

## Re: Help! Safe Mode Loop – Cannot Login

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*Source:*

[http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help\\_and\\_support/2007-01/msg00226.htm](http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2007-01/msg00226.htm)

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- *From:* WebGuyBob <[WebGuyBob@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:WebGuyBob@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 2 Jan 2007 07:12:00 –0800
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John B.

I appreciate your input. On the day that I had the problem, I ended up performing a variation of Solution #2. I needed to reset the admin password per corporate standards, so I chose that option and, upon reboot, simply unchecked the /safeboot option in msconfig's boot.ini tab.

It's always great to have additional solutions to this and similar problems. I'll definitely keep your post handy for future reference. Thanks for sharing!

Happy New Year,

Bob

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webguybob-nospam@xxxxxxxxxxx

"johnbaylor1000@xxxxxxxx" wrote:

Problem: Windows XP stuck in safe mode and cannot login or dont know the Administrator password

I've seen a few posts on this subject and no really good solutions. This happened to me and I was able to resolve it after about 6 hours of searching and trying various options. I messed up when I was trying to run chkdsk in safe mode and using msconfig I selected the /safeboot option under boot.ini. As a result, on the reboot, Windows would only boot in safe mode and my user account and password were not accepted. Because this is a corporate laptop, I did not have access to the Administrator password. Also, my filesystem is NTFS which complicates matters.

In googling for answers, the most recommended solution was resetting the Administrator password. I was reluctant to do this and wasn't willing to risk damaging the system. Here is the solution I came up with. I think there is another solution that will also work. I have

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listed both here. You will need access to a 2nd computer with either a floppy drive or a CDROM writer. Solution #1 worked for me, but no guarantees.

Solution #1 (This is what worked for me, assumes you know a little about DOS commands)

- Boot your computer (with either Floppy or CDROM) using a program called NTFS4DOS
- NTFS4DOS will mount the c:\ drive that contains boot.ini
- You will have to edit this file to remove the "/safeboot:minimal" from the boot.ini file
- The trick is that the EDIT command for DOS does not come with NTFS4DOS
- So you have to find it. In my case, the edit command was in c:\windows\system32
- The exact command I used to edit was --> c:\windows\system32\edit c:\boot.ini
- The DOS edit command is a simple editor. Use the ALT key to get to the menus
- In edit, remove "/safeboot:minimal" from the last line, keep everything else the same
- Save the file and then exit (I think turning off computer is also OK)
- Then reboot

Some details on the NTFS4DOS program:

- This is completely free and you can find it by google
- I found my copy from [http://www.freewarefiles.com/program\\_9\\_90\\_11100.html](http://www.freewarefiles.com/program_9_90_11100.html)
- NTFS4DOS must be converted to a bootable floppy or CDROM
- The NTFS4DOS program will create a floppy for you, I needed a CDROM
- Fortunately my 2nd laptop had a floppy drive and a writable CDROM
- So I created a bootable floppy, then ran NTFS4DOS to create a bootable floppy
- Then using my CDROM software to create a bootable CDROM from the bootable floppy
- If you dont have a floppy drive, try getting to NTFS4DOS via ultimatebootcd.com
- You can also burn the NTFS4DOS image from the image/ dir from the ultimate boot cd

Solution #2 (I tried this initially, my situation was special, read on)

- Another way to do this if you know UNIX is to boot Linux from the CDROM
- Then you mount your hard drive as RW and modify the boot.ini file
- My special situation was that my hard drive was marked as dirty
- As a result, Linux would not mount my hard drive (would only mount as read only)
- If your drive is not marked dirty, then I "think" this solution will also work
- Get a password reset boot disk. You wont actually need to reset the password.

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- These password reset boot disks come with Linux so that you can mount and edit files
- Example password reset boot disk is:  
<http://home.eunet.no/~pnordahl/ntpasswd/bootdisk.html>
- You can also find this at [ultimatebootcd.com](http://ultimatebootcd.com)
- Boot the computer with the CDROM, follow thru the mounting of the hard drive
- I think this is thru step 1 and 2
- All you have done up to now is to mount your hard drive, no password reset is needed
- Now swith to another Linux terminal (with ALT F2 or ALT F3)
- This will bring up the UNIX prompt
- cd /disk (where /disk is the mounted hard drive) and then edit with vi the boot.ini file
- Remove "/saveboot:minimal" from the last line, keep everything else the same
- Save the file and then umount /disk
- Go back to the first terminal (ALT F1) and quit the password reset program
- Shutdown the computer (I think turning off is also OK), then reboot

Note: in order to get your computer to boot off of a CDROM, you may have to hit F2, F12, or F8 right after power on. This will typically get you to a screen where you can select booting from CDROM. You can also google to see how to create a bootable USB flash drive and then using that to boot with NTFS4DOS.

Good Luck!

John Baylor  
Dallas TX