

# Re: Emergency Installation of XP – How to Solve Activation Problem

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*Source:*

[http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.configuration\\_manage/2008-10/msg00065](http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.configuration_manage/2008-10/msg00065)

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- *From:* "Ken Blake, MVP" <kblake@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sun, 19 Oct 2008 14:33:38 -0700
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On Sun, 19 Oct 2008 13:44:00 -0700, VC <VC@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

PS Is there any way for a not-for-profit with donated PC's to somehow reactivate the licenses that originally came with those PC's? The Microsoft product key sticker is still on some of these donated computers, including the one in question.

There is no need to reactive the license. Activation pertains to the computer, not the owner. It doesn't expire if the computer is sold or given to someone else.

By the way if the computer has a product key sticker on it, it came with Windows XP installed, and is therefore an OEM version.

"Ken Blake, MVP" wrote:

On Sun, 19 Oct 2008 11:50:01 -0700, VC  
<VC@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>  
wrote:

We are a not-forprofit organization and work on donated computers. We had a crash that required us to reinstall the operating system. Unfortunately, we had not receive the operating system CD with the donated computer.

When the crash happened, we were under a severe time constraint and so used

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another WINDOWS XP CD that had come with another computer. Now we cannot activate the operating system on the computer that had crashed. I realize we must purchase a new copy of Windows XP in order to do the activation, and we are fine with that.

But unfortunately, we have already spent considerable time installing and configuring software on that computer. Is there a way to somehow use the product key from the new license we will purchase to activate the existing installation?

Yes, \*if\* the old CD and the new one match with respect to Home vs. Professional, Retail vs. OEM, and Full vs. Upgrade. If they don't match, the product key will not work.

We realize and accept that that new XP CD would then be permanently linked to the computer in question.

Sorry, but that's not necessarily correct. Only if you buy an OEM CD is what you say true. With retail CDs, you can move the installation from computer to computer as many times as you want to.

It's for that reason that I almost always recommend against buying OEM copies. My view is that an OEM copy is the worst kind you can buy. It comes with several restrictions, and the worst restriction is that the license ties it permanently to the first computer it's installed on. Even if the computer dies, you may not use your copy on another computer. Retail versions do not have that restriction.

Despite what some people think, an Upgrade copy \*can\* do a clean installation as long as you own a CD of a previous qualifying version to show it as proof of ownership when prompted. Most people have a Windows 98 CD around, but worst case, if you don't, you can buy one inexpensively someplace like eBay.

Since the Upgrade normally costs only slightly more than an OEM copy, I strongly recommend that you buy an Upgrade.

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Ken Blake, Microsoft MVP – Windows Desktop Experience  
Please Reply to the Newsgroup

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