

## Troubleshooting Chief Architect Software Closing Unexpectedly on Windows

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The information in this article applies to:



### DESCRIPTION

I keep encountering errors, lockups, or the program exiting unexpectedly when I run Chief Architect on my Microsoft Windows computer. What might be the cause?

### CAUSE

There are many different reasons why Chief Architect may be encountering errors or suddenly quitting, including the PC not meeting the System Requirements for running the software, needing to have updated drivers (particularly for the video card), or a third party application may be conflicting with the software's operation.

Before continuing, please access our [Known Incompatibilities](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/products/known-incompatibilities.html) (<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/products/known-incompatibilities.html>) page to learn more about the software and hardware incompatibilities with Chief Architect software.

# RESOLUTION

Since there are a number of possible causes for software failures, some basic troubleshooting is required in order to identify the reason for a particular issue. Please follow all of the recommendations in this article in order and do not skip any steps. When followed correctly, these instructions resolve almost all issues with Chief Architect software crashing on a Microsoft Windows computer.

Step 1 - [Verify System Requirements](#)

Step 2 - [Download Program Updates](#)

Step 3 - [Basic Initial Troubleshooting](#)

Step 4 - [Restart in Safe Mode with Networking](#)

Step 5 - [Run the System File Checker](#)

Step 6 - [Create a New User Account](#)

Step 7 - [Advanced Troubleshooting](#)

## STEP 1 - Verify System Requirements

First, it is extremely important to make certain that your computer meets the minimum system requirements for running the software. The minimum, and recommended, system requirements for running the current version can be found on the website at the appropriate link for your program below.

- [Chief Architect System Requirements](#)  
(<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/products/sysreq.html>)
- [Home Designer System Requirements](#)  
(<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/products/system-requirements.html>)

Please note that running in an emulator, or virtual machine environment, such as Hyper-V, VMWare, Parallels, or VirtualBox is not supported.

If your computer does not meet the minimum system requirements for your version, then you should consider installing on an alternate system that does meet, or exceeds, the requirements.

## STEP 2 - Download Program Updates

If your computer meets the System Requirements for running the software, then the next step is to make sure you are using the most current program version of your Chief Architect software program.

In Chief Architect and Home Designer software programs, you can verify whether you have the latest program update by selecting **Help> Download Program Updates** from the program menu.

- If you have the most recent update, then the updates page will state this.
- If you are not running the most recent update, then selecting this option under the Help menu will take you to the most recent update for your version. Follow the instructions to download and install it.

You can also access the Program Updates page on the website at the appropriate link below for your version.

- [Chief Architect Program Updates](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/updates.html)  
(<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/updates.html>)
- [Home Designer Program Updates](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/updates.html)  
(<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/updates.html>)

## STEP 3 - Basic Initial Troubleshooting

If your Windows computer meets or exceeds the System Requirements, and you are running the most recent update available for your software, then these additional basic troubleshooting steps should be tested.

- First, please note that working on files stored on a network server, external hard drive, or USB flash drive device is not supported. When working with Chief Architect files, always make sure they are saved on the local machine's hard drive. To learn more, please see the [Organizing your Plan and Layout files](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00562/organizing-your-plan-and-)  
(<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00562/organizing-your-plan-and->

[layout-files.html](#)) Knowledge Base article.

Having automated backups that run when files are not in use to back up to a network server or cloud drive is a great idea to ensure that in the event of a computer crash, hard drive failure, computer theft, fire or other natural disaster that you do not lose your important files.

- If the unexpected closure of the program appears to be particularly linked to 3D camera views, dialogs which display object previews, or accessing particular objects in the Library Browser where a preview is displayed in the panes below, then please follow the instructions in the Knowledge Base article that applies to your product below:

[Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Chief Architect](#)

(<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00106/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-chief-architect.html>)

[Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Home Designer](#)

(<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html>)

Ideally, you want to see a Driver Date from within the past 6 months listed for your video card.

If your system has switchable graphics, and the wrong chipset or video card is listed in Preferences, please contact your computer's manufacturer directly for instructions on how to adjust the system settings.

- If you are running Chief Architect on multiple monitors, test disconnecting one of the monitors and use Chief Architect on only one screen. If the program failure does not occur when only using a single monitor, then it is likely that your video card is not capable of handling more than one monitor display, or that one of the monitors is plugged into the motherboard. Ensure that all monitors are plugged directly into the ports on the video card and test to see if the crashing continues to occur.
- If the program seems to hang or close unexpectedly when attempting to print, please see the appropriate article below for additional troubleshooting specific to printing.

[Chief Architect - Troubleshooting Printing Issues](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00085/troubleshooting-printing-issues.html)

(<https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00085/troubleshooting-printing-issues.html>)

[Home Designer - Troubleshooting Printing Issues](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00176/troubleshooting-printing-issues.html)

(<https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00176/troubleshooting-printing-issues.html>)

## Step 4 - Restart in Safe Mode with Networking

After testing the basic troubleshooting steps above, if you are still experiencing unexpected software termination with your Chief Architect software program on a Windows PC computer, then you should try restarting the system in Safe Mode with Networking by following the instructions in the Microsoft support article listed below.

- [Windows 10 / 11 \(https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/start-your-pc-in-safe-mode-in-windows-92c27cff-db89-8644-1ce4-b3e5e56fe234\)](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/start-your-pc-in-safe-mode-in-windows-92c27cff-db89-8644-1ce4-b3e5e56fe234)

Once you have completed the Safe Mode instructions, launch Chief Architect and test to see whether the behavior still occurs.

**Note:** Please note that you will likely receive a warning that your customized video driver is not in use, which is expected behavior in Safe Mode.

