

Enable Windows Directory Services Restore Mode (DSRM)

Boot with Windows Boot CD/ISO and when you see **Install now**, click on **Repair your computer** → **Troubleshoot** → **Command Prompt**.

- Find the Windows volume (usually `C:`):
 - `dir C:\Windows` to confirm it exists.
- Tell Windows to boot into **Directory Services Restore Mode** (DSRM) on the next boot:
 - `bcdedit /set {default} safeboot dsrepair`

Close the Command Prompt and reboot the machine. On next boot, the DC should start in **Directory Services Restore Mode**. Log on using the **DSRM password** you set when promoting the DC (local, not domain). Enter the username as `.\Administrator`.

Once you've fixed whatever issues and want normal startup again:

- From an elevated Command Prompt inside Windows on that DC, run:
 - `bcdedit /deletevalue {default} safeboot`

Then reboot; it will go back to normal DC mode.

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