

1. Security



Security is crucial if you connect your computer to the Internet. An adequate security system will reduce the risk of contracting *viruses* and prevent harmful software from being installed onto your computer. A virus is a program that attempts to spread from one computer to another causing damage to the computer (by deleting or damaging data), or by simply being a nuisance (by displaying unwanted messages or changing the information that is displayed on the screen).

A computer that is contaminated by viruses can cause a lot of irritation. It will not only annoy you, but may also annoy other people as well. If your computer contains a virus, it can also contaminate other computers. You may not notice this, because it can happen while you are sending an e-mail message, or a chat message. Or if you are sharing files from a CD, DVD, Blu-ray disk, or a USB stick. As a computer user you are responsible for your own computer's security. To protect your computer, you can use a *firewall* and an updated *antivirus program*. You should also make sure that your computer is regularly scanned for viruses or other harmful software.

Windows offers a useful security tool: the *Action Center (Windows 7)* or the *Security Center (Windows Vista and Windows XP)*. You can use this tool to check your computer's security settings for *Windows* and modify them, if necessary.

In order to be protected from viruses and unwanted software, such as spyware, you will need to install an antivirus program. *Microsoft Security Essentials* is just one of the many antivirus programs that are available today. In this chapter you will learn how to download and install the free *Microsoft Security Essentials* program.

In the last part of this chapter we will explain how to safeguard your privacy and how to use the Internet in a more secure manner when using programs such as *Internet Explorer*, *Windows Live Mail* or *Outlook Express*.

In this chapter you will learn how to:

- use the *Action Center* or the *Security Center*;
- set up a firewall;
- download and install *Microsoft Security Essentials*;
- scan for viruses;
- change the settings for *Microsoft Security Essentials*;
- modify the security and privacy settings in *Internet Explorer*;
- prevent phishing;
- set the *SmartScreen* filter;
- set the pop-up blocker;
- manage add-ons;
- filter unwanted e-mail messages.

 **Please note:**

To perform the actions described in this chapter, you will need to use the administrator's account (be logged in as administrator). If you cannot use this account, you will not be able to change several settings. When this happens, *Windows* will display a warning message. In such a case you can just read through the relevant section.

 **Please note:**

The screen shots in this chapter have been made in *Internet Explorer 9*. If any of the operations are different in *Internet Explorer 8*, they will also be explained.

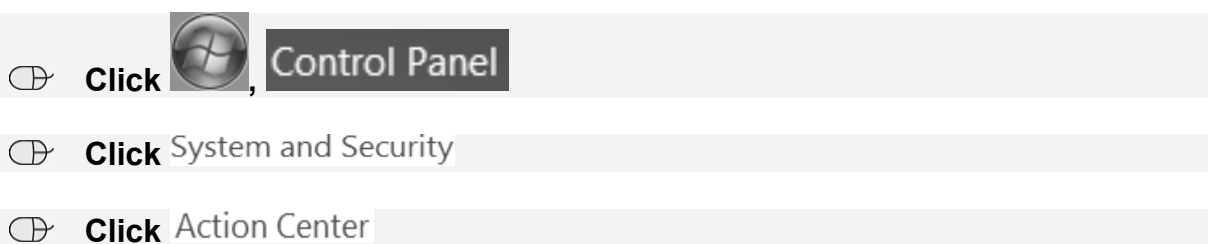
 **Please note:**

In several sections, various *Windows* editions will be discussed simultaneously. This means the screen shots in this book may differ from what you actually see on your own computer.

