

## Microsoft Knowledge Base Article - 290497

# OL2002: You Cannot Open Attachments

[View products that this article applies to.](#)

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**IMPORTANT** : This article contains information about modifying the registry. Before you modify the registry, make sure to back it up. Understand how to restore the registry if a problem occurs. For information about how to back up, restore, and edit the registry, click the article number to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[256986](#) Description of the Microsoft Windows Registry

### SUMMARY

Outlook 2002 includes a new security feature that blocks attachments that are considered unsafe. If you receive an e-mail message blocked file types, you may receive the following warning message:

Outlook blocked access to the following potentially unsafe attachments: [...]

Although Outlook has blocked access to the attachment, the attachment still exists in the message. This article summarizes what to do about the attachment.

For additional information about the latest service pack for Microsoft Office XP, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[307841](#) OFFXP: How to Obtain the Latest Office XP Service Pack

### MORE INFORMATION

This security feature provides an additional level of protection against malicious e-mail messages. Updates are available for earlier versions of Outlook. By default, this security feature is implemented in Outlook 2002.

Use one of the following recommended methods to open the attached file:

- Request that the sender post or save the attachment to a file share, and then send you the link to it.
- Request that the sender use a file compression utility that changes the file name extension. For a list of third-party compression utilities, click the following article number to view the Microsoft Knowledge Base article:

[291637](#) OL2002: Attachments Are Not Compressed by Outlook

- Request that the sender rename the extension, and then resend you the file. After you receive the renamed attachment, you can rename the file to the original extension.

If the previously recommended methods do not meet your needs, use one of the following methods:

- If you are in a Microsoft Exchange environment and your administrator has configured the Outlook Security settings, ask the administrator to change the security settings for your mailbox.
- If you are not in an Exchange environment, modify the registry to customize the attachment security settings (see the "How to Customize Attachment Security Behavior" section of this article for details).

### How to Customize Attachment Security Behavior

**WARNING:** If you use Registry Editor incorrectly, you may cause serious problems that may require you to reinstall your operating system. Microsoft cannot guarantee that you can solve problems that result from using Registry Editor incorrectly. Use Registry Editor at your own risk.

You can modify the attachment security behavior in Outlook 2002 if you are using Outlook in one of the following scenarios:

- You are not using Outlook in an Exchange environment.
- In an Exchange environment, the administrator has not configured the Outlook Security settings to disallow changes to the attachment security behavior.

In these scenarios, modify the attachment security behavior by making a modification to the registry. To do so:

1. Quit Outlook 2002, if it is running.
2. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
3. In the **Open** box, type **regedit**, and then click **OK**.
4. See if the following registry key exists. If it does, skip to step 5.

**HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\10.0\Outlook\Security**

If the registry key does not exist, create it. To create the registry key, locate and then click the following registry key:

**HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft**

- a. Click the **Edit** menu, click **New**, and then click **Key**.
- b. Type **Office**, and then press ENTER.
- c. Click the **Edit** menu, click **New**, and then click **Key**.
- d. Type **10.0**, and then press ENTER.
- e. Click the **Edit** menu, click **New**, and then click **Key**.
- f. Type **Outlook**, and then press ENTER.
- g. Click the **Edit** menu, click **New**, and then click **Key**.
- h. Type **Security**, and then press ENTER.
5. Click the **Edit** menu, click **New**, and then click **String Value**.
6. Type the following name for the new value:

**Level1Remove**

7. Press ENTER.
8. Right-click the new string value name, and then click **Modify**.
9. Type the extension of the file type that you want to open in Outlook 2002. For example:

**.exe**

To specify multiple file types, use the following format:

**.exe;.com**

10. Click **OK**.
11. Quit Registry Editor.
12. Restart your computer.

When you start Outlook 2002, you can open the file types that you specified in the registry.

**NOTE:** Microsoft recommends that you enable only the file types that you need. If you rarely receive a particular file type, Microsoft give Outlook 2002 temporary access to the file type in question, and then reconfigure Outlook 2002 to block the file type by undoing

## Exchange Environment

If you run Outlook 2002 in an Exchange environment, your administrator can change the default attachment security behavior. For click the article number about how to configure Outlook 2002 in an Exchange environment below to view the article about how to cc an Exchange environment in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[290499](#) OL2002: Administrator Information About E-Mail Security Features

## Attachment Behavior

Attachments are divided into three groups based on their file name extension, or type. Outlook handles each group in a specific way

