BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Windows 10 Support Ended — Is My PC Still Safe to Use?

What "end of support" really means, and the calm choices in front of you

Plain-English Windows help from:

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Windows 10 stopped getting free security updates on October 14, 2025, but your computer did not stop working and nothing bad happens overnight. The gentlest fix is to enroll in Microsoft's free Extended Security Updates from Settings Windows Update, which now runs into October 2027. If your PC is newer, you may be able to upgrade to Windows 11 free — check with the PC Health Check app.

If it is older and you mostly browse and email, ChromeOS Flex can give it years more life. Back up your files first, stay alert to scare-tactic pop-ups and calls, and there is no need to rush or spend money today.

1 The Short Version

Microsoft stopped supporting Windows 10 on October 14, 2025. If you are still on a Windows 10 computer, you have probably seen the reminders, and you may be worried that your machine has suddenly become unsafe or will stop working. Take a breath: your computer did not break that day, and it will keep turning on and running your programs just as it did before. What changed is narrower and more specific than the warnings make it sound, and you have several calm, sensible paths forward.

This guide explains in plain English what "end of support" actually means, whether your particular computer is safe to keep using, and the real choices in front of you — including a free way to keep getting security updates for a while longer. You do not have to rush out and buy anything today.

- "End of support" means no more free security updates by default — not that your PC stopped working.
- Microsoft is offering a free Extended Security Updates program for home users that runs into 2027.
- Your safest long-term paths are: enroll in those updates, move to Windows 11 if your PC qualifies, or switch the computer to something lighter.

- Browsing habits and a good browser matter more than ever while you decide.

> **TIP**
>
> There is no deadline that forces you to act this week. The right move is to understand your options calmly, pick the one that fits your computer and your budget, and let me help with the step that feels fiddly. Nothing bad happens to a Windows 10 PC the moment support ends.

2 What "End of Support" Really Means

When Microsoft ends support for a version of Windows, it stops sending that version new security updates — the small, behind-the-scenes patches that quietly close holes criminals could use. It does not reach into your computer and switch anything off. Your Windows 10 machine keeps starting up, your printer, email, photos and programs keep working, and your files are exactly where you left them.

The real change is that, over time, newly discovered security holes on Windows 10 will no longer be fixed for free by default. That raises the odds, slowly, that a careless click on a bad website or email could cause trouble. It is a gradual increase in risk, not a cliff you fall off on a single date.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Think of it like a car model the maker stops making new parts for. The car still drives fine today. You just want a plan for keeping it safe and roadworthy, rather than being caught out a year from now.

3 Is My Computer Still Safe to Use Right Now?

For most people, the honest answer is: yes, for now, especially if you are sensible about what you click and you take one of the protective steps in this guide. The risk is not that your computer stops working; it is that it slowly becomes a softer target. A few straightforward habits keep that risk low while you decide on a longer-term plan.

- Keep your web browser (Chrome, Edge, or Firefox) up to date — browsers still update themselves even on Windows 10, and that is where most everyday danger arrives.
- Keep Microsoft Defender, the built-in protection, turned on; it continues to receive virus-definition updates for a while yet.
- Be extra careful with email links and pop-ups, which are the main way trouble sneaks onto any computer.
- Avoid online banking or shopping on a Windows 10 PC that has no security updates and no plan — do that on a phone or a newer device if you can.

WATCH OUT

The biggest danger right now is not a virus appearing from nowhere — it is scare pop-ups and phone calls claiming your "unsupported" PC has been hacked and demanding payment or remote access. Those are scams playing on exactly the worry this change creates. Never let anyone who calls you take control of your computer.

4 Option 1: Get Free Extended Security Updates

Microsoft knows millions of home computers cannot easily move to Windows 11, so it created a program that keeps sending security updates to Windows 10 for a while longer. For home users there is a free way to enroll, and the program has been extended to run through October 2027 — giving you well over a year of breathing room without buying anything.

Enrolling is done from inside Windows itself, in the Windows Update area of Settings, where an enroll option appears for eligible PCs. It typically asks you to be signed in with a Microsoft account and may offer a couple of ways to qualify. Once you are enrolled, your computer quietly keeps receiving the important security patches, and the nagging largely stops.

1. Open Settings (the little gear icon on the Start menu), then choose Update & Security, then Windows Update.
2. Look for a message or link about enrolling in Extended Security Updates and select it.

3. Follow the prompts; signing in with a free Microsoft account is usually part of qualifying.
4. When it confirms you are enrolled, check for updates once to make sure everything is flowing.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> This is the gentlest option for most people: your familiar computer stays exactly as it is, but keeps getting protected. If the enroll option does not appear or the sign-in step trips you up, it is a five-minute thing for me to sort out on a visit — and a good moment to tidy up the computer while I am there.

5 Option 2: Move Up to Windows 11 (If Your PC Qualifies)

If your computer is recent enough, you can upgrade to Windows 11 for free, and that puts you back on a fully supported version with years of updates ahead. The catch is that Windows 11 has stricter hardware requirements than earlier upgrades, so not every Windows 10 machine qualifies — particularly ones more than a handful of years old.

The simplest way to find out is Microsoft's free "PC Health Check" app, which tells you plainly whether your computer meets the requirements and, if not, why. I have a separate guide that walks through that check step by step, so you know for certain before you change anything.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If your PC does qualify, the upgrade keeps your files and most of your programs in place — it is more like a big update than starting over. If it does not qualify, do not force it; the next options are made for exactly that situation.

6 Option 3: Give the Old Computer a Lighter Life

If your computer cannot run Windows 11 and you would rather not spend money, there is a genuinely good option: turn the machine into a fast, simple, secure computer built mainly for web browsing, email, and video. Google offers free software called ChromeOS Flex that does exactly this, and it often makes an older, sluggish laptop feel quick again.

