

Introduction

On startup, computers perform a Power-on Self Test, commonly referred to as a POST. If problems are found while booting, you can usually diagnose them using the error codes displayed on the screen. However, if nothing displays on the screen, the computer might use sounds (i.e., beep codes) to tell you what is wrong. Many of these errors indicate hardware problems that should be fixed. However, some errors are easily fixed.

IBM Desktop

Beeps	Meaning
No beep	No power, loose expansion card (ISA, PCI, or AGP), a short, or an improperly grounded motherboard
1 short	System okay
1 long	Video/display problem; video card incorrectly seated or defective
2 short	POST Error displayed on monitor
3 long	Problem with 3270 keyboard card
1 long, 1 short	Problem with system board
1 long, 2 short	Problem with display adapter (MDA, CGA)
1 long, 3 short	Problem with EGA
Repeating short beeps	Problem with power supply or system board
Continuous beep	Problem with power supply or system board

IBM ThinkPad

Beeps	Meaning
Continuous beeping	System board failure
1 beep with blank display	LCD connector problem, LCD backlight inverter failure, video adapter failure, or LCD assembly failure
1 beep w/message "Unable to access boot source"	Boot device failure or bad system board
1 long, 2 short	System board, video adapter, or LCD assembly failure

IBM ThinkPad (cont)

1 long, 4 short	Low battery voltage
1 beep every second	Low battery voltage
2 short w/message	Read the error message on the display
2 short with blank display	System board failure

Compaq

Beep	Meaning
1 short	No error: The system is booting properly.
1 long, 1 short	BIOS ROM checksum error: The contents of the BIOS ROM do not match the expected contents. If possible, reload the BIOS from the PAQ.
2 short	General error: No specifics available on what this code means
1 long, 2 short	Video error: Check the video adapter and make sure it's seated properly. If possible, replace the video adapter.
7 beeps (1 long, 1 short, 1 long, 1 short, pause, 1 long, 1 short, 1 short)	AGP video: The AGP video card is faulty. Reseat the card or replace it outright. This beep pertains to Compaq Deskpro systems.
Continuous beep	Memory error: Bad RAM; replace and test
1 short, 2 long	Bad RAM: Reseat RAM, then retest; replace RAM if failure continues.

Information is from the BIOS Central Compaq BIOS Beep Codes page.

Quadtel BIOS

Beep	Meaning
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1 short	Normal boot: System is booting normally.
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2 short	CMOS IC error: The CMOS RAM is faulty. Replace the IC if possible.
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1 long, 2 short	Video failure: The video adapter is faulty. Reseat the video adapter or replace the adapter if possible.
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1 long, 3 short	Peripheral controller error: One or more of the system peripheral controllers is bad. Replace the controllers and retest.
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Information is from the BIOS Central Quadtel BIOS Beep Codes page.

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Published 28th January, 2016.
Last updated 12th May, 2016.
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