"Windows cannot access the specified device, path, or file" error when you try to install, update or start a program or file

Applies to: Windows 7 EnterpriseWindows 7 Home BasicWindows 7 Home Premium More

Symptoms

When you try to install, update or start a program or a file, you receive the following error message:
Error: Windows cannot access the specified device, path, or file. You may not have the appropriate permission to access the item

Resolution

To resolve this issue, follow the steps in the methods below starting with method 1, if that method does not resolve the issue continue to the next method.

**Method 1: Check the permission of the file or folder**
Note Make sure you are an Administrator or you are part of the Domain Admins group if you are in a domain.

Permissions are rules associated with files that determine if you can access the file and what you can do with it. To check the permission of the file or folder, follow these steps:

1. Right-click the file or folder, and then select Properties.
2. Select the Security tab.
3. Under Group or User names, click your name to see the permissions you have. (The screen shot for this step is listed below).
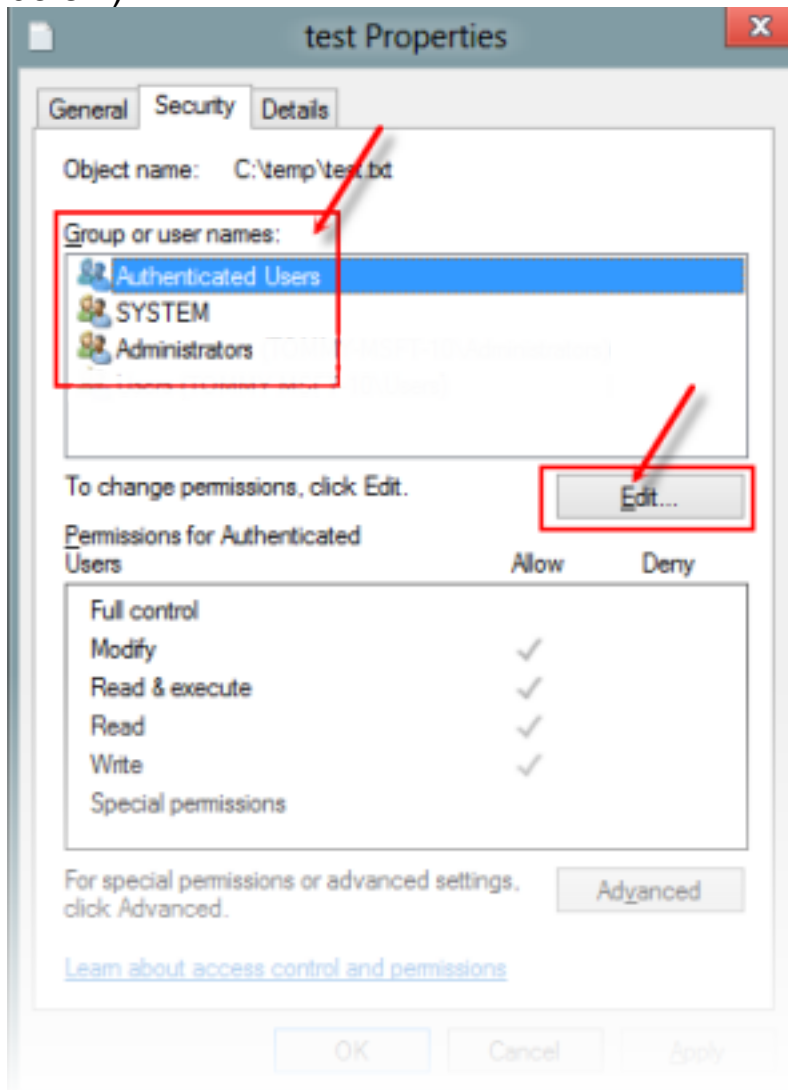

4.
5. Select Edit, and then select to check the check boxes for the permissions that you need, and then select OK. (The screen shot for this step is listed below).

6.
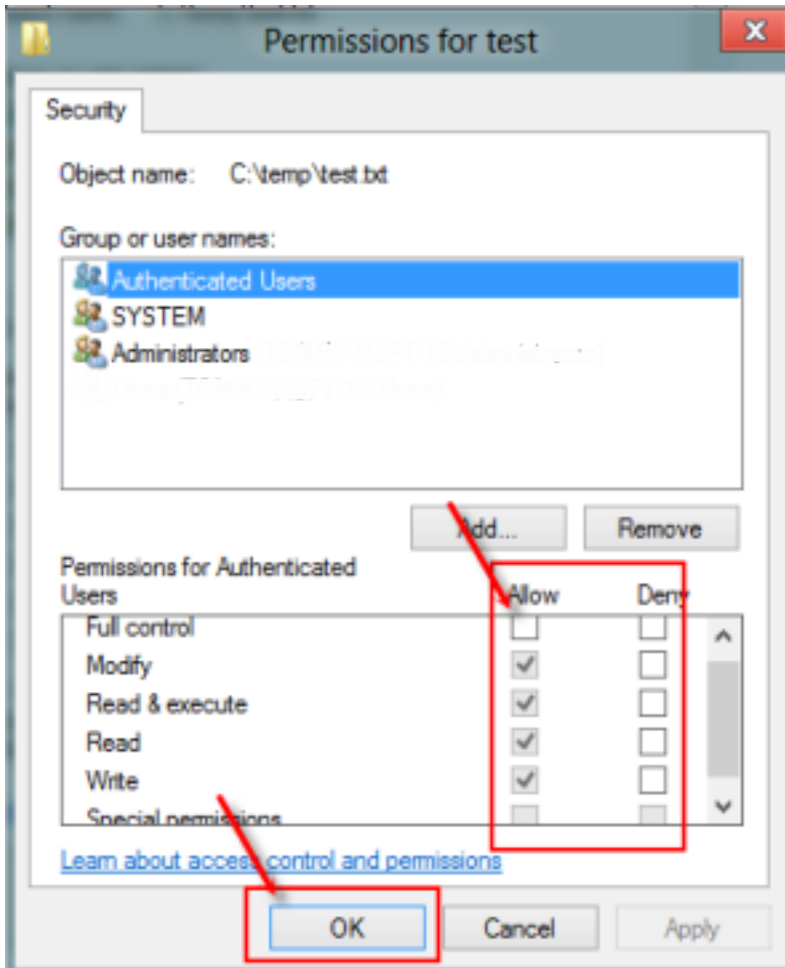
For more information on permissions, see What are permissions?

