

Safety statement

## **Remember to Flip the Switch**

Always, always, always remember to turn the power off before servicing anything. This should always be your first step. Do not even open the computer case unless the power is turned off. Many computers have a number of lights inside that serve certain functions so check to see that no lights are on. If any are still on then the power is probably not completely off.

## **Unplug for Extra Safety**

As a second precaution, it is wise to unplug the computer from the wall or power strip. If there was any doubt as to whether the computer was off before, it's settled now.

## **Avoid Capacitors**

Capacitors are miniature electronic components contained in many of the parts inside a PC. Capacitors can store electric charge for a short while after the power is turned off so it's a wise decision to wait a few minutes after pulling the plug before working on your PC.

## **Never Service the Non-Serviceable**

When you come across labels that say "No serviceable components inside" don't take it as a challenge or even a suggestion. This is a serious statement.

Some parts of a computer are just not meant to be repaired, even by most professional computer repair persons. You will usually see this warning on power supply units but you may also see them on monitors, hard drives, optical drives and other dangerous or highly sensitive components.

## **Electrostatic Discharge Precautions**

Static is a major enemy of computer components. Static can zap and ruin your CPU, memory or other components instantly. The safest way to avoid this problem is to work at a static-safe station or use a commercial grounding strap. Most people don't bother with special straps, but if you aren't going to wear one, make sure you ground yourself before working, and don't do obviously foolish things like walking on a carpet in socks while working. One easy way to ground yourself is to touch the exterior metal box of your computer's power supply (near the fan) before you unplug it.

Warning: If you are going to use a grounding strap, buy one, don't try to make your own by simply running a wire from your wrist or whatnot. Commercial grounding straps are specially designed to incorporate a large resistor that protects you in the event that you touch live power while grounded. Without it, you risk becoming the path of least resistance for that live power to ground, and you may be electrocuted. If you care enough to use a grounding strap, you should use a properly designed one.

In general, handle all components by the edges. If you avoid touching any pins, edges, chips, or anything else made of metal, you greatly decrease the chances that you will zap or break anything. Smaller components such as loose RAM chips and processors are at the greatest risk.

Whenever possible, leave static-sensitive devices in their original packaging. Transport circuit boards and peripherals in an anti-static metallized bag if you do not have the original packaging material. However, do not put this material inside your PC, or plug in a motherboard while it is sitting on top of one of these bags. They are anti-static because they are partially conductive; you don't want your motherboard shorted out by firing it up while several hundred pins from its components are touching a partially conductive material.

<http://www.pcguides.com/site/warnESD-c.html>

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