



An Extended Guide · No. 1919

Office 2016, 2019 & 2021 After Support Ends — Keep, Upgrade or Switch?

What end of support really means,
and your three calm options

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

BillsHomeTech.com · (330) 200-8042 · Atwater, Ohio

Free & printable — share it with someone who needs it



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

! What 'end of support' does — and doesn't — mean

Your old Office won't suddenly stop working. But it stops getting security fixes, which slowly makes it riskier to use for anything connected to the internet. This guide explains how much that matters and your three calm ways forward.

Your old Office still runs — let's talk about what's next

If you own Office 2016, 2019, or 2021, you may have heard it's 'no longer supported.' That sounds alarming, but it's a manageable situation. Let's sort out what actually changed and what, if anything, you should do.

I'm Bill, from Bill's Home Tech in Portage County. I help folks make level-headed decisions about exactly this — no scare tactics, no pushing you to spend. We'll look at the real risks and the sensible options.

The short version: the programs keep opening and your documents are safe. What ends is Microsoft's steady stream of security patches, and that's the thing worth thinking through calmly.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these points, you'll make a sound decision.

- ❑ Office 2016 and Office 2019 support ended on October 14, 2025.
- ❑ Office 2021 support ends October 13, 2026.
- ❑ 'End of support' means no more security updates — not that the program stops working.
- ❑ Your files are completely safe either way.
- ❑ You have three sensible choices: keep using it carefully, buy a newer one-time version, or switch to a subscription or a free option.
- ❑ If the computer is online and you use Office for email or downloads, moving on sooner is wiser.

✓ No need to panic today

Nothing breaks the morning after a support date. You have time to choose well. This is a 'decide this season,' not a 'fix it tonight' situation.

The dates that matter

Let's put the facts on the table so you know exactly where your copy stands.

Version	Support ended / ends
Office 2016	October 14, 2025
Office 2019	October 14, 2025
Office 2021	October 13, 2026

After its date, Microsoft no longer sends that version security updates, bug fixes, or technical support. The apps themselves are not switched off — Word, Excel, and the rest keep opening and working as before.

★ **Not sure which version you have?**

Open Word, click File, then Account (or About Word), and it'll tell you. If the screen is confusing, text me a photo at (330) 200-8042 and I'll tell you exactly which version you're on and where it stands.

What 'end of support' really changes

The phrase sounds dramatic. Here's the plain, accurate picture of what's different the day after.

What stays the same

Your programs still open. Your documents still open. You can still type, print, and save exactly as you always have. Nothing is deleted, and no feature is taken away.

What changes

Microsoft stops releasing security updates for that version. Over time, as new weaknesses are discovered elsewhere and left unpatched here, an unsupported program becomes a softer target — mainly a concern if the computer is online and you open files or links from others.

! The risk grows slowly, not instantly

Think of it like a car that's no longer getting recall repairs. It drives fine today, but small risks quietly add up. The longer you run unsupported software online, the more that matters.

How risky is it to keep using it?

The honest answer is: it depends on how you use the computer. Let's judge your situation, not a worst case.

- **Higher risk:** the computer is online, and you use Office to open email attachments or files people send you.
- **Medium risk:** online computer, but you mostly write your own documents and rarely open outside files.
- **Lower risk:** an offline computer, or one used only for your own letters and lists, never opening files from strangers.

Most of the real danger in old Office comes from opening a booby-trapped document someone sends you. If you're careful about what you open — and our scam and protected-view guides help with that — the day-to-day risk of writing your own letters is modest.

✓ Pair caution with a plan

Keeping an old version a little longer is reasonable if you're careful and have a plan to move on. Keeping it forever, online, opening everything, is the combination to avoid.

Choice one: keep using it, carefully

If money's tight or the version does everything you need, you can keep it going — with some sensible guardrails.

This is the no-cost path, and it's defensible for a while, especially on a computer that's offline or used lightly. The key word is careful: you're accepting a slowly rising risk in exchange for not spending.

- Keep the rest of the computer updated — especially Windows or macOS and your web browser.
- Be extra cautious opening email attachments and downloaded files.
- Keep good backups of your documents, just in case.
- Set yourself a date to revisit the decision rather than drifting forever.

! Best as a bridge, not a forever home

Keeping old Office is a fine bridge while you decide, particularly offline. As a permanent plan on an internet-connected computer, it's the riskiest of the three choices.

Choice two: buy a newer one-time version

If you liked owning Office outright with no yearly bill, you can do that again with the current one-time version.

The latest buy-once release is Office 2024. You pay a single price and keep it, just like your old copy. The Home edition runs about \$150 and the Home & Business edition (which adds Outlook) about \$250, as of this writing — always check the current price before buying.

