How to Recover Password on a Cisco 2950/2960 Switch?

How to recovery your password on a [Cisco 2950](#) or a [Cisco 2960 switch](#)? Again these instructions assume you have console and physical access to the device. Also just as a FYI, the up arrow doesn't show your last command when you are in the following screens.

If you hit the up arrow it will move your cursor up the screen. Without any further ado:
1. Unplug the switch so that it is powered off.

2. While holding the "mode" button down for 5 seconds, plug the switch back in so that the device power's up.

3. The SYST light switch will blink green/amber and you will see the boot screen on the console.

```
The system has been interrupted prior to initializing the
flash filesystem.  The following commands will initialize
the flash filesystem, and finish loading the operating
system software:

    flash_init
    load_helper
    boot

switch:
```

4. Type "flash_init"; this will initialize the flash in the switch so you can access its file system.

5. Type "load_helper".

6. Type "dir flash:" to display the contents of flash. Look for the file named config.text, this is the start-up config.

```
switch: dir flash:
Directory of flash:/

2     -rwx  1655       <date>            config.text
3     -rwx  5          <date>            private-config.text
4     -rwx  676        <date>            vlan.dat
5     -rwx  269        <date>            env_vars
7     -rwx  110        <date>            info
8     -rwx  2958970    <date>            c2950-i6q412-mz.121-14.EA1a.bin
9     drwx  2304       <date>            html
84    -rwx  110        <date>            info.ver

2479104 bytes available (5262336 bytes used)
```

7. Rename the config file so that it won't load. The extension of the file can simply be changed from config.text to config.old. Type the following command as "rename flash:/config.text flash:/config.old".

```
Directory of flash://

2     -rwx  1655       <date>            config.text
3     -rwx  5          <date>            private-config.text
4     -rwx  676        <date>            vlan.dat
5     -rwx  269        <date>            env_vars
7     -rwx  110        <date>            info
8     -rwx  2958970    <date>            c2950-i6q412-mz.121-14.EA1a.bin
9     drwx  2304       <date>            html
84    -rwx  110        <date>            info.ver

2479104 bytes available (5262336 bytes used)
switch: rename flash:/config.text flash:/config.old
switch:
```

8. Reboot the device by typing "reset". Type "y" for yest and press enter.

```
switch: reset
Are you sure you want to reset the system (y/n)?y
```

9. The switch will reboot and reload the IOS. If everything was done correctly the "System Configuration Dialog" should come up (this happens because the switch didn't find a start-up configuration in the flash.) Type *"n" to skip this part.*

10. Once at the user EXEC mode type "enable" to get into the privilege EXEC mode.

11. Once in the privilege EXEC mode. Type "dir flash:" to review your flash contents you will see the file that we previously name config.old. You will need to change that back to config.text if you want to retrieve youryour original settings. **If you you don't want retrieve your original settings you can simply type "copy run start" and the switch will create a new config.text file.**

12. Type "rename flash:/config.old flash:/config.text". After you press enter, another line will ask you to confirm the file name. Press enter again.

```
Switch#rename flash:/config.old flash:/config.text
Destination filename [config.text]?
Switch#
```

13. Type "dir flash:" again to confirm that you changed the file back to config.text.

14.Next at the privilege EXEC level type "copy config.text run" to load back the startup config into the running configuration. Then type "show run" to verify your old configuration is back in RAM.

```
Switch#copy config.text run
Destination filename [running-config]?
1655 bytes copied in 1.624 secs (1019 bytes/sec)
```

15. While in the privilege EXEC mode, Go to the global configuration mode by typing "conf t".

```
Switch_2950-2#conf t
Enter configuration commands, one per line.  End with CNTL/Z.
Switch_2950-2(config)#
```

16. Once in the Global Configuration mode you can change your enable password/secret. Also don't forget to change any other necessary passwords.

17. After you have updated the switch/Cisco switch with your new passwords, exit out of global configuration mode, and you will be back in privilege EXEC mode. Type *"copy run start"* (**THIS IS CRITICAL BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T YOUR START-UP CONFIGURATION FILE WILL NOT BE UPDATED.**)

```
Switch_2950-2#copy run start
Destination filename [startup-config]?
Building configuration...
[OK]
Switch_2950-2#
```