

Viruses / malware, and skipped items in BackupAssist 365

When you perform a backup from the cloud, some items may be skipped if they contain attachments that fail a virus scan.

We'll explain how this works and how you can find the skipped items.

How the virus scanning works

When BackupAssist 365 downloads email attachments and files, it saves them to disk. After saving them, Windows Defender will perform a scan. If this scan fails, BackupAssist will skip over the item.

Yes – it surprises many people, but viruses regularly end up in Office 365 mailboxes. At least with the Windows Defender scan, it means that your backups will be clean and virus free.

Note: if you have disabled Windows Defender, then obviously this feature will not be available.

How to tell if you have a mailbox with virus items

In the backup report, you will see an informational message logged against any mailboxes that have skipped items.

For example, looking at the backup report on the right, the “adminuser1” mailbox has 3 items that were skipped because of a failed virus scan.

If you are logged into the machine at the time of the backup, you will also see a notification in the bottom right, which pops up when Windows Defender detects a virus or malware.

 Found some malware
Windows Defender is removing it.

Summary

Task name	Rarenerds mailbox backup
Status	success
Data downloaded	266.4 MB 1 mailboxes
Start time	7/12/2021 4:08:25 PM
End time	7/12/2021 4:20:22 PM
Duration	0:11:57
Next run time	7/13/2021 12:00:00 AM

Warnings and errors

No warnings or errors.

Task details

Type	Mailbox download
Source	Office 365 Account: adminuser1@rarenerds.com
Destination	Z:\BA365\Rarenerds mailbox backup

Mailbox	Items	Folders	Warnings/errors
adminuser1@rarenerds.com	8627	60	Cannot save an attachment: An attachment was skipped because it has failed a virus scan.(repeated 3 times)

This report was generated by BackupAssist 365 v1.9.2

How to find the skipped items

Under the Status > Skipped Items navigation, you will see a list of all your backup tasks.

Any task with skipped items will be highlighted in bold.

The screenshot shows the BackupAssist 365 web interface. The left sidebar contains navigation options under 'BACKUP', 'RESTORE', 'STATUS', and 'MANAGE'. The 'Skipped items' option is selected. The main content area displays a list of backup tasks, with 'RareNerds mailbox backup' highlighted. Below this, a detailed report for a backup run on 7/12/2021 at 4:08:28 PM is shown, listing three skipped items with their respective error messages and metadata.

```
Backup run - 7/12/2021 4:08:28 PM
2021-07-12 16:19:33.7583, Cannot save an attachment
Error: An attachment was skipped because it has failed a virus scan.
Mailbox:
Folder: Sent Items
Subject: draft eicar
Received: 8/27/2020 8:00:23 AM
Sent: 8/26/2020 11:17:25 PM
Created: 8/26/2020 11:16:42 PM
-----
2021-07-12 16:19:33.8449, Cannot save an attachment
Error: An attachment was skipped because it has failed a virus scan.
Mailbox:
Folder: Sent Items
Subject: eicar aja
Received: 8/26/2020 11:16:35 PM
Sent: 8/26/2020 11:16:34 PM
Created: 8/26/2020 11:15:47 PM
-----
2021-07-12 16:19:33.8656, Cannot save an attachment
Error: An attachment was skipped because it has failed a virus scan.
Mailbox:
Folder: Sent Items
Subject: Eicar virus test
Received: 4/24/2020 9:50:09 PM
Sent: 4/24/2020 9:50:08 PM
Created: 4/24/2020 9:49:44 PM
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```

The skipped items report will list the items that failed the virus scan.

In mailbox backups, the virus file is replaced with a text file that notes that the attachment was not backed up.

As a good practice, you can instruct the mailbox owner to delete the listed emails. Or as the administrator, you can choose to delete the items yourself.

Finding viruses in mailboxes is quite commonplace, even for those running anti-virus solutions.