

# Windows 10 Activation

## Check your Windows 10 license

Run the following command in an elevated command prompt:

```
wmic path SoftwareLicensingService get OA3xOriginalProductKey
```

## Park a free Windows 10 upgrade license

1. Install Windows 10 Home or Pro on the machine you want to park the license, the best way is to install it into a newly created Microsoft VHD Virtual Machine.
2. During installation, enter a valid key of a Windows 7, 8.0, or 8.1 license.
3. OEM licenses can be upgraded too. However, note the limitations of the license. For example, OEM licenses for Dell computers can only be used on Dell computers.
4. Boot into Windows 10 after installation, but do not activate the license yet.
5. Currently, the free licenses expired end of July 2016.

## Activate a Windows 10 upgrade license

1. Make a fresh install of Windows 10 on the new machine.
2. During installation, select ***I don't have a license key***.
3. After installation is finished, go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation and activate Windows 10 with the license key of the original Windows 7, 8.0, or 8.1.

## Move an activated Windows 10 upgrade license to another machine

1. Make sure you register the machine to be retired as a Microsoft device by changing your login to a Microsoft linked account.
2. Copy or Clone the Windows 10 partition of the machine you want to retire (e.g. where the license is moved *from*)
3. Make a fresh install of Windows 10 on the new machine. The fresh install does not need the linked account to be activated later.
4. Move the cloned Windows 10 partition after the fresh install.
5. Modify the BCD Store to a dual-boot configuration. This is easiest done with [EasyBCD](#).
6. Boot into the cloned Windows 10 partition which was activated before, then go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation. Select *Troubleshoot* (which is not available on a fresh install), then ***I changed hardware on this device recently***.
7. Activation will take you to your Microsoft account. Select the machine to be retired (see step 1) and select the check box ***This is the device I'm using right now***, and then select **Activate**. The machine data on Microsofts servers will now be replaced with the one from your new machine.

8. Boot offline into the fresh install and change machine name (and work group) to the one used in the cloned install. Reboot, then connect internet.
9. Wait for auto activation or go to Settings -> Update & Security -> Activation and click **Activate**. The fresh install will now be activated.
10. Delete the cloned install. Using the fresh install ensures that you do not carry outdated drivers and apps for the retired machine with you.

## Links

- [Reactivating Windows 10 after a hardware change](#)
- [Configure UEFI/GPT-Based Hard Drive Partitions](#)
- [How to deactivate and uninstall Windows Product Key](#)
- [When can you move a Windows license to a new PC?](#)
- [How to repair the EFI bootloader on a GPT HDD for Windows 7, 8, 8.1 and 10 on your Dell PC](#)

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