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Microsoft confirms you really, really don't need to 'safely remove' USB flash drives anymore

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You probably haven't needed to do so for a while

By [Sean Hollister](#) | [@StarFire2258](#) | Apr 8, 2019, 2:37pm EDT



Photo by Sean Hollister / The Verge

You know how every tech expert in your life told you how crucially important it was to *safely eject* a flash drive before ripping it out of your PC? Have you been that tech expert yourself?

Well, Microsoft is confirming once and for all that — in Windows 10 — it's no longer a thing you need to worry about. Windows 10 has a feature called “quick removal” that lets you yank a drive anytime (so long as you're not actively writing files to it), and it's now the default setting for each new drive you plug in as of Windows 10 version 1809, according to [Microsoft's own support guidance](#). Basically, “quick removal” keeps Windows from *continuously* trying to write to a flash drive, which could help in the event you disconnect it.

Technically, Microsoft flipped this switch back in October when version 1809 first started rolling out, so this won't be a revelation for every reader. It just so happens to be making the rounds now that the company's notifying IT

professionals that the update is being deployed more broadly. Plus, the company's had protections to keep your flash drives safe *since Windows 7*, according to my Microsoft-expert colleague Tom Warren.

But it's also true that Microsoft has been sending mixed messages about the need to safely remove drives for a while, and the operating system definitely still features a vestigial "Safely Remove Hardware and Eject Media" feature. (I just checked my System Tray, and it's totally still there.)

So now, the process of safely ejecting a flash drive can be one of those things you tell your kids about, one of those "Do you remember this thing that olds used to do?", like adjusting the tracking on a VHS tape or screaming at your family not to pick up the telephone while you're downloading a new webpage.

Update, 6:12 PM ET: *Clarified that you probably still don't want to yank a USB thumb drive if you're in the middle of writing files to it.*