. Click the **Advanced System Settings** link in the left column.
- 4. In the *System Properties* window, click the **Advanced** tab, then click the **Environment Variables** button near the bottom of that tab.
- 5. In the *Environment Variables* window (pictured below), highlight the **Path** variable in the *System variables* section and click the **Edit** button. Add or modify the path lines with the paths you want the computer to access. Each different directory is separated with a semicolon, as shown below.

C:\Program Files;C:\Winnt;C:\Winnt\System32

Variable	Value
TEMP TMP	C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc
	New Edit Delete
vstem variables	
ystem variables Variable	Value
Variable NUMBER_OF_P	
Variable NUMBER_OF_P OS Path	2 Windows_NT C:\WINDOWS\system32;C:\WINDOWS;
Variable NUMBER_OF_P OS	2 Windows_NT C:\WINDOWS\system32;C:\WINDOWS; .COM;.EXE;.BAT;.CMD;.VBS;.VBE;.JS;

6. After creating or modifying the environment variables, restart the computer for those changes to take effect in Windows.

Tip: You can edit other environment variables by highlighting the variable in the *System variables* section and clicking **Edit**. If you need to create a new environment variable, click **New**, and enter the variable name and value.

Tip: To view and set the path through the Windows command line, use the path command.

Setting the path and variables in Windows Vista and Windows 7

- 1. On the desktop, right-click the **Computer** icon and select **Properties**. If you don't have a Computer icon on your desktop, click Start, right-click the **Computer** option in the Start menu, and select **Properties**.
- 2. Click the **Advanced System Settings** link in the left column.
- 3. In the *System Properties* window, click the **Advanced** tab, then click the **Environment Variables** button near the bottom of that tab.
- 4. In the *Environment Variables* window (pictured below), highlight the **Path** variable in the *System variables* section and click the **Edit** button. Add or modify the path lines with the paths you want the computer to access. Each different directory is separated with a semicolon, as shown below.

C:\Program Files;C:\Winnt;C:\Winnt\Syster	C:\Program	Files;C:\Winnt	t;C:\Winnt`	\System32
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Variable	Value
TEMP TMP	C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc
vstem variables	New Edit Delete
Variable	Value
Variable NUMBER_OF_P OS	2 Windows_NT
Variable NUMBER_OF_P	2

5. After creating or modifying the environment variables, restart the computer for those changes to take effect in Windows.

Tip: You can edit other environment variables by highlighting the variable in the *System variables* section and clicking **Edit**. If you need to create a new environment variable, click **New**, and enter the variable name and value.

Tip: To view and set the path through the Windows command line, use the path command.

Setting the path and variables in Windows 2000 and Windows XP

The path is now managed by Windows 2000 and Windows XP and not the autoexec.bat or autoexec.nt files, as was done with earlier versions of Windows. To change the system environment variables, follow the steps below.

- 1. From the desktop, right-click **My Computer** and click **Properties**. If you don't have a My Computer icon on your desktop, click Start, right-click the **My Computer** option in the Start menu, and select **Properties**.
- 2. In the *System Properties* window, click the **Advanced** tab.
- 3. In the *Advanced* section, click the **Environment Variables** button.
- 4. In the *Environment Variables* window (as shown below), highlight the **Path** variable in the *System Variable* section and click the **Edit** button. Add or modify the path lines with the paths you want the computer to access. Each different directory is separated with a semicolon, as shown below.

C:\Program Files;C:\Winnt;C:\Winnt\System32

Variable	Value
TEMP TMP	C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc C:\Documents and Settings\Techno\Loc
	New Edit Delete
ystem variables	Citer Citer
ystem variables Variable	Value
and the state and the	Value
Variable NUMBER_OF_P OS Path	Value 2 Windows_NT C:\WINDOWS\system32;C:\WINDOWS;
Variable NUMBER_OF_P	Value 2 Windows_NT G;WINDOWS\system32;C:\WINDOWS;COM;.EXE;.BAT;.CMD;.VBS;.VBE;.JS;

5. After creating or modifying the environment variables, restart the computer for those changes to take effect in Windows.

Tip: You can edit other environment variables by highlighting the variable in the *System variables* section and clicking **Edit**. If you need to create a new environment variable, click **New**, and enter the variable name and value.

Tip: To view and set the path through the Windows command line, use the path command.

What is the default Windows %PATH%?

The path is based on programs installed on the computer, so there is no "default path." However, the Windows minimum path is often the path below.

%SystemRoot%\system32;%SystemRoot%;%SystemRoot%\System32\Wbem

Tip: Keep in mind that as you install programs, the path is updated with the paths for the newly installed programs. So, if you have erased your path after installing other programs, those programs

may be affected.

Setting path in the MS-DOS and Windows command line

To view and set the path in MS-DOS and the Windows command line, use the path command.

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