### Level 1 ("Unsafe")

The "unsafe" category represents any extension that may have script or code associated with it. You cannot open any attachment w if you use a version of Outlook that has the security patch applied to it. The following list contains attachments that are considered i

Extension	File type
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.ade	Microsoft Access project extension	
.adp	Microsoft Access project	
.asx	Windows Media Audio / Video	
.bas	Microsoft Visual Basic class module	
.bat	Batch file	
.chm	Compiled HTML Help file	
.cmd	Microsoft Windows NT Command script	
.com	Microsoft MS-DOS program	
.cpl	Control Panel extension	
.crt	Security certificate	
.exe	Program	
.hlp	Help file	
.hta	HTML program	
.inf	Setup Information	
.ins	Internet Naming Service	
.isp	Internet Communication settings	
.js	JScript file	
.jse	Jscript Encoded Script file	
.lnk	Shortcut	
.mda	Microsoft Access add-in program	
.mdb	Microsoft Access program	
.mde	Microsoft Access MDE database	
.mdt	Microsoft Access workgroup information	
.mdw	Microsoft Access workgroup information	
.mdz	Microsoft Access wizard program	
.msc	Microsoft Common Console document	
.msi	Microsoft Windows Installer package	
.msp	Microsoft Windows Installer patch	
.mst	Microsoft Windows Installer transform; Microsoft Visual	T
.ops	Office XP settings	
.pcd	Photo CD image; Microsoft Visual compiled script	
.pif	Shortcut to MS-DOS program	
.prf	Microsoft Outlook profile settings	
.reg	Registration entries	
.scf	Windows Explorer command	
.scr	Screen saver	
.sct	Windows Script Component	
.shb	Shell Scrap object	
.shs	Shell Scrap object	
.url	Internet shortcut	
.vb	VBScript file	
.vbe	VBScript Encoded script file	
.vbs	VBScript file	
.wsc	Windows Script Component	
.wsf	Windows Script file	
.wsh	Windows Script Host Settings file	

The following list describes how Outlook functions when you receive or send an "unsafe" file attachment:

- Any "unsafe" attachment is not accessible. You cannot save, delete, open, print, or otherwise work with "unsafe" files. The icon indicates that Outlook has blocked access to the "unsafe" attachment. The attachment is not accessible from Outlook; however, it is not actually removed from the e-mail message.
- If you forward an e-mail message with an "unsafe" attachment, the attachment is not included in the forwarded e-mail message.
- If you send an e-mail message that contains an "unsafe" attachment, you receive a warning message that says other Outlook users are unable to access the attachment that you are trying to send. You can either ignore the warning message and send the e-mail message, or you can choose to not send the e-mail message.
- If you save or close an e-mail message that contains an "unsafe" attachment, you receive a warning message that says you cannot save the attachment in Outlook. You can override the warning message and save the e-mail message.
- You cannot open objects that are inserted into Microsoft Outlook Rich Text messages by using the **Insert Object** command. You can see a representation of the object, but you cannot open or activate the object in the e-mail message.
- You cannot open "unsafe" files that have been directly stored in an Outlook or Exchange folder. Although these files are not blocked, you cannot open them.

item, they are still considered "unsafe." The following error message occurs in this situation:

Can't open the item. Outlook blocked access to this potentially unsafe item.

## Level 2

Level 2 files are not "unsafe" but they do require more security than other attachments. When you receive a Level 2 attachment, you can save the attachment to a disk; you cannot open the attachment in the e-mail message. By default, extensions are not associated with this category. You can add extensions to the Level 2 list.

**NOTE:** You can only change the list of files that are included in the Level 2 category if you are using Outlook in an Exchange environment. An administrator must make these changes.

## Other Attachments

When you try to open an attachment other than those in the "unsafe" or Level 2 lists, you are prompted to either open the file directly or save it to a disk. You can turn off future prompts for that extension if you click to clear the **Always ask before opening this type of file** check box.

**NOTE:** If a program associates itself with a new extension, that extension is treated as an "other" attachment until you add the extension to the Level 2 list. For example, if you install a program on your computer that uses files with an .xyz extension, whenever you open an attachment with that extension, the new program opens and runs the attachment. By default, the .xyz extension is not on the "unsafe" or Level 2 list, so attachments with that extension are treated as "unsafe." If you want attachments with the .xyz extension to be treated as "safe," you must add the .xyz extension to the list of safe extensions. For additional information about the "Level1Add" registry key, click the following article number to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[312834](#) OL2002: The "Level1Add" Registry Key Is Missing from Outlook 2002

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## The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Outlook 2002

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