

Clean Graphics Driver Reinstall

Fix game freezes, crashes and stutters by wiping the old GPU driver completely with DDU and installing a fresh one. Takes about 20–30 minutes.

Why this works

A normal driver update installs over the top of the old one. Leftover files, registry entries and broken settings stay behind and can cause freezes. Display Driver Uninstaller (DDU) strips the driver out completely so the new install starts from a clean slate.

Before you start

- Know which graphics card you have. Press **Win + R**, type **dxdiag**, press Enter, then check the **Display** tab. Note the model (e.g. NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3060, AMD Radeon RX 6700 XT, Intel Arc).
- Save any open work. The screen will go black and flicker during the process. That is normal.
- If you have a wired internet connection, use it. Wi-Fi may drop briefly during the install.
- Allow 20–30 minutes where you can leave the PC alone.

Step 1 — Download what you need (do this first)

- 1 Download **DDU (Display Driver Uninstaller)** from the official site: **wagnardsoft.com**. Click the DDU download, then extract the ZIP (right-click > Extract All) to your Desktop.
- 2 Download the **latest driver for your card** and save it to your Desktop:
 - **NVIDIA** — [nvidia.com/drivers](https://www.nvidia.com/drivers) (choose your card model and Windows version; pick *Game Ready Driver*).
 - **AMD** — [amd.com/support](https://www.amd.com/support) (pick your card; download the full *Adrenalin* package).
 - **Intel** — [intel.com/support](https://www.intel.com/support) (Graphics Drivers section).
- 3 **Do not run the new driver installer yet.** Just have it ready on the Desktop. You will be offline for the next steps, so download everything now.

Step 2 — Stop Windows from reinstalling the old driver

- 1 Disconnect from the internet: unplug the Ethernet cable, or turn off Wi-Fi from the taskbar. This stops Windows Update from quietly installing an old driver while you work.
- 2 Optional but recommended: open the extracted DDU folder, run **Display Driver Uninstaller.exe**, click **Options** and tick "**Prevent downloads of drivers from Windows Update**". Close DDU for now.

Step 3 — Boot into Safe Mode

- 1 Click **Start > Settings > System > Recovery** (Windows 11) or **Update & Security > Recovery** (Windows 10).
- 2 Under **Advanced startup**, click **Restart now**. The PC restarts to a blue menu.
- 3 Choose **Troubleshoot > Advanced options > Startup Settings > Restart**.
- 4 When the numbered list appears, press **4** for **Enable Safe Mode**. Windows will load looking plain and low-resolution. That is correct.

Shortcut

DDU can do this for you: open DDU normally, click **Options**, then use the **Launch in Safe Mode** button and it will reboot into Safe Mode and reopen itself.

Step 4 — Run DDU and remove the old driver

- 1 In Safe Mode, open the DDU folder on your Desktop and run **Display Driver Uninstaller.exe**. If an options window pops up, just close it.
- 2 On the right-hand side, set the first dropdown to **GPU**.
- 3 Set the second dropdown to your card's brand: **NVIDIA**, **AMD** or **Intel**.
- 4 Click the big button **Clean and restart (Highly recommended)**.
- 5 Wait. The screen may flash or go black for a few seconds. DDU will finish and restart the PC on its own. Do not power off manually.

Laptop with two graphics chips?

If your laptop has both an Intel/AMD built-in chip and an NVIDIA/AMD gaming chip, run DDU once for the gaming card. Only clean the built-in Intel/AMD chip as well if a technician has told you to. Removing both is safe but takes two rounds.

Step 5 — Install the new driver

1	Windows restarts normally. The display will look oversized or blurry. That is expected because there is no driver yet.
2	Keep the internet disconnected for this step.
3	Double-click the driver installer you saved on the Desktop.
4	NVIDIA: choose Custom (Advanced) , tick Perform a clean installation , then Next. If you do not use GeForce Experience / the NVIDIA App, untick it. AMD: choose Factory Reset under the install options, then Install. The <i>Minimal</i> or <i>Driver Only</i> option is fine if you do not want the extra software. Intel: run the installer and accept the defaults.
5	Let it finish. The screen will flicker a few times. Restart the PC when prompted, even if it does not insist.
6	Reconnect the internet.

Step 6 — Check it worked

1	Right-click the Desktop. You should see NVIDIA Control Panel or AMD Software / Intel Graphics in the menu.
2	Press Win + R , type dxdiag , Enter, and check the Display tab shows your card name and a recent driver date.
3	Set your monitor's refresh rate: Settings > System > Display > Advanced display , and pick the highest refresh rate listed (e.g. 144 Hz). DDU resets this to 60 Hz.
4	Open the game that was freezing and play for 15–20 minutes to test.

Still freezing after a clean install?

A clean driver fixes most freezes caused by driver corruption. If it continues, the cause is likely elsewhere. Try these in order:

- **Turn off any GPU overclock** (MSI Afterburner, factory OC utilities) and set the card to stock.
- **Check temperatures** with HWMonitor or HWINFO while gaming. GPU above ~85°C or CPU above ~90°C points to cooling or dust.
- **Check the power supply** — an ageing or underpowered PSU causes hard freezes under load. The game freezing then recovering, or a black screen with sound looping, are classic signs.
- **Disable overlays:** Discord, Steam, GeForce/Xbox Game Bar overlays can all cause hitching.
- **Run a memory test** (Windows Memory Diagnostic or MemTest86) and check XMP/EXPO is stable.
- **Verify game files** in Steam / Epic / Battle.net.

Need a hand?

If you would rather we did this, or the freezing continues, call or bring the PC in and we will run the full diagnostic (drivers, thermals, PSU, memory). **Mobile PC Doctor** | 07902 810090 | mpcdoctor.com