

Data loss: the first ten minutes

Pause first. Protect what is still there.



Clicking, grinding or beeping? Power off and leave it off.



01

Stop using the device



Power off.
Do not restart.



Remove the card
or USB stick.



Do not format,
initialise or run
repair tools.



Never save recovered
files onto the
affected drive.

02

Check backups elsewhere



Use another device to check
cloud storage, photo libraries
and deleted items.



Try Time Machine, File History,
email and messages.



Restore to a different disk.

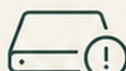
03

Choose the right route



Deleted files,
healthy drive

Consider read-only
recovery software.
Install it elsewhere.
Save recovered files
to a different drive.



Not detected
or damaged

Not detected? Check power
and cables once. Still absent?
Seek advice.

Dropped, wet, overheated or hit
by a power surge? Leave it off.
Ask a professional.



Phone, console,
RAID or NAS

Get specialist advice.
Phones and consoles may
be encrypted. A reset can
erase data.

Do not rebuild a RAID or NAS
to rescue files.

04

Know when to stop



Irreplaceable files with no backup? Seek advice before experimenting.



Strange noises, repeated disconnections or no power? **Stop.**



One careful scan found nothing? **Reassess** before trying again.

Never



Format "to fix it". Freeze, open or shake a hard drive.
Install onto the affected drive. Trust "100% recovery" promises.