

About Adding Drivers to WinPE Rescue Media

WinPE is packaged with a large collection of drivers, however, there are many devices that are not part of the WinPE list of drivers. For WinPE to recognize your device, you need to add a driver. Your device then communicates with WinPE and loads at boot time of WinPE.

The main devices to be concerned with are hard drive/RAID controllers, network interface cards (NIC) or USB controllers and USB hubs.

If you intend to use a network device then you need to ensure that your NIC is supported in WinPE. If your hard drives are attached to a RAID controller then you need to ensure that your RAID Controller is supported in WinPE, either by a WinPE driver or by adding a driver.

A device driver is a collection of files (also referred to as a driver package) and generally comprises of:

1. The driver software. These files have a .SYS extension.
2. The driver information, or INF, file which contains the installation instructions for the drivers. These files have a .INF extension.
3. An optional security catalog which signs the drivers for operating systems which require signed drivers, commonly used on x64 operating systems. These files have a .CAT extension.
4. One or more optional supporting software library files (Dynamic Link Library) which contain further code to support the driver software. These files have a .DLL extension.

Your best sources for driver packages are the CD that comes with your device (or motherboard) or downloads from the vendor website as a ZIP file. When downloading a package from the vendor website, it is best to source a ZIP package for easy extraction.