

What is a Good Backup?

If you have been using a computer for very long, you have probably heard the term “backup”. But you may not know exactly what a backup is, how you do it, or why it is so important.

A backup is a copy of information stored on your computer. Backups are made so that if you have a mechanical failure — like a hard disk crash, or flood damage — the information stored on your computer is not lost. Though it may seem obvious that backup should be made, they are not a standard part of what Windows generally does.

You need to do your own backups... or else!

Because Windows does not do backups automatically, you need to do them yourself. Windows comes with a backup program, called Windows Backup, which is often found in the Systems Tools folder. There are many other backup programs around, and they are easy to find on the internet. These programs can make backing up easier and can operate automatically, on a schedule you set up. You can also just copy files to back them up.

Your backup can be on an optical disk, like a CD or DVD, on an external hard disk, or stored on-line. It's important to keep your backup up to date, and to keep a copy away from your home, in case of a disaster. (This is called an off-site backup.)

What to backup.

You need to backup anything you want to keep. You should backup all of your personal data and documents, but you cannot backup programs. Programs need to be re-installed in case of a computer failure.

Here are some of the things you need to backup regularly:

- Pictures and photos
- Music
- Video
- Documents you have created
- Emails: sent and received
- Passwords and log-in information for email and on-line accounts
- Browser bookmarks (favorites)
- The “Documents and Settings” folder for you and each person who uses the computer
- Data created by programs like Quicken or QuickBooks that is stored in a special folder
- Downloaded programs



Your ReliaTech technician will be happy to help you choose a backup device and setup a backup system for you. There is a charge for this service, but your peace of mind is worth far more than this moderate fee.

Most importantly, be sure to backup your computer frequently, and keep a copy of you backup somewhere away from your home or office.

This is a typical external hard disk. It connects to your computer through a USB cable and port. These small devices don't cost much, and are great for backing up your computer.