

Windows 9x Software Tasks

*First Things First: Do These Tasks Before Wiping these Computers
(Certain Tasks Can Be Harder Once We Start Installing Windows 2000 Pro)*

1. Create a Windows 98 Emergency Startup Disk with CDROM Support

An emergency boot disk is useful if for some reason the computer cannot start up off its internal hard drive. A Windows 98 startup disk has built-in CDROM support and so is superior to a Windows 95 startup disk. The Windows 98 startup disk can also boot up a machine with Windows 2000 Pro (but won't recognize the file system on the C: drive). Being able to boot from a floppy demonstrates that the basic computer hardware is functioning (except perhaps the hard drive).

To create one, go to a machine with Windows 98 second edition. From the START menu, go to the CONTROL PANEL. Open ADD/REMOVE PROGRAMS. Then select the Startup Disk tab. You need a blank or worthless floppy in the A: drive, which will be overwritten. Click on Create Disk. Lock the diskette and label it. Test it by restarting the PC with the floppy in the drive. If the PC doesn't boot from the floppy, it might be a bad diskette, or it might be that the CMOS is not configured to boot from floppy.

2. Copy Y2K Check Diskette (Only One Floppy Drive)

We will use the Y2K DOS Check diskette as an example of how to duplicate a diskette. This task seemed easier in the "old days," when computers had no hard drive but came with two floppy drives. Lock the source disk and insert it into the A: drive. From Windows 98se, right-click on the A: drive and select COPY DISK. After it reads the entire source diskette into memory, you will be prompted to put in the target diskette. Ensure that the target diskette is UNlocked. Remember which is which and follow the prompts carefully. Lock the target diskette when finished. Since the floppy drives on older machines can get out of alignment, be sure to test your diskette on another computer.

3. Test for Y2K Compliance

The Y2K DOS Checker is designed to be run from DOS under Windows 98se. Put the diskette you just prepared in step 2 into the A: drive and follow the instructions in the README.TXT file. It will tell you to first turn off automatic adjustments for daily savings time. Then you open a DOS Command Prompt and run the program directly from the A: drive. It will count down from before midnight on December 31, 1999, to see if your computers three timekeeping systems each do the right thing. If one or more of the clocks fails the test, it will also explain the severity of the failure and how to work around or correct it. In many cases, older computers might fail one test, but are still usable so long as you manually set the date past 1/1/2000 after the computer has been unplugged for an extended period or the battery has been replaced.