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Rescue Disk Comparison

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For: [Windows XP](#) | [Windows Vista](#) | [Windows 7](#) | [Linux](#)

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1. Introduction

A rescue disk (a.k.a., rescue disc, repair disk/disc or recovery disk/disc) is bootable media that provides functionalities and utilities for fixing computer problems that prevent the computer from starting normally. Different rescue disks provide different functionalities and utilities. This page compares rescue disk functionalities and utilities.

Being bootable and portable, CD/DVD discs and USB flash memory drives are ideally suited for use as rescue disks. To use a rescue disk: 1.) create the rescue disk on a CD/DVD disc or USB flash memory drive; 2.) boot the computer from the rescue disk, not the computer hard drive; and 3.) run the rescue disk utilities against the computer hard drive.

i USB external hard drives are also bootable and portable. However, rescue disks can be created typically only on USB flash memory drives, not on USB external hard drives.

To boot a computer from a rescue disk, insert the rescue CD/DVD into the CD/DVD drive or plug the rescue USB flash memory drive into a USB port, power on/restart the computer, and, if prompted, respond as necessary to boot the computer from the rescue disk. If the computer cannot boot from the rescue disk, and if the rescue disk was created successfully and is functional, and if the CD/DVD drive or USB port is functional, then either: 1.) the computer BIOS does not support booting from CD/DVD drives or USB drives, which is unlikely for computers manufactured since 2002; or 2.) the computer BIOS is not configured to boot from CD/DVD drives or USB drives, which means, to use the rescue disk, you must enter the BIOS setup program and configure the BIOS to boot from CD/DVD drives or USB drives.

i Further discussion of the BIOS is beyond the scope of this page. For information on how to enter the BIOS setup program and how to configure the BIOS to boot from CD/DVD drives and/or USB drives, see the computer motherboard/BIOS documentation.

2. Rescue Disks By Anti-Malware Vendors

Rescue disks by anti-malware vendors provide malware detection and removal. Most also provide additional functionalities and utilities.

Rescue Disks By Anti-Malware Vendors						
Functionality/ Utility	AVG Rescue CD (avg.com)	Avira AntiVir Rescue System (avira.com)	BitDefender Rescue CD (download. bitdefender. com)	F-Secure Rescue CD (f-secure. com)	Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10 (support. kaspersky. com)	Norton Bootable Recovery Tool (security. symantec. com)
Version Reviewed	120.120126 build 4828 released 23Feb12	3.7.16-20120301135250 downloaded 01Mar12	Released 18Jan12	3.14 build 44905 downloaded 19Dec11	10.0.31.4 downloaded 26Feb12	4.5.0.34 downloaded 26Feb12
Usage Requirement	None/Free	None/Free	None/Free	None/Free	None/Free	Requires qualifying PIN/product key (1)
Rescue Disk Download Size	~80MB	~240MB	~380MB	~120MB	~260MB	~150MB

