

Windows Update Error 0x80070643: What It Is and How to Fix It

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What happened

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When you're trying to keep your Windows 10 computer up-to-date, encountering an error can be frustrating. One such error that has been causing headaches for many users is the Windows Update Error 0x80070643. This error typically occurs when trying to download the Windows 10 KB5034441 update, which is an important security update released by Microsoft in January 2024. Let's dive into what this error means, why it happens, and how you can fix it.

Understanding the Error

What is Error 0x80070643?

Error 0x80070643 is a Windows Update error that appears when your computer tries to download and install the KB5034441 update. When this error occurs, you might see a message like this:

"There were some problems installing updates, but we'll try again later. If you keep seeing this and want to search the web or contact support for information, this may help: (0x80070643)."

Why is the KB5034441 Update Important?

The KB5034441 update is a crucial security fix for Windows 10 computers that use the Windows Recovery Environment (WinRE). This update addresses a security vulnerability that, if left unpatched, could allow attackers to bypass BitLocker encryption through WinRE. In simpler terms, it helps keep your computer safe from potential security threats.

The Root Cause of the Error

The Recovery Partition

The main reason for the 0x80070643 error is related to the Windows Recovery Environment (WinRE) partition on your computer. This partition is a special area on your hard drive that helps you recover your computer if something goes wrong with the main Windows installation.

Space Requirements

For the KB5034441 update to install correctly, your WinRE partition needs at least 250 MB of free space. If it doesn't have this much space available, you'll encounter the 0x80070643 error when trying to download the update.

Do You Need to Fix This Error?

Before we jump into fixing the error, it's important to know whether you actually need to address it:

1. If your computer has a Recovery partition, you should fix this error and install the update.
2. If your system doesn't have a Recovery partition, Microsoft says you can ignore this error and don't need to download the KB5034441 update.

Checking Your Recovery Partition

To find out if you have a Recovery partition and if it's working correctly:

1. Open Command Prompt as an administrator (right-click on the Start button and select "Windows Terminal (Admin)" or "Command Prompt (Admin)").
2. Type 'reagentc /info' and press Enter.
3. Look for "Windows RE status". If it says "Enabled", you have a working Recovery partition.

Fixing the Windows Update Error 0x80070643

If you've determined that you need to fix this error, here's a step-by-step guide to help you through the process. Remember, this involves using Command Prompt and making changes to your disk partitions, so proceed carefully.

Step 1: Prepare Your Computer

1. Save any open work and close all programs.
2. Make sure your computer is plugged in if it's a laptop to prevent any power loss during the process.

Step 2: Open Command Prompt as Administrator

1. Right-click on the Start button.
2. Select "Windows Terminal (Admin)" or "Command Prompt (Admin)".

Step 3: Disable the Recovery Partition

1. In the Command Prompt window, type 'reagentc /disable' and press Enter.
2. This temporarily disables the Recovery partition so we can make changes to it.

Step 4: Open Diskpart

1. Type 'diskpart' and press Enter.
2. This opens a new prompt that allows us to manage disk partitions.

Step 5: Identify Your Disks and Partitions

1. Type 'list disk' and press Enter to see all your disks.
2. Identify the disk where Windows is installed (usually Disk 0).
3. Type 'select disk 0' (or the appropriate number) and press Enter.
4. Type 'list partition' and press Enter to see all partitions on this disk.

Step 6: Resize the Main Partition

1. Identify your main Windows partition (usually the largest one).
2. Type 'select partition X' (replace X with the partition number) and press Enter.
3. Type 'shrink desired=250 minimum=250' and press Enter.
4. This frees up 250 MB of space that we'll use for the Recovery partition.

Step 7: Delete the Old Recovery Partition

1. Find the partition labeled as "Recovery".
2. Type 'select partition Y' (replace Y with the Recovery partition number) and press Enter.
3. Type 'delete partition override' and press Enter.

Step 8: Create a New Recovery Partition

This step differs depending on your disk partition style:

1. Scroll up in the Command Prompt window.
2. Look for an asterisk (*) in the GPT column next to your disk.
3. If there's an asterisk, your disk uses GPT style. If not, it uses MBR style.

For GPT disks:

1. Type 'create partition primary id=de94bba4-06d1-4d40-a16a-bfd50179d6ac' and press Enter.
2. Type 'gpt attributes =0x8000000000000001' and press Enter.

For MBR disks:

1. Type 'create partition primary id=27' and press Enter.

Step 9: Format the New Partition

1. Type 'format quick fs=ntfs label="Windows RE tools"' and press Enter.
2. This formats the new partition with the correct file system.

Step 10: Verify the New Partition

1. Type 'list vol' and press Enter.
2. Confirm that you see the new Recovery partition in the list.

Step 11: Exit Diskpart

1. Type 'exit' and press Enter to leave Diskpart.

Step 12: Re-enable the Recovery Partition

1. In the main Command Prompt window, type 'reagentc /enable' and press Enter.

Step 13: Verify the Recovery Partition

1. Type 'reagentc /info' and press Enter.
2. Confirm that you see "Enabled" next to "Windows RE status".

Step 14: Restart Your Computer

1. Close Command Prompt.
2. Restart your computer to apply all changes.

After the Fix

Once you've completed these steps and restarted your computer, try running Windows Update again. The error 0x80070643 should no longer appear, and you should be able to download and install the KB5034441 update successfully.

What If the Error Persists?

If you've followed all these steps and still encounter the error, don't worry. Here are a few additional things you can try:

1. Run the Windows Update Troubleshooter:
 - Go to Settings > Update & Security > Troubleshoot
 - Select "Windows Update" and run the troubleshooter
2. Reset Windows Update components:
 - Open Command Prompt as administrator
 - Run the following commands one by one: 'net stop wuauerv net stop cryptSvc net stop bits net stop msiserver'
 - Then run: 'ren C:\Windows\SoftwareDistribution SoftwareDistribution.old ren C:\Windows\System32\catroot2 catroot2.old'
 - Finally, restart the services: 'net start wuauerv net start cryptSvc net start bits net start msiserver'
3. Perform a clean boot:
 - Press Windows Key + R, type "msconfig" and press Enter
 - Go to the Services tab
 - Check "Hide all Microsoft services"
 - Click "Disable all"
 - Go to the Startup tab and click "Open Task Manager"
 - Disable all startup items
 - Restart your computer and try the update again

Preventing Future Update Errors

While you can't always prevent update errors, here are some tips to minimize their occurrence:

1. Keep your disk clean and maintain at least 20GB of free space.
2. Regularly run Disk Cleanup to remove unnecessary files.
3. Use a reliable antivirus program and keep it updated.
4. Avoid interrupting updates while they're in progress.
5. Ensure your internet connection is stable when downloading updates.

Wrapping Up

Dealing with Windows Update errors can be challenging, but with patience and the right steps, you can overcome them. The 0x80070643 error, while frustrating, is fixable by following the steps outlined in this article. Remember, keeping your Windows system updated is crucial for maintaining security and getting the best performance from your computer.

If you're ever unsure about making changes to your system, don't hesitate to seek help from a tech-savvy friend or a professional. Your computer's health and your data's safety are worth the extra care and attention.