[VSS writers](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb968827.aspx) are application-specific components for Microsoft's [Volume Shadow Copy Service](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc785914.aspx), which ensure the consistency of application data when a shadow copy is created. That's quite useful for creating consistent backups of a system. However, some of these writers go into error states more or less frequently. And Microsoft did not deem it necessary to document how to reset writers without rebooting the entire system (or at least I didn't manage to find that piece of information).

Since this burnt me once too often, I started compiling a list of VSS writers and the services that need to be restarted to reset each of them. Some are rather obvious, others (*System Writer* for instance) not so much.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VSS Writer** | **Service Name** | **Service Display Name** |
| [ADAM (*<instance\_name>*) Writer](https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/desktop/bb968827.aspx#active_directory_lightweight_directory_services__lds__vss_writer) | ADAM\_*<instance\_name>* | *<instance\_name>* |
| ASR Writer | VSS | Volume Shadow Copy |
| BITS Writer | BITS | Background Intelligent Transfer Service |
| Certificate Authority | CertSvc | Active Directory Certificate Services |
| COM+ REGDB Writer | VSS | Volume Shadow Copy |
| Dedup Writer | ddpvssvc | Data Deduplication Volume Shadow Copy Service |
| DFS Replication service writer | DFSR | DFS Replication |
| DHCP Jet Writer | DHCPServer | DHCP Server |
| FRS Writer | NtFrs | File Replication |
| FSRM writer | srmsvc | File Server Resource Manager |
| IIS Config Writer | AppHostSvc | Application Host Helper Service |
| IIS Metabase Writer | IISADMIN | IIS Admin Service |
| [Microsoft Exchange Replica Writer](http://blogs.technet.com/b/timmcmic/archive/2012/03/11/exchange-and-vss-my-exchange-writer-is-in-a-failed-retryable-state.aspx) | MSExchangeRepl | Microsoft Exchange Replication Service |
| Microsoft Exchange Writer | MSExchangeIS | Microsoft Exchange Information Store |
| Microsoft Hyper-V VSS Writer | vmms | Hyper-V Virtual Machine Management |
| [MSMQ Writer (MSMQ)](https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb968827.aspx#microsoft_message_queuing__msmq__writer) | MSMQ | Message Queuing |
| MSSearch Service Writer | WSearch | Windows Search |
| NPS VSS Writer | EventSystem | COM+ Event System |
| NTDS | NTDS | Active Directory Domain Services |
| OSearch VSS Writer | OSearch | Office SharePoint Server Search |
| OSearch14 VSS Writer | OSearch14 | SharePoint Server Search 14 |
| OSearch15 VSS Writer | OSearch15 | SharePoint Server Search 15 |
| Registry Writer | VSS | Volume Shadow Copy |
| Shadow Copy Optimization Writer | VSS | Volume Shadow Copy |
| SharePoint Services Writer | SPWriter | Windows SharePoint Services VSS Writer |
| SMS Writer | SMS\_SITE\_VSS\_WRITER | SMS\_SITE\_VSS\_WRITER |
| SPSearch VSS Writer | SPSearch | Windows SharePoint Services Search |
| SPSearch4 VSS Writer | SPSearch4 | SharePoint Foundation Search V4 |
| SqlServerWriter | SQLWriter | SQL Server VSS Writer |
| System Writer | CryptSvc | Cryptographic Services |
| TermServLicensing | TermServLicensing | Remote Desktop Licensing |
| WDS VSS Writer | WDSServer | Windows Deployment Services Server |
| WIDWriter | WIDWriter | Windows Internal Database VSS Writer |
| WINS Jet Writer | WINS | Windows Internet Name Service (WINS) |
| WMI Writer | Winmgmt | Windows Management Instrumentation |

This list is far from complete. It merely contains those writers I already had to deal with and some contributions from fellow administrators.

You can use PowerShell for listing failed writers:

& vssadmin list writers | Select-String -Context 0,4 '^writer name:' | ? {

$\_.Context.PostContext[2].Trim() -ne "state: [1] stable" -or

$\_.Context.PostContext[3].Trim() -ne "last error: no error"

}

or the state of a particular writer:

$name = [Regex]::Escape('writer name')

& vssadmin list writers | Select-String -Context 0,4 "^writer name: .\*$name"