Rescue Disk Download Updated	~Every 10-50 days	Daily	~Once a year	~Twice a year	~Every 7-30 days	~Twice a year
Rescue Disk Download Includes Virus Definitions	+	+	+	+	+	-
Rescue Disk Includes Virus Definitions	+	+	+	+	+	+
Source Of Rescue Disk Included Virus Definitions	Bundled with downloaded .iso/.rar/.zip file	Bundled with downloaded .iso/.exe file	Bundled with downloaded .iso file	Bundled with downloaded .zip file	Bundled with downloaded .iso file	Downloaded at time of rescue disk creation (2)
Date Of Rescue Disk Included Virus Definitions Determined By	Release date of downloaded .iso/.rar/.zip file	Release date of downloaded .iso/.exe file	Release date of downloaded .iso file	Release date of downloaded .zip file	Release date of downloaded .iso file	Date of rescue disk creation
Download Updated Virus Definitions	+	+	+	+ (3)	+	+ (4)
How To Create Rescue CD/DVD	Download .iso file Burn image.	Download .iso file Burn image. or, Download .exe file Run .exe file Burn image.	Download .iso file Burn image.	Download .zip file Extract .zip file Burn image.	Download .iso file Burn image.	Download via Norton Download Manager Install Run Click Create on CD/DVD media.
How To Create Rescue USB Flash Memory Drive	Download .rar/.zip file Extract .rar/.zip file Run setup.exe file.	-	-	-	Download .iso file Download rescue2usb.exe file Run rescue2usb.exe file.	Download via Norton Download Manager Install Run Click Create on USB key.
Rescue CD/DVD And USB Flash Memory Drive Functionally Equivalent	+	NA	NA	NA	+	+
Functionality/ Utility	<u>AVG Rescue CD (avg.com)</u>	<u>Avira AntiVir Rescue System (avira.com)</u>	<u>BitDefender Rescue CD (download.bitdefender.com)</u>	<u>F-Secure Rescue CD (f-secure.com)</u>	<u>Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10 (support.kaspersky.com)</u>	<u>Norton Bootable Recovery Tool (security.symantec.com)</u>
Loads	Linux	Linux	Linux	Linux	Linux	Windows 7 Recovery Environment
Scan Volumes	Windows XP/Vista/7	Windows XP/Vista/7 and Linux	Windows XP/Vista/7	Windows XP/Vista/7 and Linux	Windows XP/Vista/7 and Linux	Windows XP/Vista/7
Select Volumes To Scan	+	+	+	+	+	-
Select Directories To Scan	+	+	+	-	+	-
Malware Removal Undo	?	?	?	?	?	+
Terminal/ Command Prompt Access	-	Terminal	Terminal	Terminal (5)	Terminal	Command prompt
File Manager				-		-

	Midnight Commander 4.7.1 (text)	Midnight Commander 4.6.1 (text) (6)	Thunar 1.0.1 (graphical)		Dolphin 1.4 (graphical)	
CD/DVD Drive Support	+ (7)	+ (8)	+	-	+	+
Replace Rescue CD/DVD With Different CD/DVD Disc In Same Drive	+ (9)	-	-	-	-	+
Windows XP Product CD Access	+	+	+	-	+	+
Windows Vista/7 Product DVD (i.e., UDF Disc) Access	-	-	+	-	+	+
USB Flash Memory/External Hard Drive Support	+ (10)	+ (11)	+	+(12)	+	+
Network Support	+	+	+	+	+	+
Web Browser	Links 0.99pre9-no-ssl (text)	-	Mozilla Firefox 3.5.8 (graphical)	-	Konqueror 4.4.5 (graphical)	-
Registry Editor	Registry Editor (text)	-	-	-	Kaspersky Registry Editor 1.0.8 (graphical)	Registry Editor 6.1 (graphical) (13)
Additional Functionalities/ Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memtest86+ 4.00. • TrueCrypt. • Fix MBR Volume. • TestDisk 6.11.3. • smartctl 5.40. • PhotoRec 6.11.3. • Ping Utility. 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TestDisk 6.11.3. • GParted 0.4.5. • Foxit Reader 1.1.0. 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardware Info. • Screenshot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norton Power Eraser (14). • Notepad (15). • Numerous Windows 7 Recovery Environment utilities (16).

(1) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: Qualifying PIN/product key required to boot from the Norton Bootable Recovery Tool, not to create the Norton Bootable Recovery Tool. Qualifying product keys include Norton Antivirus, Norton Internet Security, and Norton 360. Apparently expired qualifying product keys are accepted. For example, a product key from Norton Internet Security 2008 that expired in 2009 was accepted in March 2012.

(2) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: Internet connection required to create the Norton Bootable Recovery Tool. When downloading virus definitions, since the Norton Bootable Recovery Tool download does not include virus definition, the entire virus definition database (~100-150MB) is downloaded, which can be prohibitive with slower Internet connections. Therefore, it is suggested that dial-up users use a malware free computer with a faster Internet connection to create the Norton Bootable Recovery Tool.