This gets you a fully supported version again, with security updates, for years to come. The trade-off versus a subscription: no 1 TB of online storage, no Copilot AI, and it won't upgrade to the next version when one arrives. Our buy-once-vs-subscribe guide weighs it fully.

✓ The familiar path, refreshed

If you disliked the idea of renting software, this choice keeps your preference intact — you own it, no recurring charge — while getting you back under the safety of current updates.

Choice three: switch to a subscription or free option

The third path moves you to always-current software, either paid or free. For many, it's the simplest long-term answer.

A Microsoft 365 subscription

You pay yearly and always have the newest, fully supported Office, plus online storage and the option of the AI helper. You never face an 'end of support' date again, because it updates itself. Our which-plan guide helps you pick the right, cheapest fit.

A free option

If you mostly write letters and keep simple lists, free Word on the web, Google Docs, or LibreOffice may replace your old Office entirely, at no cost and always current. Our free-ways-to-write guide compares them.

★ Switching keeps your files — promise

Moving to any of these keeps your old documents; they open right up in the new program. If the idea of switching feels daunting, that's exactly what I help with. Call (330) 200-8042.

Your documents are safe no matter what you choose

This is the worry under all the others, so let's settle it plainly: your files are not tied to Office's support.

The letters, spreadsheets, and photos you've saved live in your Documents folder on your computer, not inside the Office program. Whether you keep old Office, buy new, or switch to something free, those files stay put and open in the new program.

The one smart move during any change is a fresh backup — a copy on a USB drive or an online folder — so a hiccup during installation can't cost you anything. Our backup guides make that easy.

✓ **Back up first, then change with confidence**

A five-minute backup before you install or switch turns a nervous afternoon into a calm one. It's the single best habit around any software change.

Two kinds of readers, two sets of needs

The right move depends a lot on how your computer is used. Find yourself below and the sensible path gets clearer.

A computer that's online every day

You browse, email, and open files people send you. Security updates matter more here, because an unsupported program is exposed to the wider world.

- Plan to move on sooner rather than later.
- A subscription or the current one-time version gets you updates again.
- Be especially careful with attachments until you do.
- Keep Windows or macOS and your browser fully updated in the meantime.

A computer that's rarely or never online

An old desktop you use just for your own letters and lists, seldom connected to the internet. The security risk is far lower here.

- Keeping the old version a good while longer is reasonable.
- A free option can replace it whenever you're ready, at no cost.
- Still keep backups of your documents.
- No rush — just avoid opening files from strangers on it.

★ Tell me how the computer's used

Online daily, or offline for letters? Tell me, and I'll tell you honestly whether to act now or relax. No scare tactics, no sales pitch. Call (330) 200-8042.

What each choice costs you

Money is a fair part of this decision. Here's the honest shape of it, keeping in mind prices change.

- **Keep it:** nothing now, but rising risk and an eventual move anyway.
- **Buy once (Office 2024):** a single payment — about \$150 for Home, more for Home & Business — then yours for years.
- **Subscribe (Microsoft 365):** a yearly fee, with storage, AI, and always-current apps.
- **Switch to free:** nothing at all, if a free option covers your needs.

There's no single right answer — a light user might switch to free, a one-computer household might buy once, a busy family might subscribe. Match the spending to how much you actually use Office.

✓ Cheapest isn't always best, and neither is priciest

Free is wonderful if it fits; a subscription is worth it if you lean on the storage and updates. The goal is the fit, not the extreme.

Staying safer while you decide

If you keep the old version a little longer, these habits keep the risk low in the meantime.

- ❑ Keep Windows or macOS updated — that's separate from Office and still matters.
- ❑ Keep your web browser current, since much online risk comes through it.
- ❑ Don't open email attachments you weren't expecting, even from people you know.
- ❑ Save a backup of your documents to a USB drive or online folder.
- ❑ Set a reminder to make your longer-term choice within a few months.

! Attachments are the main doorway

The likeliest trouble with old Office is a rigged document arriving by email. When in doubt, don't open it — verify with the sender first. Our scam guides show the tells.

A related worry: Windows itself

Often the folks asking about old Office are on an older Windows too. It's worth a glance, because the two go together.

If your computer runs an older version of Windows that's also past its support, that's a bigger security concern than Office alone, because Windows is the foundation everything sits on. The two decisions often make sense to handle at the same time.

We have dedicated guides on the end of Windows 10 support and on moving to a newer computer. If you're facing both at once, tackling them together usually saves effort and money.

