

How to Fix Windows 10's new Critical Security Flaw (March 2020)

Adapted from [How-To Geek](#)

MARCH 23, 2020, 4:57PM EDT

Windows 10 has a new security flaw, and you could be infected with malware just from downloading a file, as File Explorer will automatically open the file and preview it. Windows 7 has the same problem.

What You Need to Know

Microsoft announced this security hole on March 23, 2020. Microsoft says it is “aware of limited targeted attacks” that use flaws in the Adobe Type Manager Library. “There are multiple ways an attacker could exploit the vulnerability, such as convincing a user to open a specially crafted document or viewing it in the Windows Preview pane,” according to Microsoft’s security advisory.

The flaw affects all versions of Windows in active use: Windows 10, Windows 8.1, Windows 8, Windows 7, and various versions of Windows Server. A Microsoft spokesperson said Microsoft is working on a fix and expects it to be available on the next [Patch Tuesday](#)—that is, [April 14, 2020](#).

Until then, Microsoft offers a workaround that will protect your PCs from the security flaw.

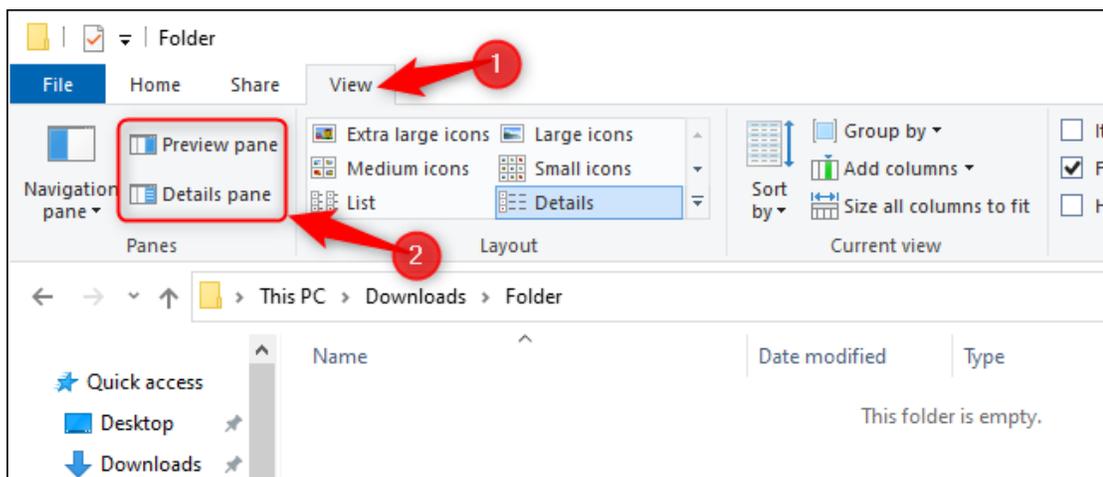
How to Protect Your PC

To work around the flaw, you need to disable the Preview and Details panes in File Explorer (or Windows Explorer on older versions of Windows.) Windows won’t automatically display previews of OTF font files, which will protect you.

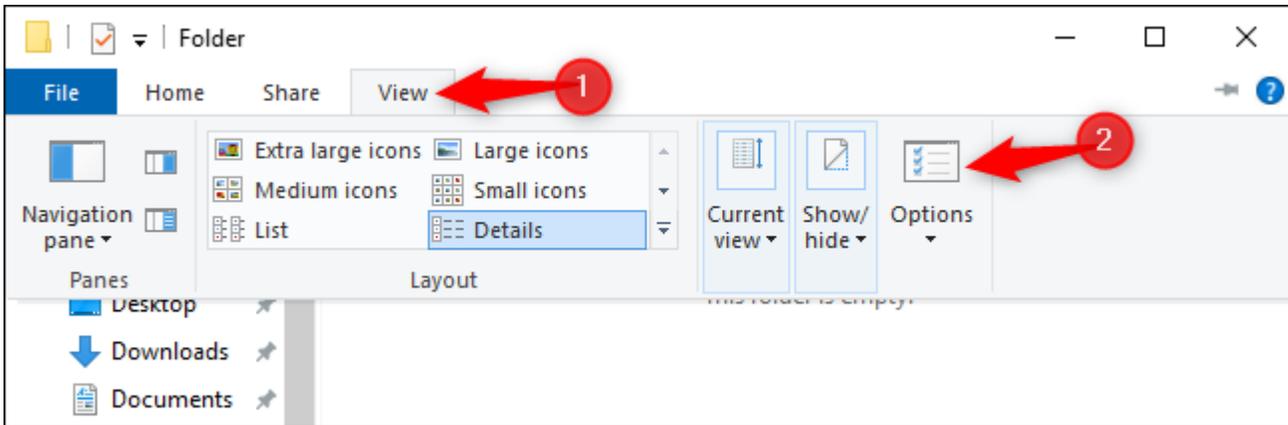
You could still be attacked if you open a malicious file. However, simply viewing the file in File Explorer won’t be a risk.