(3) F-Secure Rescue CD: When downloading virus definitions, instead of downloading only updated virus definitions, the entire virus definition database, [fsdbupdate9-packed.run \(download.f-secure.com\)](#), (~130-150MB) is downloaded, which can be prohibitive with slower Internet connections. However, the F-Secure Rescue CD automatically looks for and uses fsdbupdate9-packed.run located on the root of an attached USB flash memory drive. Therefore, it is suggested that dial-up users use a malware free computer with a faster Internet connection to download fsdbupdate9-packed.run. If Internet Explorer opens fsdbupdate9-packed.run instead of prompting to save it, download fsdbupdate9-packed.run with Mozilla Firefox. To use fsdbupdate9-packed.run located on the root of an attached USB flash memory drive: 1.) if necessary, format the USB flash memory drive FAT or FAT32, not NTFS or exFAT; 2.) download fsdbupdate9-packed.run; 3.) copy fsdbupdate9-packed.run to the root of the USB flash memory drive; 4.) boot the computer from the F-Secure Rescue CD; and 5.) attach the USB flash memory drive after the F-Secure Rescue CD splash screen appears and before pressing Enter.

(4) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: Automatically downloads updated virus definitions at scan time, not manually. Therefore, to download updated virus definitions, click Start Scan.

(5) F-Secure Rescue CD: To open terminal, press Alt+F2. To close terminal, press Alt+F1.

(6) Avira AntiVir Rescue System: To open Midnight Commander, click Miscellaneous | Command line | press Alt+F5. To close Midnight Commander, press Alt+F7.

(7) AVG Rescue Disk: Insert CD/DVD discs before booting from the AVG Rescue Disk, or boot from the AVG Rescue Disk, insert CD/DVD discs, and select Re-mount Windows volumes.

- (8) Avira AntiVir Rescue System: Insert CD/DVD discs before booting from the Avira AntiVir Rescue System, or boot from the Avira AntiVir Rescue System, insert CD/DVD discs, and click Miscellaneous | Include all devices.
- (9) AVG Rescue Disk: To eject the AVG Rescue CD, select Eject rescue cd. To access a different CD/DVD disc in the same drive, insert CD/DVD disc and select Re-mount Windows volumes.
- (10) AVG Rescue Disk: Attach USB flash memory/external hard drives before booting from the AVG Rescue Disk, or boot from the AVG Rescue Disk, attach USB flash memory/external hard drives, and select Re-mount Windows volumes.
- (11) Avira AntiVir Rescue System: Attach USB flash memory/external hard drives before booting from the Avira AntiVir Rescue System, or boot from the Avira AntiVir Rescue System, attach USB flash memory/external hard drives, and click Miscellaneous | Include all devices.
- (12) F-Secure Rescue CD: Attach USB flash memory/external hard drives before booting from the F-Secure Rescue CD.
- (13) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: To open Registry Editor, click Norton Advanced Recovery Scan | Launch Command Prompt | type regedit.exe | press Enter.
- (14) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: Internet connection required to run Norton Power Eraser.
- (15) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: To open Notepad, click Norton Advanced Recovery Scan | Launch Command Prompt | type notepad.exe | press Enter.
- (16) Norton Bootable Recovery Tool: To list the numerous Windows 7 Recovery Environment utilities; 1.) click Norton Advanced Recovery Scan | Launch Command Prompt | type dir *.exe | press Enter, and 2.) click Norton Advanced Recovery Scan | Launch Command Prompt | type cd.. | press Enter | type dir *.exe | press Enter.

3. Additional Reading

- [AVG Rescue CD Guide \(avg.com\)](#)
- [F-Secure Rescue CD User's Guide \(pdf\) \(f-secure.com\)](#) (Although dated September 23, 2011, the F-Secure Rescue CD User's Guide is largely outdated and includes numerous mistakes.)
- [Kaspersky Rescue Disk User Guide \(pdf\) \(support.kaspersky.com\)](#)

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