



Guide to Repair Services

We are glad you came to us and trusted us with your computer repair. We have come to understand that computer repairs can be unpredictable and traumatic. This document is to help bridge the communication gap that can occur. We use certain terms commonly not realizing that they are words that are not universally understood. Also, even when the concepts are understood, expectations may differ. Please use this as a reference guide to understand what we are trying to do and what you can expect from our services.

Time to Bench

Generally, a repair will begin the diagnostic process within 24 - 48 hours from check in time. Once a computer is placed on a bench, the time to complete the repair can vary dramatically. Our biggest challenge is to achieve balance between being thorough and efficient. A hasty diagnosis/repair will often result in a return-trip to the shop. Likewise, a repair that drags on and on will result in the frustration of not having a computer. Neither is ideal. We try to find the happy medium between them.

Status Checking

We understand that your computer is valuable to you. Every minute we have it you are unable to do all those things that you have come to rely upon your computer for. This can be a stressful time. On average, we have between 20-30 computers in our shop for repair. Ironically, when a customer calls to "check the status" of their computer it only prolongs the time of the repair. Each call of this nature requires a member of our staff to check with the technician and interrupt what he is doing to get an update on your situation. You can see how this would detract from the efficiency of our technicians when several customers call daily to "status check." We have a process in place to have our technicians contact you if we run into a problem or concern as well as a policy that would require someone to call you and log that phone call as soon as your repair has been completed. Please do not call to check the status of your repair unless you have additional information to provide or it has been more than a week since you dropped it off for repair.

Expedite Services

If you are in a situation where you have to get your computer back up and going as soon as possible, you may want to consider an expedite. Our basic expedite moves your computer to the front of the queue to the "next on the bench" position. The cost for this premium service is currently \$50. While this fee ensures that your computer will be given a higher priority than those who have checked in their system before yours, it does not come with any guarantees that we will diagnose or fix your system within a certain time frame. The same is true of our premium expedite, currently at \$100. This fee buys you the privilege of being put directly on the bench. Your computer will bypass the waiting period of all standard check-ins, but does not get any guarantee regarding the amount of time necessary to complete the repair.

Diagnosis/Minimum Bench Fee

Any system that is checked-in for repair will, at the very least, be assessed either a diagnosis fee or minimum bench fee. The difference between the two is determined by the amount of time required to troubleshoot the problem and is left at the discretion of the technician. If the symptoms are fairly obvious and you authorize a repair you will usually not be charged a diagnosis fee. A common example of this is virus and spyware removal. We usually know pretty quickly if this is the problem and the resulting charge would be only for the virus/spyware removal.

Computer Cleaning

It is very common for dust to get into your computer. The amount of dust can be surprising and varies depending on your environment. If your fans are not spinning optimally as a result of dust or if your computer has collected so much dust that a technician is unable to work on it without a proper cleaning a cleaning fee will be assessed automatically.

Data transfer/Backup

These two services are similar in terms of what they accomplish, but require different processes. One is more time consuming than the other and thus costs more. The process of data transfer is when we "clone" your hard drive and put everything back to how it was prior to your repair. When we "backup" the beginning of the process is oftentimes the same. The data is either cloned or manually moved to another drive. Then the data is moved manually to your hard drive into desired directories. We must emphasize that we are in no way responsible for your data. It is expected that you have backed up your important data. We will do what we can to retrieve and backup all data that we can, however, we assume no responsibility for any files that are lost or corrupted.

Spyware/Viruses

The internet is rampant with files that can have a negative effect on your computer experience. Some are more devious than others and the cumulative effect on your computer can vary. Often, our technicians are able to remove all threats and leave your operating system, applications and data intact. This is ideal, but is not always reality. Many times, these infections corrupt the Windows operating system to the extent that it becomes necessary to reload your OS (operating system) from scratch. In other cases, we may remove all the threats and it may seem like the computer is running correctly, but there may be some specific applications that do not run. Please understand that it is not realistic for us to go into your computer and test the functionality of each of your programs after removal of viruses and spyware. It is simply not cost-effective for you or us. You may have to run the computer for a few days to determine whether any files were corrupted as a result of the cleaning. Oftentimes, infections "attach" themselves to files that are required to run your programs. When the bad files are removed, they take the good files with them. This is what causes the programs to stop working properly. In some cases, it is possible to uninstall and reinstall that application. In other cases, it becomes necessary to reload your operating system. Since this is the most traumatic repair for customers, we try to avoid it as much as we can. If you have a severe infection, it may be best in the long run to just reload your OS. This would save you the charges for virus and spyware removal.

OS Reinstall

This is the process of setting your computer back to the way it was when you bought it. If you have restore disks from the manufacturer, it will likely include any programs that came with your computer (Word, Excel, Works, Quicken, etc...). If you do not have any of the original media, we can only install Windows without any of the other applications. We can only install programs that you have provided disks and licenses (product keys) for. Among other things, downloaded applications, printer drivers and internet settings will all need to be reinstalled or reconfigured. All of your data will be written over when we reinstall an OS. If you have not backed it up and it is important, you will need to opt for the "backup" service. We will move all files to a single folder, but this does not mean that everything will be in the same place it was. You will need to sort through the backup folder to reallocate your files. This also includes your e-mail, favorites, personal documents, application data (Quicken/Quickbooks files) and other information. All of these services are available from Personalized Computers for an additional fee. In many cases, it is most practical to employ one of our onsite techs to visit your home to restore all of these things to their proper place and functionality in the operating environment.

Data Recovery

This service differs from data backup or transfer. Data recovery becomes necessary when your hard drive is failing or has failed and special means are required to access the data. We are often able to get data from a failing/failed hard drive. Sometimes we get all of the data. Other times we can get some of the data, but not all. In some cases we are unable to get any data. In all of these cases the process is time consuming for the technician regardless of what data we are able to obtain. The fee that we charge for data recovery is for the time required to setup and attempt to get the data, not for the success in obtaining the files that were not backed up. There is no guarantee that we will get any data in this process. Our inability to get any data does not relieve your responsibility to pay for the service. It is common that the files we recover are in "raw" format. This means that we retrieve the files, but are unable to retrieve the folder structure and naming conventions. Files are reorganized in folders according to their file extensions. In other words, all of your word documents will be stored in one folder while all of your pictures will be in another folder. Even less desirable is the fact that the file name is now just a number. This will require for you to open each file, rename it and save it to the proper directory.

DC Jack Repair

This repair is necessary when a laptop will no longer charge the battery via the AC adapter. Most commonly, the jack is no longer making contact with the solder points on the motherboard. It is required for a technician to disassemble the laptop and re-solder the jack. In most cases this will fix the problem. Be aware that a re-solder is not as durable as a factory solder and you should handle your laptop with care. Do not force the AC adapter into the jack and be certain to use care when removing the adapter as well. There will be laptops that will not be fixed by this process. Some will require us to purchase a replacement DC jack to solder onto the motherboard. In this case, it will require extra time to find a replacement and re-solder the new jack. Finally, there are some laptops that do not charge because there is a problem with the motherboard. This is a costly repair that may or may not be worth pursuing. In any of these cases, the DC jack repair is a necessary part of the troubleshooting process and must be eliminated as a variable before the next step that can be taken. The DC jack repair comes with no guarantee that it will fix the problem or that it will hold for any certain amount of time. The cost of the repair is based on the time required to perform the service, not on the result. Bear in mind that most DC jack repairs are successful and last for as long as the laptop lasts, but we cannot determine whether the problem is with the solder, jack or motherboard without pursuing this option before others. It is reasonable to consider this step a necessary diagnosis that will usually fix the problem.