If starting up your Windows PC in Safe Mode resolves the program error, and if it continues when restarting Windows normally, then there is likely a conflict with a third party application running on your system.

- One application that is known to conflict with Chief Architect is **Nahimic Audio**, which can be uninstalled.

## Step 5 - Run the System File Checker tool

To scan your computer for corruptions in the Windows system files, you can run the System File Checker tool included with Windows. Information on this utility can be located in the following Microsoft article.

- [Windows 10 / 11 \(https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/using-system-file-checker-in-windows-365e0031-36b1-6031-f804-8fd86e0ef4ca\)](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/using-system-file-checker-in-windows-365e0031-36b1-6031-f804-8fd86e0ef4ca)

## STEP 6 - Create a New User Account

If none of the above steps have resolved the software closing unexpectedly on your system, then you should create a brand new Administrator User Account on the computer. Create it with full administrative rights, log in using that account, and then attempt to use the software using the new account to test whether or not you continue to experience the same behavior.

For information on creating a new user account, please see the following Microsoft article below.

- [Windows 10 / 11 \(https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/create-a-local-user-or-administrator-account-in-windows-20de74e0-ac7f-3502-a866-32915af2a34d\)](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/create-a-local-user-or-administrator-account-in-windows-20de74e0-ac7f-3502-a866-32915af2a34d)

## STEP 7 - Advanced Troubleshooting


Finally, if you continue to experience problems with the software closing unexpectedly on your Microsoft Windows computer after going through all of these steps, please contact our Technical Support department directly, and include all of the following files listed below.

Please make sure you have already completed all of the earlier troubleshooting steps listed in this article before following the steps below, as these files will not be helpful unless all of the preliminary steps have already been completed.

1. When the crash occurs, it is a good idea to take a moment to write down what you were doing just prior to the crash, including what kind of view was open, what tools you were using, and what objects you were drawing or editing. If you receive an error or warning, attach a screenshot image of the message.

See Knowledge Base article: [Creating a Screenshot](#)

[\(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00326/\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00326/).

2. If the issue only seems to occur in one particular file, use the **Backup Entire Plan/Layout**  tool to create a folder with a copy of the file in which the error occurs, along with all referenced files.

See Knowledge Base article: [Using the Backup Entire Plan/Layout Tool \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00987/\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00987/).

3. Locate and save the program's **MESSAGE LOG** file.

See Knowledge Base article: [Locating the Message Log \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-02908/\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-02908/).

4. Export or save your **SYSTEM INFORMATION**.

See Knowledge Base article: [Retrieving System Information to Send to Technical Support \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-01867/retrieving-system-information-to-send-to-technical-support.html).

5. Sign in to the [Technical Support Center \(https://support.chiefarchitect.com/\)](https://support.chiefarchitect.com/) and create a new support case to send to Technical Support.

See Knowledge Base article: [Using the Technical Support Center \(https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html\)](https://www.chiefarchitect.com/support/article/KB-00717/using-the-technical-support-center.html).

6. Give the case a short but descriptive title.

In the text of the case, type a detailed description of the problem, including the exact steps that caused the crash or error to occur, if at all possible.

Click the **Browse** button and attach the **SCREENSHOT IMAGES**, the **PROJECT BACKUP**, **MESSAGE LOG**, and **SYSTEM INFORMATION** files to your case before submitting it.

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**Note:** Some of the requested information may identify you, as well as specific information about your computer, but it will also help us determine the source of the problem. Please be assured that any files submitted to Chief Architect Technical Support will be used for troubleshooting purposes only.


#### Related Articles

- [📄 Backing up Chief Architect Content \(/support/article/KB-00001/backing-up-chief-architect-content.html\)](/support/article/KB-00001/backing-up-chief-architect-content.html)
- [📄 Chief Architect Minimum System Requirements \(/support/article/KB-02761/chief-architect-minimum-system-requirements.html\)](/support/article/KB-02761/chief-architect-minimum-system-requirements.html)
- [📄 Home Designer Minimum System Requirements \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01095/home-designer-minimum-system-requirements.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-01095/home-designer-minimum-system-requirements.html)
- [📄 Message: Chief Architect has encountered a problem and needs to close. \(/support/article/KB-02958/message-chief-architect-has-encountered-a-problem-and-needs-to-close.html\)](/support/article/KB-02958/message-chief-architect-has-encountered-a-problem-and-needs-to-close.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Chief Architect \(/support/article/KB-00106/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-chief-architect.html\)](/support/article/KB-00106/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-chief-architect.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting 3D Camera View Display Problems in Home Designer \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/support/article/KB-00897/troubleshooting-3d-camera-view-display-problems-in-home-designer.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Exception and Assertion Error Messages \(/support/article/KB-00802/troubleshooting-exception-and-assertion-error-messages.html\)](/support/article/KB-00802/troubleshooting-exception-and-assertion-error-messages.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Installation Problems \(/support/article/KB-00214/troubleshooting-installation-problems.html\)](/support/article/KB-00214/troubleshooting-installation-problems.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Library Download Issues \(/support/article/KB-02772/troubleshooting-library-download-issues.html\)](/support/article/KB-02772/troubleshooting-library-download-issues.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Registration Issues \(/support/article/KB-01191/troubleshooting-registration-issues.html\)](/support/article/KB-01191/troubleshooting-registration-issues.html)
- [📄 Troubleshooting Slowness in Chief Architect Plans \(/support/article/KB-00521/troubleshooting-slowness-in-chief-architect-plans.html\)](/support/article/KB-00521/troubleshooting-slowness-in-chief-architect-plans.html)





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