To do this, open **File Explorer** (yellow folder on taskbar) and click the **“View”** tab at the top of the window.

Ensure both the **“Preview pane”** and **“Details pane”** options in the Panes section are disabled. Click them to toggle them on and off.

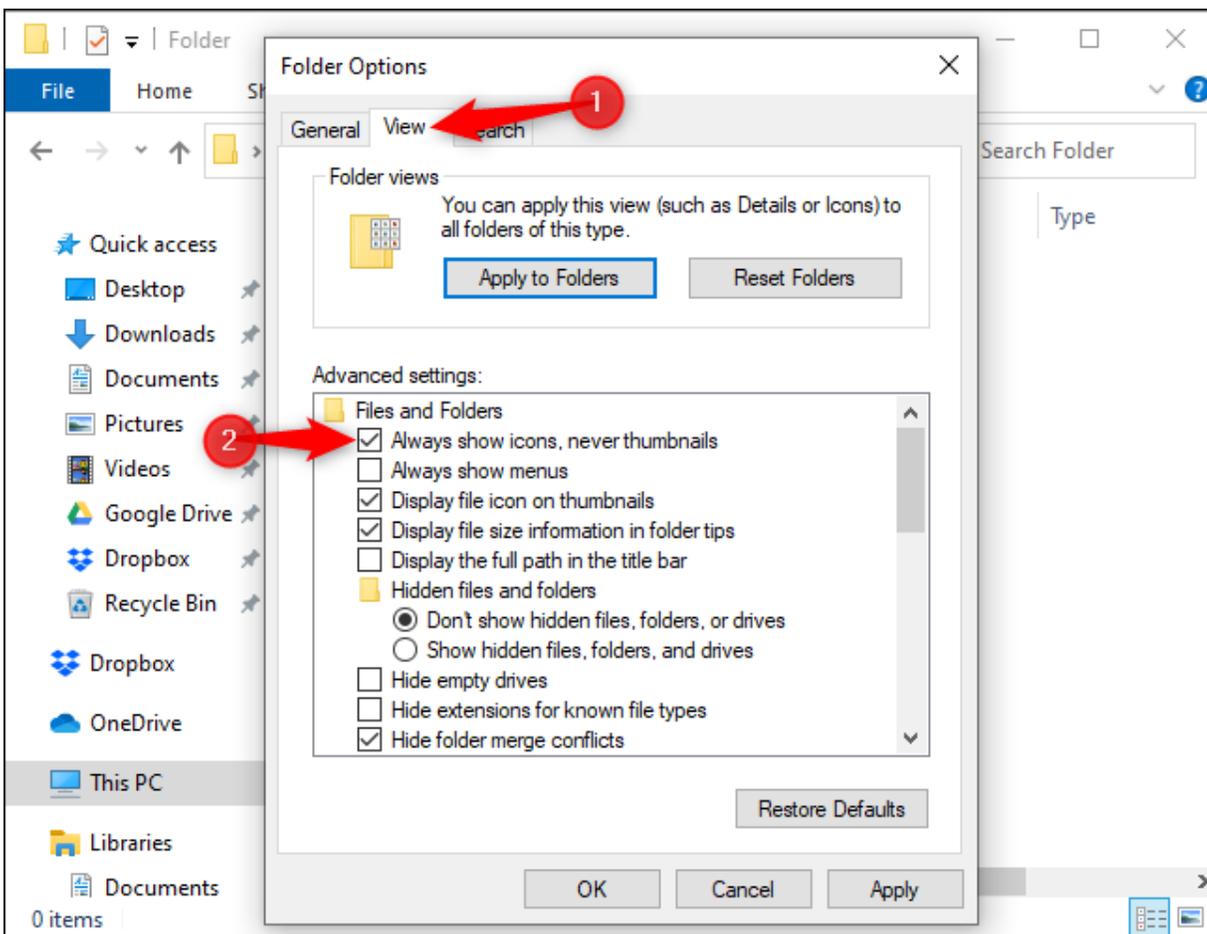


Next, click the **“Options”** icon at the right side of the ribbon bar. When a menu appears, click **“Change folder and search options.”**



Click the **“View”** tab. In the **“Advanced Settings”** box, enable the **“Always show icons, never thumbnails”** option.

You're done. Click the **“OK”** button to save your changes. Close all open File Explorer windows so your change takes effect. Double check by opening File Explorer again, click **File** then **Change folder and search options**, to see if **“Always show icons, never thumbnails”** is checked.



This change will only be necessary until Microsoft issues a security update that fixes the problem. After the company does, you can re-enable previews.