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## Understanding Windows Desktop Licensing: Unlicensed PCs and Mislicensing FAQs

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## Proper Desktop Licensing FAQs

The purpose of this document is to help you gain a solid understanding of Windows desktop licensing. It explains the value of proper licensing and key Windows licensing policies every organization needs to know. It also provides information about using the Get Genuine Kit for Windows XP Professional to get legal should you find that your existing desktops are not properly licensed.

### Q. What does “mislicensing” mean?

A. Mislicensing occurs when customers use their Volume License Agreement to install the initial Windows License on a new PC. Volume License (VL) covers the Windows UPGRADE only, therefore these systems are not properly licensed—they are mislicensed.

### Q. What is the value of running genuine, fully licensed Windows?

A. Using counterfeit or improperly licensed software puts your organization’s systems and intellectual property at serious risk. By running authentic, properly licensed Microsoft software, you can feel confident that your organization has:

- The features, options, and capabilities needed to maximize productivity.
- Protection from Trojans, spyware and other dangers that come with counterfeit software.
- Access to important updates, product enhancements and tech support.
- A clear path to upgrade to Microsoft Vista™ when the time comes.

### Q. How can I acquire a full version of Windows?

A. There are two ways to acquire a full version of Windows: preinstalled on a new PC through a PC manufacturer, or as full packaged retail product.

### Q. What does a Windows Volume License cover?

A. Volume Licensing covers upgrades only. Windows upgrades are designed to upgrade previously acquired qualifying licenses. A Volume Licensing Windows upgrade requires an existing Original Equipment Manufacturer- or Full Packaged Product-qualified desktop Operating System license.

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**Q. What is the most cost-effective way to acquire a full version of Windows?**

**A.** The best and most cost-effective way to acquire Windows software is preinstalled on a new PC. However, occasionally customers find that they have inadvertently acquired non-genuine Windows XP Professional software. The Get Genuine Kit for Windows XP Professional is a cost-effective way for you to legalize your PC with the help of a Microsoft® reseller.

**Q. Do I need a Certificate of Authenticity (COA) on every PC?**

**A.** Yes. There should be a Certificate of Authenticity (COA) on all your PCs before you install the upgrade, even if they are also covered with VL Windows.

**Q. If I sell or retire a desktop machine, can I transfer its license to a new PC?**

**A.** No. OEM operating system licenses live and die with each PC—they are not transferable.

**Q. Why does Microsoft license the Windows Desktop operating system differently than all other products?**

**A.** When Windows Desktop operating system software is licensed through the OEM or System Builder Channel, the OEM or system builder is responsible for preinstalling and supporting Windows software on that computer, and ensuring that Windows works smoothly with their hardware. Additionally, the end user license agreement (EULA) is between the OEM/system builder and the customer, not Microsoft and the customer. As such, the licensing is different.

**Q. Is this a change in licensing policy?**

**A.** No. Windows Desktop licensing policies have been in effect for over 10 years.

**Q. I am an Enterprise Agreement (EA) customer. Do I need to acquire an underlying operating system with new PCs?**

**A.** Yes. EAs are no different than other Volume License agreements—EAs also cover Windows Upgrades only. EA customers must acquire their initial full Windows License via the OEM or retail channels and cannot use their EA to cover the Windows License.

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**Q. I'm not properly licensed. What do I do?**

**A.** If you find that you have been acquiring Windows incorrectly, the first thing to do is adjust your acquisition policies moving forward. Be sure to acquire Windows pre-installed on a new or replacement PC from this point on.

If your organization is already running fully assembled PCs with a previously installed counterfeit, pirated, or otherwise illegal or unlicensed copy of Windows XP Professional software, contact your Microsoft reseller to discuss the possibility of using the Get Genuine Kit for Windows XP Professional to get legal.

**Q. What is the Get Genuine Kit for Windows XP Professional, and who is eligible to use it?**

**A.** The Get Genuine Kit for Windows XP Professional is a cost-effective way to legalize your PC with the help of a Microsoft reseller. The kit is only available for use on fully assembled PCs with a previously installed counterfeit, pirated, or otherwise illegal or unlicensed copy of Windows XP Professional. Your Microsoft reseller can help you determine if the Get Genuine Kit is right for you.

**For more information on genuine Windows software, please visit [www.microsoft.com/genuine](http://www.microsoft.com/genuine).**