

BIOS Security

IN THIS GUIDE

Your BIOS may well be protected by a password to prevent unauthorised changes to the bios settings. Some companies apply passwords during manufacturing for safety and security reasons. If you have forgot or were not told your password, making changes to the bios will be impossible. This guide schedules some common bios passwords which you can use to enter the bios. Other useful guides relating to the bios include 02_001 Introduction to the BIOS, 02_003 BIOS Limitations and 02_007 BIOS Explained.

File: 02_002 BIOS security

Rev: 4.0 Essential reading

PDF version (43kb)

Did you forget your BIOS password?

There are several ways to bypass the BIOS security. Below you will find an overview of these methods. It depends on your system or mainboard and your BIOS, what method will be appropriate for your situation.

Clear the CMOS RAM

The first method to clear the CMOS RAM is to remove the battery on the mainboard. The battery should be removed for some 30 to 40 minutes. In the worst case you will have to desolder the battery. If the battery is a NiCad type battery, there is no need to remove the battery. Instead, you can connect a 39 Ohm resistor in parallel over the battery. Leave the resistor connected for about half an hour. Do not use this method on Lithium batteries, because these are non-rechargeable, and have to be removed from the mainboard leaving the charge intact.

Another method is to use the CMOS Selector, a 2- or 3-pin jumper on the mainboard. Consult your mainboard manual on the correct jumper setting to clear the CMOS. If your system is provided with a MR BIOS, the CMOS Selector is not needed and the Mono/Color Selector on the mainboard can be used for this purpose. The Mono setting of the jumper is used as a master-override.

Find and use a master-password

Ever since BIOS security has been added to BIOS, the BIOS manufacturers have provided their BIOS with a master-password. In known cases this master-password has been changed by the mainboard manufacturer or system integrator. In case of an AMI or Award BIOS you can use a configuration utility, that these manufacturers have provided for their OEMs, AMIBCP and ModBin respectively. Although these packages aren't available to the public, you may find these programs on several FTP servers.

Note: You will not be able to use the above mentioned software, if your system has been protected by a BIOS password, only if the BIOS Setup has been protected. In the latter case you will have to try to use a master-password from the list, and if that doesn't work you will have to rely on one of the hardware-options.

Other hardware options

Another way could be to remove the hard disk(s) or floppy drive from the system (just disconnect the data cable), add or remove memory modules. This may also force you to go into BIOS Setup and may in some cases reset the password.

Other software options

Some computers have some kind of backdoor into a CMOS Editor. Go into the Config or System Information menu and try the key combination <Ctrl><D>. If this doesn't work try the other menus, as well as other key combinations.

Passwords

The following table provides an overview of known default master-passwords.

BIOS Manufacturer	Passwords
Advanced Integration	Advance
AMI BIOS	589589 - A.M.I. - aammii - AM - AMI - AMI_SW AMI!SW - AMI?SW - AMI.KEY - ami.key - ami.kez AMI~ - AMIAMI - AMIDECOD - AMIPSWD - amipswd AMISSETUP - bios310 - BIOSPASS - CMOSPWD helgaßs - HEWITT RAND - KILLCMOS
Amptron	Polrty
AST	SnuFG5
Award BIOS	?award - 01322222 - 13222222 - 1EAAh - 256256 589589 - 589721 - admin - alfarome - aLLy - aPAf award - award_? - award.sw - award sw - award_ps AWARD_PW - AWARD_SW - AWARD SW - awkward BIOS - bios* - biosstar - biostar - CONCAT - condo CONDOCONDO, - djonet - efmukl - g6PJ - h6BB HELGA-S - HEWITT RAND - HLT - j09F - j256 - j262 j322 - j64 - lkw peter - lkw peter - LKWPETER - PASSWORD - SER - setup - SKY_FOX - SWITCHES_SW Sxyz - SZYX - t0ch20x - t0ch88 - TTPTHA - ttptha TzqF - wodj - ZAAADA - zbaaaca - zjaaadc
Biostar	Biostar Q54arwms
Compaq	Compaq
Concord	last
CTX International	CTX_123
CyberMax	Congress
Daewoo	Daewuu
Daytek	Daytec
Dell (some)	Dell
Digital Equipment (DEC)	komprie
Enox	xo11nE
Epox	central
Freetech	Posterie
Hewlett-Packard (Vectra)	hewlpack
IBM	IBM - MBIUO - merlin - sertafu
IWill	iwill
Jetway	spooml
Joss Technology	57gbzb technolgi
Leading Edge	MASTER
M Technology	mMmM
MachSpeed	sp99dd
Magic-Pro	prost
Megastar	star
Micron	sldkj754 xyzall

Micronics	dn_04rjc
Nimble	xdfk9874t3
Packard Bell	bell9
Phoenix	phoenix
QDI	QDI
Quantex	teX1 - x1j1bj (or: x1j1bj)
Research	Co12ogro2
RM (Server BIOS)	RM
Shuttle (Spacewalker)	Spacve
Siemens-Nixdorf	SKY_FOX
SpeedEasy	lesarot1
SuperMicro	ksdjfg934t
Tinys	tiny
TMC	BIGO
Toshiba	Toshiba - 24Banc81 - toshy99
Vextrec	Vextrex
Vobis	merlin
Zenith	3098z Zenith
ZEOS	zeosx

Keystrokes to Enter BIOS-Setup

BIOS	Keystroke
AMI	Del (while memory test is running)
AWARD	DEL or CTRL+ALT+ESC (during boot)
MR BIOS	ESC (at boot) or CTRL+ALT+ESC (later)
PHOENIX	F2 or CTRL+ALT+ESC or CTRL+ALT+S

Other possibilities:-

Del / Entf

F1

Ctrl-S

Ctrl-Alt-Enter (Phoenix)

Ctrl-Alt-Ins

Alt-F1

[change RAM size, remove floppy]