1.1 The Action Center in Windows 7

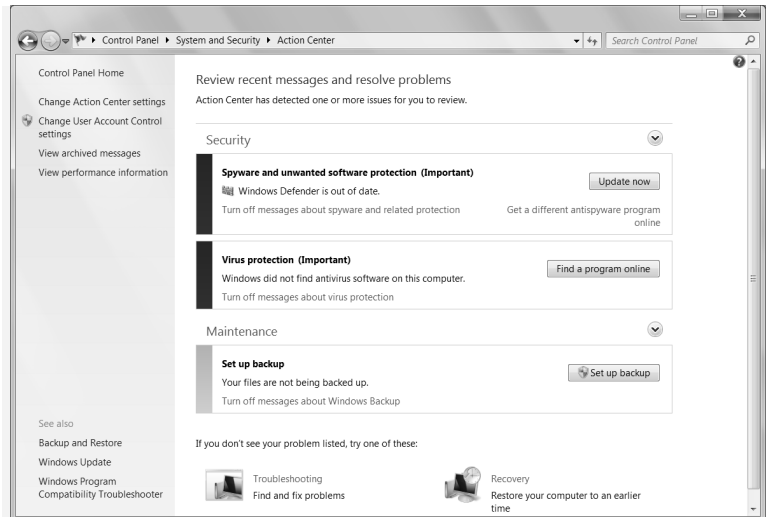
The *Windows 7 Action Center* checks the security settings for your computer and installs the automatic *Windows* updates, provided you have enabled the *Automatic Updating* function. In the *Action Center* you can also check your computer's maintenance status and update it as needed as well as solve various other computer problems.

This is how you open the *Action Center*:



In the *Action Center* you can view the status of the main components of your computer's security system, such as:

- *Firewall*
- *Automatic updates*
- *Protection from unwanted software*
- *Other security settings*



You will be able to see at a glance if there are any problems occurring on your computer and what these problems are about. The problems will be indicated by a red or yellow color. A red color indicates a major problem which will need to be solved as soon as possible, for instance installing new antivirus software. A yellow color indicates a maintenance task that you might need to perform, such as scanning the computer for spyware.


Please note: your computer's settings may differ from the settings in this example.

 **Close the *Action Center*** 

 **Tip**
View problems on the taskbar

In *Windows 7*, you can check the taskbar for maintenance or security problems on your computer:

To the right of the taskbar you will see an icon with a flag

and a red cross . This means a problem has been detected:

 **Point the mouse to**




A small pop-up message will appear with a brief summary of the problems:

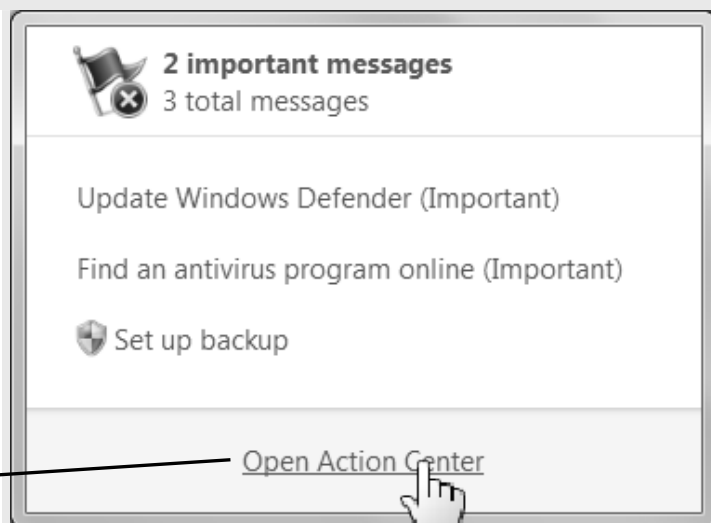
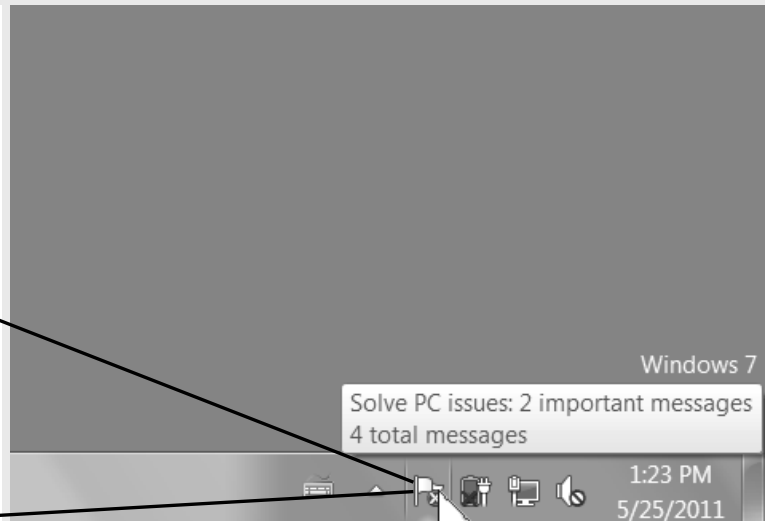
 **Click**



