

How To Fix Your Xbox 360 Console Yourself In Under One Hour!

Please note this process involves dismantling your 360, which will void any and all warranties you may or may not have. Our warranty was up, and had not purchased an extended warranty.

Dec. 31, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- 3 Reasons for the Red Light Error - And how you can prevent it:

#1: Overheating!

Sound obvious?

Well, if you think about it your 360 has the same (if not a bit better!) components inside as a high end gaming PC. The only difference is it is crammed into a space that is much smaller! So the first thing that causes the 3 red lights problem is overheating and there are a number of ways you can prevent this. Firstly, if you keep your Xbox inside a display cabinet with closed doors this is a big NO, NO!

The 360 will almost definatly get far too hot if it cannot pump out all the hot air so make sure you keep the display cabinet doors open if this is the case, or better still take the Xbox out the display case altogether!

#2 : The second reason an Xbox gets the 3 red lights is down to the Graphics Processor Unit or GPU. It is also similar to the overheating problem as the 3 red lights is due to the GPU taking too much heat! You see in modern computers you have a fan and that pumps out all the heat from the CPU because if it gets to hot it is programmed to shut off.

Well, your 360 is exactly the same and if the GPU or the chips become too hot they will shut off resulting in a screen freeze. If you then switch off the Xbox and turn it back on all will be well, right until the chip gets hot again and then you will get another screen freeze! The reason the 3 red lights appears is when this happens too many times and the 360 assumes there is a fault or a hardware error with the console!

#3: Another reason your console can get the dreaded 3 red lights is to do with the power brick. You see, when the problem occurs a commonly overlooked component is the power brick. A good way you can stop the power brick from overheating (yes, it's the overheating problem again!) is to keep it up from the floor. You are best to rest the power brick on top of a box as this will allow the brick to breath on all sides!

This can help prevent the freezes and stop the 3 red lights from ever happening!

If you still have not got your 3 red lights fixed then get the full guide with colour pictues and full support by clicking the link at the end after trying our free repair:

This FIX applies to your Xbox 360 suffering from the "three red lights of death," or red lights from three o'clock to twelve o'clock around the power button. This means "General Hardware Failure" and does not point to any one specific item.

My XBox 360 would boot into the dashboard without any trouble, but once you started a game, it would only run a few seconds. I suspected the dashboard would not give the system much of a workout, but games would, so a heat problem was an avenue to be explored.

There are ways to get a more specific trouble code out of the XBox 360 when this happens. I'm not going to get into that now, but this link will tell you how to get the additional code and how to interpret that.

I was unable get the secondary error code because my XBox 360's troubles were very erratic. Sometimes it would let me play for a few minutes and then freeze up. Sometimes it wouldn't even get past the intro screen during bootup without freezing. Sometimes it wouldn't boot at all and give me the three red lights, but not every time.

I called MS support only for them to tell me for a low fee of \$130 they would fix it for me. Or I could use the extended warranty I might have purchased when I bought the unit. I obtained mine from Ebay, so I'm out of luck there. I decided to dismantle my XBox 360 and see what I could find.

I discovered the GPU chip on my XBox 360 possibly had some sort of thermal interface material (TIM) failure. I compared mine to how another one looked over at Anandtech and discovered mine was indeed different. Mine had some sort of metallic silver cover over the heatsink paste on the heatsink, and very little if any paste actually came into contact with the GPU die itself.

Note: Some TIMs are designed to have a cover over the paste. I personally have never seen one, so at least to me they are rare. (I've been building PCs since 1996.) Your experience may vary. What I found on my XBox 360's GPU could actually be a fully functional TIM in theory, but mine seemed to be experiencing overheating issues.

My GPU has a mirror finish; it is super clean. Anandtech's has thermal paste smeared all over it. That is what I was expecting to find in mine. Here's a picture of what I believe to be the source of my XBox 360's problems. The silver pad covering the thermal paste on the GPU's heatsink.

Another interesting fact is that when I pulled off the CPU heatsink, it looks like Anandtech's GPU. Thermal paste applied directly to the die itself.

And the CPU's heatsink. Notice it does not have the same silver pad covering the thermal paste.

With the troubleshooting gears turning in my head, it made sense that the GPU might be overheating. I thought I would replace the TIM with some Arctic Silver, and see what happens.

So far, this repair has worked for my XBox 360. I've been racking up as much play time as possible, so far 2+ hours, and no lockups whatsoever. This is the most it has let me play in two weeks. Before, I couldn't play 2 minutes without it locking up, much less an hour.

Please consider your options before opening your XBox 360 up. If you feel like you are pretty handy fixing computers, handling sensitive hardware, and working with basic tools, you should be fine.

Now let's get down to business.

Tools you'll need:

A thin hex head L-shaped wrench OR a probe tool of some sort.

1 T-8 Torx screwdriver

1 T-10 Torx screwdriver

Plastic scraper tool or pocket knife

Arctic Silver or other brand high quality heat sink paste

1 Brillo steel wool pad

Cleaning supplies

I'm not going to detail how to get the 360 apart, you can follow instructions on how to do that [HERE](#). You'll need to get the motherboard out of the metal cage, and pop off the heatsinks from both the CPU and GPU.

Once you get the GPU heatsink removed, look at the thermal pad on the bottom of it. Does it have a rectangular metallic silver cover on it? This is how mine looked. I suspect this thermal pad is insufficient for the amount of heat generated by the GPU.

NOTE: If yours DOES NOT have this metallic silver cover, your hardware faults might lie somewhere else. However, since you're this far already, keep going. Better cooling for your 360 would never hurt.

Scrape off the thermal pad from both the aluminum GPU heatsink and the copper CPU heatsink. I used a Brillo steel wool pad for this, and it worked great. It even polished the bottom of the heatsinks a little bit. If you get the heatsinks wet, make sure you dry them thoroughly before reinstalling.

Now clean the remaining thermal paste from the GPU and CPU. My CPU had the most paste on it, so it took the longest. I used small pieces of a paper towel slightly dampened with 409 and it worked fair. You may have a better method of removing thermal paste from a CPU, so use your judgement here.

Once clean, apply your thermal paste to the CPU and GPU dies. Don't apply too much, just enough to cover the entire die.

Now reinstall the heatsinks, put the 360 back together, and enjoy. Thats it, see how easy that is?

In some cases this is not enough to resolve the problem. If you are that unfortunate there is only one guide we recommend using :<http://www.bestplaceonthenet.com/xbox360fix>

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