It is best suited to someone whose computing is mostly online — email, the web, YouTube, banking through a browser — rather than specific Windows-only programs. It is not the right fit if you rely on a particular Windows application. I have a full guide on this, and it is one of my favorite ways to get years more life out of a machine people had written off.

- Great if you mostly browse the web, check email, and watch video.
- Keeps getting security updates from Google, so the "unsupported" worry disappears.
- Usually makes an old, slow laptop noticeably faster.
- Not suited to Windows-only programs you depend on.

> Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

7 Option 4: Keep Using It Carefully for Now

You are also allowed to simply keep using your Windows 10 computer while you think it over, and many people reasonably do. If that is your choice, the goal is to lower the risk with a few habits rather than leaving things to chance.

1. Make sure your web browser is current and set to update itself.
2. Leave Microsoft Defender turned on and let it run its background checks.

3. Do sensitive things — banking, taxes, shopping — on a phone or a newer, supported device when you can.
4. Back up your photos and documents (the next chapter shows how), so nothing important lives only on this one machine.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Keeping an unsupported PC is fine as a short bridge, not as a forever plan. The longer it goes without security updates and without being enrolled in the free program, the more it becomes worth the modest effort of one of the other options.

8 Back Up Your Files First — Whatever You Choose

Before any big change — upgrading, switching the operating system, or buying a new computer — make sure your photos, documents and anything irreplaceable exist somewhere other than this one machine. This single step removes almost all the fear from the rest of the decision, because your memories and important papers are safe no matter what.

- An external hard drive or USB stick is the simplest backup: copy your Documents, Pictures, and Desktop folders onto it.
- A cloud service like OneDrive, Google Drive, or iCloud keeps a copy online, reachable from any device.
- Doing both — one copy on a drive you hold, one in the cloud — is the gold standard and not as hard as it sounds.

> **TIP**
>
> If you are not sure what counts as important or where your files actually live, that is one of the most common things I help with. We make a safe copy together, label it clearly, and then any later change is completely low-stakes.

9 Spotting the Scams This Creates

Any big tech change becomes a goldmine for scammers, and the end of Windows 10 support is a perfect example. Criminals send emails and pop-ups, and even make phone calls, claiming your computer is now "unprotected," "infected," or "illegal," and pressuring you to pay, click, or hand over remote control. None of that is how Microsoft works.

- Microsoft does not call you out of the blue about your PC, and real warnings never demand immediate payment.
- A pop-up with a phone number telling you to call "Microsoft support" is always a scam — close the browser.
- Never let someone who contacted you first take remote control of your computer.
- Nobody legitimate asks for payment in gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If a message or call about your "unsupported" or "at-risk" Windows 10 PC frightens you, that fear is the whole point of it — stop, do not click or call the number shown, and ring me instead. I will tell you in a minute whether it is real, and it almost never is.

10 What You Do NOT Need to Do

Plenty of advice online tries to push you toward spending money or making drastic changes right away. Here is what you can safely ignore.

- You do not need to buy a new computer today — the free update program buys you time into 2027.
- You do not need to pay a random pop-up or caller for "protection" — that is a scam, not a service.
- You do not need to install extra paid antivirus to be safe; the built-in Defender plus good habits covers most people.
- You do not need to throw out a perfectly good laptop — ChromeOS Flex may give it years more use.

GOOD TO KNOW

The calmest, cheapest first move for most people is simply to enroll in the free Extended Security Updates and then decide on the longer-term path without pressure.

11 Making the Decision: A Simple Guide

Here is the whole decision boiled down. Match your situation to the row that fits, and you will know your best next step.

Your situation	Best path
PC is only a few years old	Check for Windows 11 with PC Health Check; upgrade free if it qualifies
PC is older / won't run Windows 11	Enroll in free Extended Security Updates now, then plan
Mostly browse, email, and video	Consider ChromeOS Flex to revive the machine
Rely on a specific Windows program	Enroll in updates, or budget for a newer Windows 11 PC
Just want it handled right	Call Bill — we pick the path and set it up together

TIP

There is no wrong answer here, only the one that fits your computer and how you use it. If weighing it up feels like a lot, that is exactly the kind of thing I talk through with people every week — no pressure, no upsell.

12 When to Call Bill

You can do a great deal of this yourself, and this guide is meant to make you feel in control rather than rushed. But some of the steps — enrolling in the update program, running the Windows 11 check, backing up your files safely, or deciding between the options — are quicker and calmer with someone beside you who does them every day.

I come to you here in Portage County, look at your actual computer rather than a generic one, and help you choose the path that genuinely fits. Whether that is enrolling you in the free updates, upgrading you to Windows 11, reviving the machine with ChromeOS Flex, or just making a safe backup and keeping things as they are, I make sure it is done right and leave you a plain note of what we did.

- The enroll option for free updates will not appear, or the sign-in step stalls.
- You want to know for certain whether your PC can run Windows 11.
- You have had a scary pop-up or call about your "unsupported" computer.
- You would simply like the whole thing sorted without the worry.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Windows 10 support ended Oct 14, 2025 — but you have time and good options.

I want to…	Do this…
Understand the risk	No more free security updates by default — the PC still works; browse carefully
Keep getting updates free	Settings Update & Security Windows Update enroll in Extended Security Updates (runs into 2027)
See if I can get Windows 11	Run Microsoft's free PC Health Check app
Revive an old, slow laptop	Look into ChromeOS Flex (great for web, email, video)
Protect my files first	Copy Documents, Pictures, Desktop to an external drive AND the cloud
Handle a scary pop-up/call	It's a scam — don't click or call the number; ring Bill
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

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 results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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