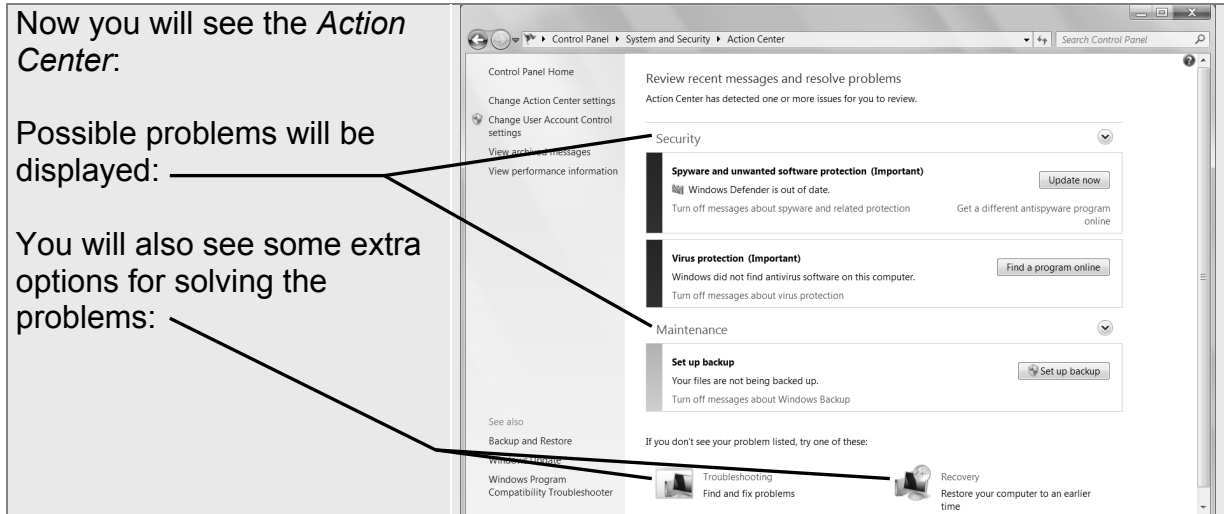
You will see a separate window with a more extensive description of the problems:

Here you can click a link which will lead you directly to a window where your problem can be solved:

 **Click**
Open Action Center



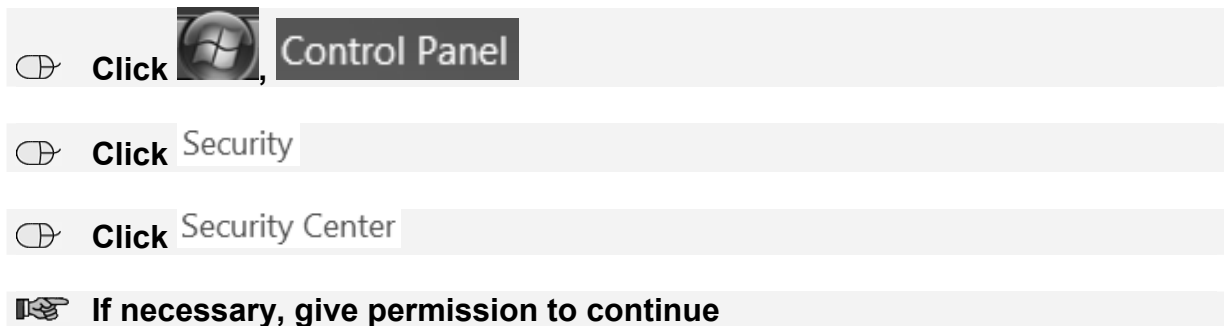
- Continue on the next page -



1.2 The Security Center in Windows Vista

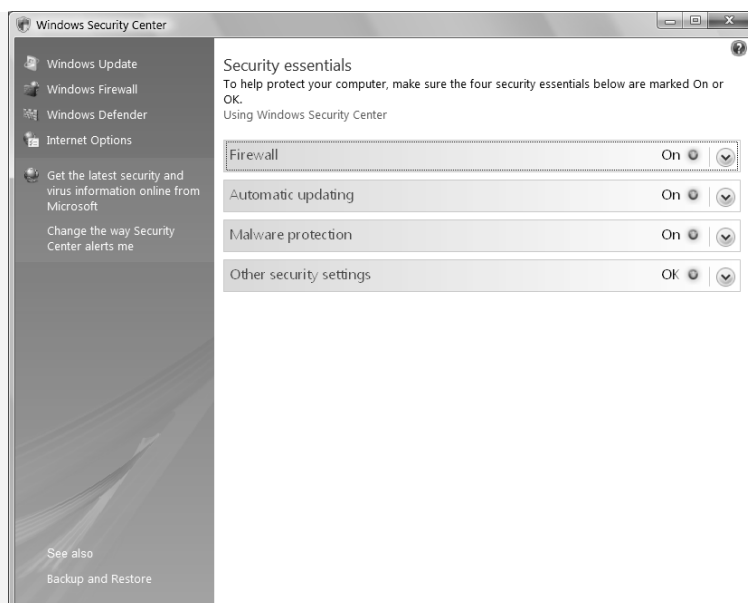
The *Windows Vista Security Center* checks the security settings for your computer and installs the automatic *Windows* updates provided you have enabled the *Automatic Updating* function.

This is how you open the *Security Center*:



In the *Security Center* you can view the status of the main components of your computer's security system, such as:

- *Firewall*
- *Automatic updates*
- *Protection from unwanted software*
- *Other security settings*



You will be able to see at a glance if there are any current computer problems. The problems are indicated by a red color. A red color means that the problem needs to be solved as soon as possible, for instance, by installing antivirus software.

Please note: your computer's settings may differ from the settings in this example.

 **Close the windows** 



Tip

Opening the Security Center

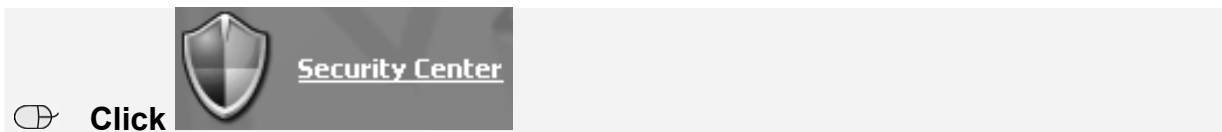
You can also open the *Security Center* from the taskbar:



1.3 The Security Center in Windows XP

The *Windows XP Security Center* checks your computer's security settings and installs the automatic *Windows* updates provided you have enabled the *Automatic Updating* function.

This is how you open the *Security Center*:



In the *Security Center* you can view the status of the main components of your computer's security system:

- *Firewall*
- *Automatic updates*
- *Other security settings*



1.4 Setting Up the Windows Firewall in Windows 7

A *firewall* is a software or hardware component that regulates the ingoing and outgoing data traffic between your computer and the Internet and/or other networks. Depending on your firewall's settings, traffic is either blocked or allowed.

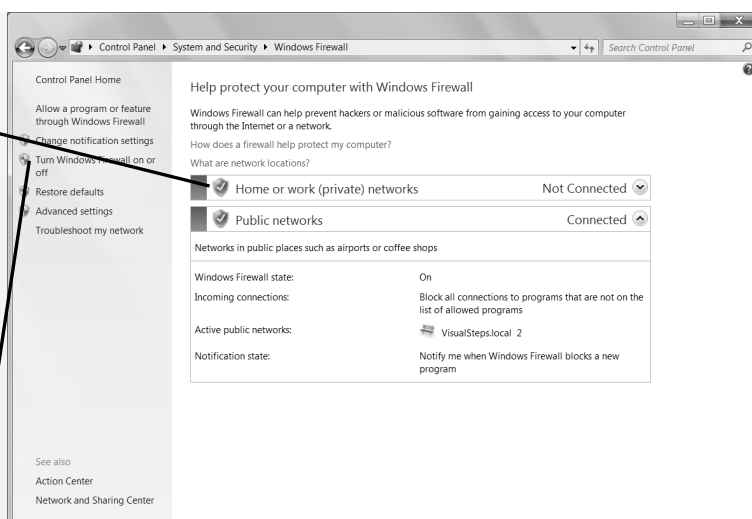
The word 'firewall' sounds a lot safer than it is. A firewall will not protect your computer from viruses. If the firewall allows your e-mail program to connect to the Internet, it is still possible to receive an e-mail message containing an attachment with a virus in it. The firewall does not check the contents of the data traffic.



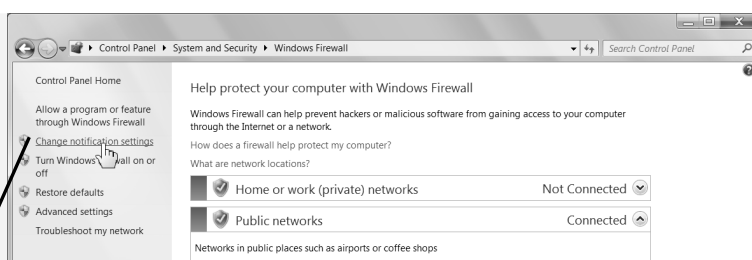
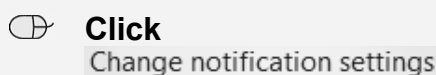
The green icon  indicates that the *Windows Firewall* has been enabled:

You may have a different firewall installed on your computer. In that case you will need to disable *Windows Firewall* by clicking the **Turn Windows Firewall on or off** link:

Using two different firewalls at once will cause system conflicts.



You can also change the *Windows Firewall* settings:



You will see the *Customize settings* window:

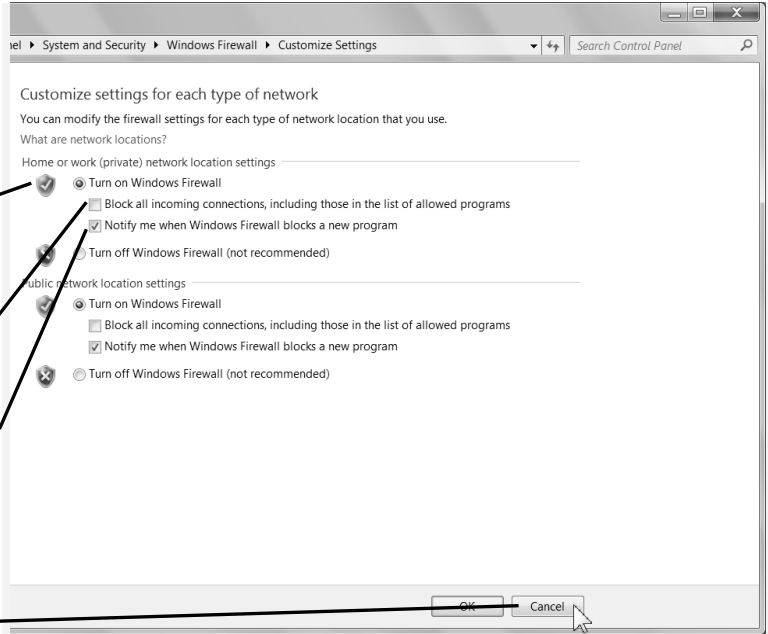
You can enable a firewall for various network types:

Block all programs, for instance for a public wireless network:

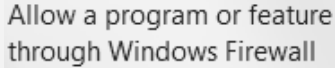
Display a message for each new program:

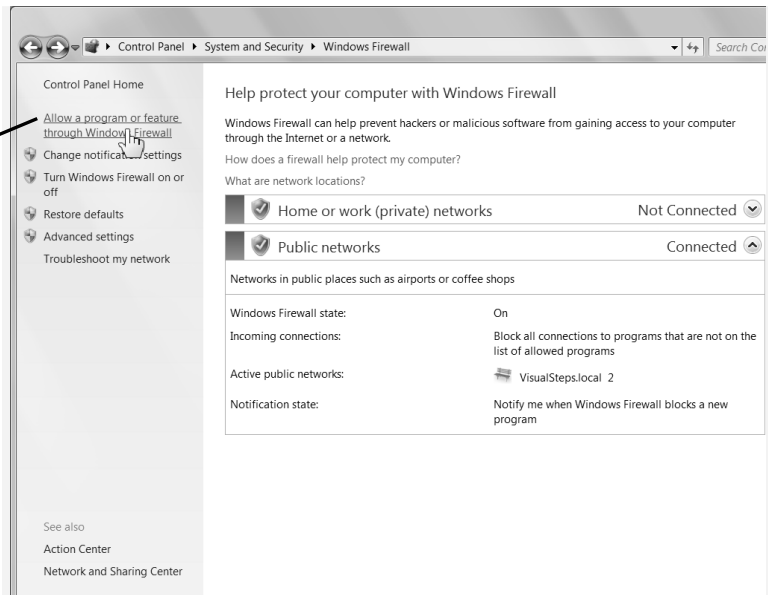
Usually, the default settings will suffice.

Click 



If you are using a program that needs to receive data from the Internet or from a network, the firewall will ask you to allow the connection. You can modify the settings in this window:

Click 



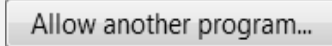
For each connection that is allowed, an exception will be added to this list:

You can use the



button,

and then the



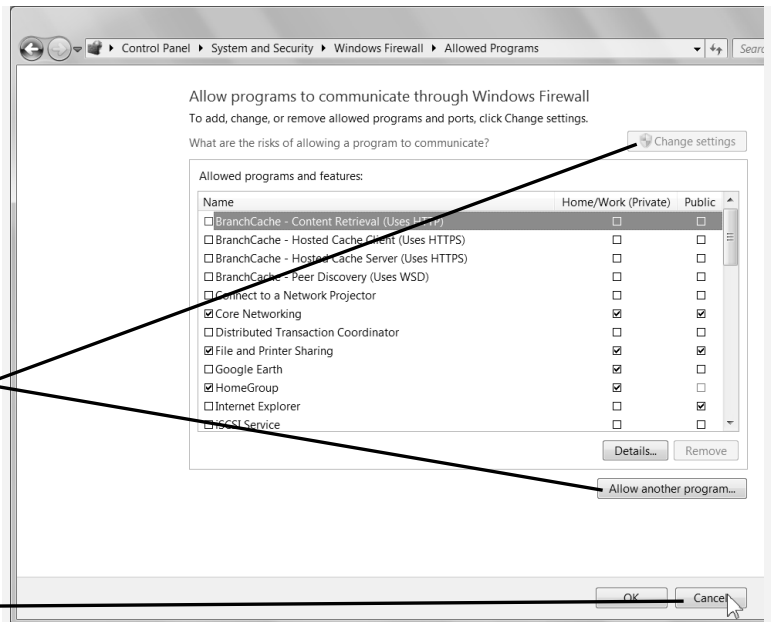
button, to directly add programs:

For now, you will not need to change these settings:



Click

Cancel



Close the windows