★ Let's look at the whole picture

Rather than fix Office and discover Windows is the real issue, I can look at the whole computer and give you one clear plan. That's exactly the kind of visit folks find reassuring. Call (330) 200-8042.

How to make the move smoothly

Whichever newer option you choose, the switch follows the same calm steps. Nothing here is as hard as it sounds.

- ❑ Back up your documents first — a copy on a USB drive or online.
- ❑ Choose your path: buy Office 2024, start a subscription, or install a free option.
- ❑ Install the new program (the old one can usually stay until you're sure).
- ❑ Open a few of your files in the new program to confirm all is well.
- ❑ Once you're happy, remove the old version if you like, to avoid confusion.

✓ Keep the old one until you're settled

There's no rule that says you must delete the old Office the moment you install the new. Keep it as a comfort blanket for a week, then tidy up once you're sure everything moved over.

If you buy, buy from the right place

Because 'cheap Office' searches draw scammers, a little care at purchase time saves real grief.

Buy a one-time Office or a subscription from Microsoft's own website or a store you trust — a big retailer, a warehouse club, a reputable online shop. Those are safe and the product will activate and keep working.

Steer clear of 'lifetime Office for \$20' keys from strangers. They're usually keys that stop working or are outright scams, and you'll have nothing to show for it. Our [fake-renewal-and-cheap-keys](#) guide explains the traps in detail.

! Too cheap is a warning, not a win

A price far below everyone else's is the surest sign something's wrong. Real Office doesn't go for pocket change, and a dead key is worse than no key.

Common mistakes people make

A few predictable missteps cause most of the trouble. Here they are so you can skip them.

- **Panicking** and buying the priciest thing the day of a support date, when nothing actually broke.
- **Doing nothing forever** on an online computer, letting risk quietly pile up.
- **Chasing a cheap key** that stops working a month later.
- **Forgetting Windows** is the bigger issue on a very old computer.
- **Skipping a backup** before installing something new.

✓ The middle path is usually right

Not panic, not denial. Decide calmly within a few months, back up first, and buy from a trustworthy place. That steady approach rarely goes wrong.

A simple decision checklist

Run through this and the right choice for you tends to stand out.

- ☐ I know which Office version I have and its support date.
- ☐ I know whether the computer is online a lot or rarely.
- ☐ I decided how I feel about a yearly fee versus buying once.
- ☐ I considered whether a free option would cover my needs.
- ☐ I checked whether my Windows is also out of support.
- ☐ I have a recent backup of my documents.

★ I'll help you weigh it in minutes

This is a decision folks often overthink alone. A short, honest chat usually settles it. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll land on the right move for your situation.

You haven't done anything wrong

If a pop-up or a headline made you feel behind for using older Office, let me ease that.

Software reaching 'end of support' is completely normal — it happens to every version eventually, and it doesn't mean you neglected anything. Your copy served you well, and moving on is just the next ordinary step.

There's no emergency and no shame. Take the time to choose the option that fits your life and budget, and you'll be in good shape — probably for years to come.

✓ **Calm beats rushed, every time**

The folks who regret these decisions are the ones who rushed. Give yourself a little time, and the choice becomes easy.

Questions to ask yourself

Honest answers to these point you to the right path.

Q: Is this computer online most days?

If yes, lean toward moving on sooner. If it's offline or lightly used, keeping the old version a while longer is reasonable.

Q: Do I mind a yearly fee?

If you dislike it, the one-time Office 2024 or a free option suits you. If you value storage and updates, a subscription earns its cost.

Q: Would a free program do what I need?

If you mostly write letters and keep lists, very likely yes — and it's always current at no cost.

Q: Is my Windows also out of date?

If so, handle both together; the Windows side is usually the bigger security concern.

✓ Let your use, not fear, decide

Match the choice to how you actually use the computer. That's a steadier guide than any alarming headline.

A few more worth answering

These come up often once the first worries settle.

Q: Will my old Office just stop working on the date?

No. The programs keep opening and working. What ends is Microsoft's security updates and support, not the software itself.

Q: Can I open my old files in a newer or free Office?

Yes. Word and Excel files open right up in newer Office, in a subscription, and in the free options. Your documents aren't tied to the old version.

Q: Is it illegal to keep using it?

No. You can keep running software you own past its support date; it's simply no longer updated. The question is risk, not legality.

Q: What's the cheapest safe option?

Switching to a free, always-current option — web Word, Google Docs, or LibreOffice — if it covers your needs. Otherwise, a one-time purchase avoids a recurring bill.

★ Still weighing it up?

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I'll give you a plain, no-pressure read on whether to act now and which path fits your home and budget.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about old Office and end of support.

Q: What does 'end of support' actually mean?

