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Don't be in a hurry if you notice that you can't remember your password.

If you make too many attempts, your account will be blocked, which can then be difficult to cancel. Before that, there are opportunities to reset the password. The result may, in the worst case, be that the account is quarantined for 30 days, but then the account is automatically reset. Furthermore, if you have prepared your account with security details, it does not have to be a "worst case".

Here are some practical guidelines plus an example of a successful rescue operation, from real life. Followed by an action plan in brief.

Procedures for password reset / account recovery.

The reasons for the recovery can be several: Forgotten password or Microsoft has locked the account for some reason.

Important:

If an account is not accessed for one year, the account becomes inactive and all emails are deleted. The account can only be recovered if you know the address and password.

If you have not accessed the account for two years, the account is permanently closed. Recovery is not possible, and the address cannot be used as an alias or to create a new account.

MS policy: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4511051/microsoft-account-activity-policy>

Restoring a password or account normally requires that you have created security information for your account that allows Microsoft to verify the account holder. E.g. mobile number and other email address for receiving verification code.

If such information is missing, you must fill in forms that prove your ownership. In addition to personal data, information from one's email conversation may be required. If you have access to it e.g. via mobile, where logout is usually not done, it is an advantage. If not, contact some people and ask for help. Usually, the recipient's email address and **accurate text of message heading** are needed. This is necessary so that the **check can be done by machine**.

One way to reset the account on your own, assumes that a recovery code has been generated.

In summary, it is **important that you plan for a recovery** when the account is created.

Reset password/ account - Guidelines

When you cannot sign in: <https://support.microsoft.com/help/12429>

Support by e-mail: <https://support.microsoft.com/help/12401/microsoft-account-get-help-by-email>

More assistance: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/17875/microsoft-account-reset-or-recover-password>

Process description: https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_10-security/how-to-reset-recover-microsoft-account/d941da9f-e4d0-4451-ad5e-3bd114a7fc53

Reset password/ account – principles

The message from MS is clear: There are several tools available to help you manage the recovery on your own. No support service can be contacted, by phone or email, to help you with this.

Go to sign into your account: <https://account.microsoft.com/account>

Select Forgot your password?

1 / Reset the password. Do you have security information, email, or mobile number, to receive verification code? Choose the appropriate option and you will soon be back in your account after receiving and registering the code.

2 / Must the account be reset?

- Do you have a recovery code for your account (25 characters)? Enter it and your account will be reset.
- If you do not have one of these, you will need to enter a **temporary e-mail address**, which you have immediate access to, to continue the account recovery. The address does not have to be your own. If it is missing, then create a new account for this very purpose. After resetting the account, which means changing the password and more, it will be quarantined for a while (30 days). E-mail can be reached during the quarantine period by logging into your account (Select more options > View inbox)

- If you have two-step verification turned on for your account, the recovery form will not work. When you turn on two-step verification, we promise not to let anyone sign in without two forms of identification, no matter how much information they know about your account.

Open a locked account

The locking can be caused by unsuccessful password reset, failed login verification or questionable activity on account. Please note that it **might be possible** to use EMAIL even though the account is quarantined i.e. you are already logged in.

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/help/13956/microsoft-account-locked>

To unlock your account, you must enter a security code you receive via text message from Microsoft. **The phone number you use to receive this text message does not need to be associated with your account. It does not even need to be your own phone number. If your phone does not receive text messages, ask a friend or family member if you can use theirs.** Microsoft will not save this phone number.

If you see a "usage limit exceeded" error message when requesting a security code, this could mean the phone number has been **used too many times in a short period of time**, or that we've detected something suspicious about the phone number. **Then use a different number.**

Recover account – What does it mean.

When you reset your account, you will be given the opportunity to enter a new password to access your account. At the same time, the old verification information will be deleted, and you will need to enter a new (albeit temporary) email address that was not previously associated with the account. New reset code is generated, and two-step verification must be re-enabled. Once you re-enter your account, you can revert your old verification information.

Change password and / or security information

Sign into your account: <https://account.microsoft.com/account>

Change Password

Supplement your security information to receive a message or verification code from Microsoft: Email account, Mobile number, Fixed phone number.

Enable 2-step verification

Create an account recovery code (25 characters)

Recovery – a success story

Since I do not work for Microsoft, I can only report my own experiences. Some time ago I helped my son access his account (forgotten password) in the following way. We spoke over the phone during the process.

1. He did not have 2-step verification activated for the account. (I assume that was one reason he was helped by MS.)
2. Neither did he have any security information registered.
3. He had access to **his e-mail** through an open login **on his mobile**.
4. When logging into **his account** on a **computer** he chose: "Forgot my password"
5. Then "Has none of these options"
6. As an e-mail for receiving verification data during recovery process, he chose my e-mail address.
7. I immediately got a verification code from MS by e-mail, which I told him.
8. He entered the code together with personal information in a form. The important factor was, quite sure, that he could state some email contacts and EXACT content in the headline.
9. **The reply from MS came to my email within 30 minutes** with a link which I forwarded to his email address.
10. When the link was opened by him, a request for confirmation came to me.
11. When confirmed by me, he was able to enter a new password and entered his account directly and changed the security information.
12. The account was now recovered but quarantined for 30 days.
13. **The email on his mobile was still working, since it was not logged out. I guess it would have been possible to use email from logging in to his account**
14. **After the quarantine period he could access the account & e-mail on computer using his new password. He also had to reconnect the e-mail on mobile using the new password.**

A short plan

I would try these steps to reset the password and the account (if you have no security information)

1. Create a **new** MS e-mail account **just for this situation**, if you do not already have one that you have immediate access to.
2. Start to log in to your old account
<https://account.microsoft.com/account>
3. Choose the option "Forgot my password"
4. Then choose "Have none of these options"
5. You will be prompted for an e-mail for verification, then chose the one you just created.
6. You will get a code
7. Enter the code
8. Fill out the form, if asked for, with your personal information. The important factor is that you can state some email contacts and EXACT content in the headline of these e-mails. If you have access to your email use that to give the accurate data.
9. Wait for MS to answer
10. When the verification link arrives to the "verification account" (the one you created in step #1
11. Open it
12. Confirm the action request
13. Enter a new password
14. This hopefully takes you into your account so you can change security information