Method 2: Check the file location

You might get this error if the shortcut or installation is attempting to access a location that is not currently available such as a networked or a removable drive. Check the path of the file that Windows cannot access and make sure that the location is accessible. (The screen shot for this step is listed below).
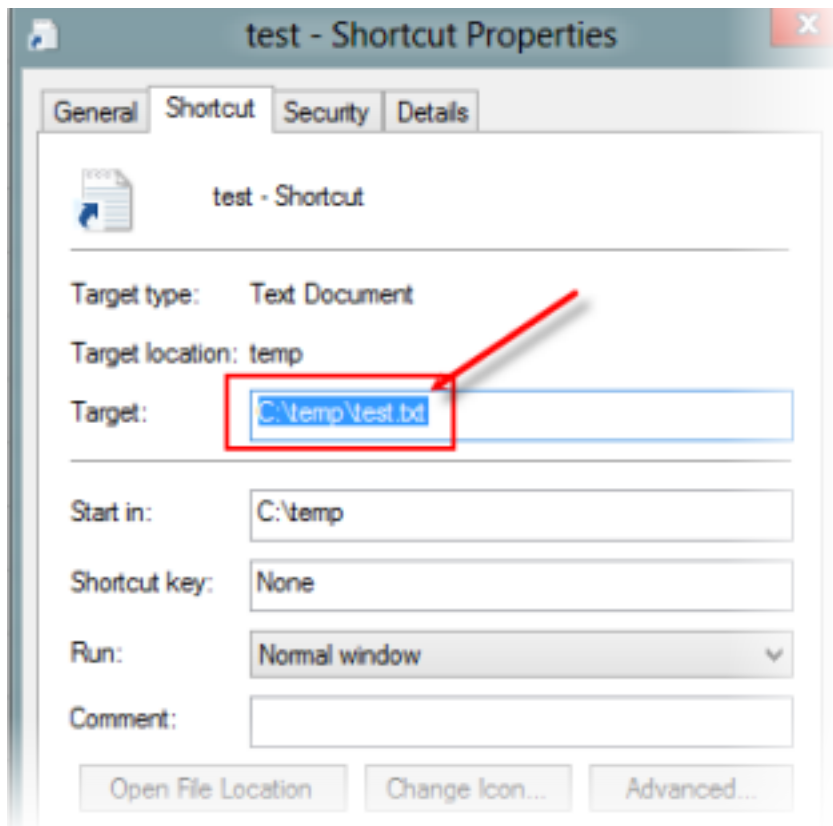
Method 3: Make sure that the file has not been moved or deleted

You can also receive this error if the file has been moved or deleted. Browse to the location of the file and make sure the file is in that location.

Method 4: Recreate the shortcut to check for corruption

You can also receive this error if the shortcut or other file type has become corrupt. You can check for corruption in shortcuts by recreating the shortcut. To do this, see Create or delete a shortcut.

If an application or other type of file is corrupt it may be necessary to repair the application to resolve the issue.

Method 5: Unblock the file

In some cases the file may be blocked by Windows. Check the properties of the file, there may be a note saying This file came from another computer and might be blocked to help protect this computer To check for and unblock the file, follow these steps:

1. Right-click the blocked file and then select Properties.

2. In the General tab, select Unblock if the option is available.

Method 6: Check to see if your antivirus software is blocking the file

You can check to see if your antivirus software is blocking a file by temporarily disabling it, and then trying to open the file. If you have to temporarily disable your antivirus software, you should re-enable it as soon as you are done. If you're connected to the Internet while your antivirus software is disabled, your PC is vulnerable to attacks.

Important: Disabling your antivirus software or changing the settings may make your PC vulnerable to viral, fraudulent, or malicious attacks. Microsoft does not recommend that you disable your antivirus software or change the settings. If you have to temporarily disable your antivirus software, you should re-enable it as soon as you are done. Use this workaround at your own risk. To temporarily disable your antivirus software, see Disable antivirus software

Cause

This issue can occur if any of the following scenarios exist on your PC.
- You do not have permissions to the file or the file location.
- The file is on a location that is not currently accessible like a network location or an external drive that is not currently connected to the PC.
- The file has been moved or deleted.
- The file or shortcut is corrupt.
- The file may be blocked by Windows.
- Your antivirus software may be blocking the file.

More Information

For more information about errors accessing files or folders in Windows, see "Access Denied" or other errors when accessing or working with files and folders in Windows