Microsoft stops providing security updates, bug fixes, and help for that version. The programs still run and your files are safe — but an unsupported program grows slowly riskier online over time.

Q: How urgent is this?

Not urgent the day of the date. It's a decide-this-season matter, more pressing on an internet-connected computer you use for email and downloads, relaxed on an offline one.

Q: What are my three main choices?

Keep using it carefully, buy the current one-time version (Office 2024), or switch to a subscription or a free, always-current option. Each is valid depending on your use and budget.

Q: Will I lose my documents if I change?

No. Your files live on your computer, not inside Office, and open fine in whatever you move to. Just make a backup first, as you would before any change.

★ Let's make the calm choice together

Deciding what to do about old Office is a great thing to talk through with a patient person and no agenda. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made deciding what to do about older Office feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — installing Office, sorting out a sign-in, setting up a document — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

The Dates That Matter

When each version stops getting updates

	Support ends	Still runs?
Office 2016	Oct 14, 2025	Yes
Office 2019	Oct 14, 2025	Yes
Office 2021	Oct 13, 2026	Yes

End of support stops updates -- it does not switch the programs off.

Three Sensible Ways Out

Pick the one that fits your use and budget



No panic needed -- decide this season, not tonight.

Your Three Choices

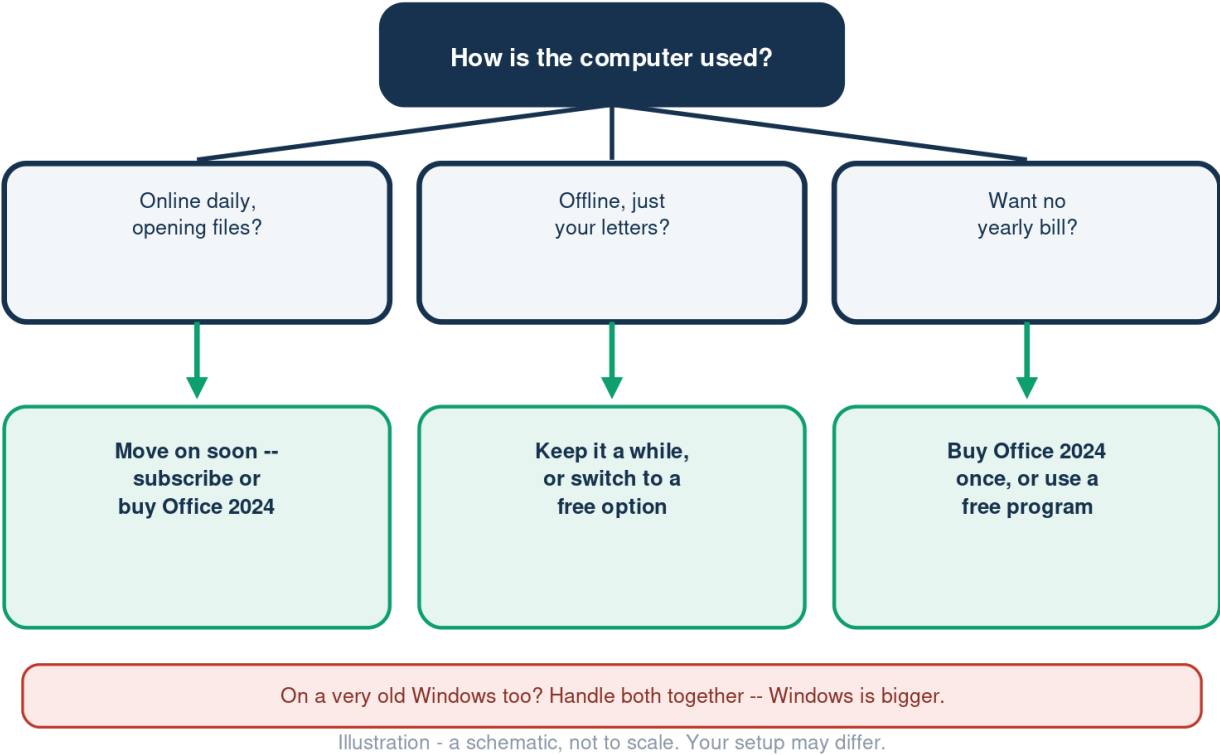
What each one costs and gives

	Cost	You get
Keep it	Nothing now	Rising risk
Buy once	One payment	Updates, no AI
Subscribe	Yearly fee	Updates + storage
Go free	Nothing	Always current

Match the spending to how much you actually use Office.

Which Path Fits You?

Let your computer and budget point the way





Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will
make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness,
no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

Use of these guides is subject to our Terms of Use (billshometech.com/terms-of-use).

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech