

Vision Tech

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV Handbook

34 free step-by-step guides in plain English

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guides.visiontech336.com - admin@visiontech336.com

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How to set up a new Echo Dot or Echo speaker step by step

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Setting up an Echo speaker takes about ten minutes and uses the Alexa app on your phone. Here is the whole process in plain steps.

Before you start

You will need your Wi-Fi name and password, your Amazon account email and password, and a phone or tablet with the Alexa app installed from your app store. Make sure your phone is connected to your home Wi-Fi and has Bluetooth switched on.

Plug the Echo into a wall socket using the adapter that came in the box, rather than a spare USB port on a TV, as these often give too little power. Place it in a central spot, away from walls.

Setting it up

1. Plug in the Echo and wait. The light ring will spin and then turn orange, which means the device is in setup mode.
2. Open the Alexa app and sign in with your Amazon account.
3. Tap the **Devices** tab, then tap the + icon and choose **Add Device**.
4. Choose **Amazon Echo**, then pick the type of Echo you have.
5. The app should find your Echo. Follow the on-screen prompts to choose your Wi-Fi network and type its password.
6. Wait while the Echo connects and updates itself. Alexa will tell you when it is ready.

After setup

Try asking, "Alexa, what is the weather today?" to check it works. In the app you can name the Echo and put it in a room.

Take a moment to look at the privacy options in the app, such as the microphone button on top of the Echo. You can press it at any time to stop Alexa listening.

If setup gets stuck

- Check you typed the Wi-Fi password exactly, including capital letters.
- Unplug the Echo for 30 seconds and try again.
- Make sure your phone is on the same Wi-Fi you want the Echo to use.

When to get more help

If the Echo never reaches setup mode or the app cannot find it, do not factory reset it without advice, as that wipes its settings. Vision Tech can set up the Echo for you in person or over a remote session and make sure it is secure.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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How to set up a new Echo Show step by step

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An Echo Show is an Echo with a screen. Most of the setup is done on the screen itself, with the Alexa app helping to link it to your account.

Before you start

Have your Wi-Fi password and Amazon login ready. Plug the Show into the wall using its own power adapter and place it where it has room, ideally on a shelf or worktop rather than inside a cupboard.

Setting it up

1. Plug in the Echo Show and wait for it to start. The screen will show a welcome message.
2. Tap your Wi-Fi network from the list on the screen.
3. Type the Wi-Fi password and tap to connect.
4. Sign in with your Amazon account. The Show may display a code or a QR code to scan with your phone, or ask for your email and password. Follow what is on screen.
5. The device may download an update and restart. Leave it alone while it does this.
6. Work through the remaining screens, such as time zone and home screen choices.

On Echo screen devices, Wi-Fi settings are normally changed on the device itself, not in the app.

Camera and privacy

Most Echo Shows have a way to cover or switch off the camera, and a button to switch off the microphones. Look for a sliding shutter or a camera button on the device, and a microphone button on top. Check your model's booklet if you cannot find them.

Making it useful

Open the Alexa app, tap **Devices**, find your Show and give it a name and a room. Then try, "Alexa, show me the weather" or "Alexa, set a timer for ten minutes".

When to get more help

If the Show cannot join your Wi-Fi, will not sign in to your account or stays stuck on a loading screen, ask for help rather than repeatedly resetting it. A factory reset erases all its settings and you would have to start again.

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Echo Dot will not connect to Wi-Fi, or you need to change the Wi-Fi network

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If your Echo cannot join your Wi-Fi, or you have a new router and need to move it to the new network, the fixes below usually work. Start with the simple ones.

Quick checks first

- Is the Wi-Fi working for your phone and other gadgets? If not, restart your router first.
- Unplug the Echo, wait 30 seconds and plug it back in.
- Move the Echo nearer to the router for now.
- Check the Wi-Fi password. It is case sensitive.

Echo devices work with standard Wi-Fi on 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz, but cannot connect to ad-hoc or peer-to-peer networks. A guest network or a hotel-style sign-in page can also cause trouble.

Changing the Wi-Fi network from the app

For most Echo speakers the steps are:

1. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**.
2. Select your Echo.
3. Open **Device Settings**.
4. Choose **Change or remove a Wi-Fi network**.
5. Pick a network you have used before, or choose **Join another Wi-Fi Network** and follow the prompts.

The Echo needs to be switched on and nearby while you do this.

Echo Show and other screen devices

For Echo devices with a screen, you change Wi-Fi on the device itself. Swipe down from the top of the screen, tap the settings cog, and look for the Wi-Fi option. The exact wording depends on the model.

Still not connecting

If the light ring turns orange while trying to connect, that means it is in setup mode or trying to get online. A purple light during setup can point to a Wi-Fi problem. Try moving the router or Echo, or restart both.

When to get more help

If the Echo still will not connect after a router restart, there may be a router setting at fault, such as a security or access control feature. Please do not turn off security settings to get round it. Ask Vision Tech to check your router safely.

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What the Echo light ring colours mean

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The light ring on an Echo speaker tells you what Alexa is doing. These are the meanings for Echo speakers. Different models, and the newer Alexa+ devices, may show different lights, so check the instructions for your exact model.

The colours and what they mean

- **Cyan spotlight on a blue ring:** Alexa is listening. It can also show when Alexa is thinking or updating.
- **Teal blue bar:** Alexa is ready for you to speak without needing the wake word.
- **Slowly spinning teal and blue:** the device is starting up or restarting after an update.
- **Solid red:** the microphone button has been pressed, so the microphone is off and Alexa is not listening. On devices with a camera it also means video will not be shared.
- **Orange:** the device is in setup mode, or is trying to connect to the internet.
- **Slow yellow burst every few seconds:** Alexa has a message or notification for you.
- **Pulsing green:** you are getting a call. Spinning green means a call or Drop In is active.
- **Purple:** appears briefly after a request when Do Not Disturb is on. It can also show during setup if there are Wi-Fi problems.
- **White:** shows the volume level when you change it.

What to do about it

If you see a **red ring** and Alexa will not answer, press the microphone button on top of the Echo once. It should turn off.

If you see **orange** for a long time, the Echo may be struggling to reach your Wi-Fi. Restart the Echo and your router.

If you see **yellow**, simply say, "Alexa, what are my notifications?"

Colours not on this list

Other colours, or patterns we have not listed, are not covered here, as they vary by model. Look in the Alexa app under help for your device, or search for your Echo model's instructions.

When to get more help

If your Echo shows a light that does not clear after a restart, or you are unsure what it means, ask for help before trying a factory reset.

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Alexa app cannot find my Echo or other device

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When the Alexa app cannot see your new Echo during setup, the problem is nearly always Bluetooth, location permissions or Wi-Fi on your phone rather than the speaker itself.

Check your phone

1. Turn Bluetooth on.
2. Make sure your phone is connected to your home Wi-Fi, not mobile data.
3. Give the Alexa app any permissions it asks for. On many phones it needs location and nearby devices permission to find an Echo. This is normal and is not tracking you.
4. Update the Alexa app from your app store.

Check the Echo

- Is the light ring orange? orange means setup mode. If it is not orange, you may need to put it in setup mode again. How to do this depends on your model, often by holding the action button for several seconds, so check the instructions for your exact model.
- Is the Echo close to your phone?
- Unplug it for 30 seconds and try again.

Try again

1. Close the Alexa app fully and reopen it.
2. Tap **Devices**, then **+**, then **Add Device**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Choose Echo and follow the prompts.

If you have two phones, try the other one. Sometimes an old phone with out-of-date software is the problem.

Router and Wi-Fi problems

Some routers keep phones and speakers on different Wi-Fi bands, with names such as ending in 5G. Echo speakers support both 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz, so this is rarely the problem, but guest networks can be. Make sure your phone is not using a guest network.

When to get more help

If the app still cannot find the Echo after trying a different phone, ask for support. Do not factory reset an Echo repeatedly. Vision Tech can talk you through it or do it for you.

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Alexa says "I'm having trouble connecting"

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This message means the Echo cannot reach Amazon over the internet at that moment. It is usually a Wi-Fi or router problem, and rarely means the Echo is broken.

Check your internet first

Look at another device, such as your phone on Wi-Fi, and see if it can load a website. If it cannot, the problem is your broadband or router rather than Alexa.

Try restarting your router. Switch it off at the wall, wait 30 seconds, switch it on and give it a few minutes to settle.

Restart the Echo

1. Unplug the Echo from the power.
2. Wait 30 seconds.
3. Plug it back in and wait for the light ring to finish its start-up.

A slowly spinning teal and blue ring means the device is starting up. An orange ring means it is in setup mode or trying to connect to the internet.

Check the Echo in the app

Open the Alexa app, tap **Devices** and look at your Echo. If it says offline, see our guide on an Echo showing offline in the app. If it needs a new Wi-Fi network, you can change it from the device settings.

Other things that cause it

- Your router is too far away or behind thick walls.
- Lots of devices on the Wi-Fi at once.
- A recent router change, or a changed Wi-Fi password.
- A problem at Amazon's end. If other Echoes in the house or other people are affected too, wait an hour and try again.

It may help to restart the Echo whenever you restart the router.

When to get more help

If the message returns every day, the Wi-Fi signal may be weak where the Echo sits, or the router may need attention. Vision Tech can check your Wi-Fi coverage and settings.

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Echo shows as offline in the Alexa app

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When the Alexa app says your Echo is offline, it means the app cannot reach the speaker through your Wi-Fi. The speaker might still be switched on, so a few checks usually sort it.

Simple fixes

1. Check the Echo has power and the light ring comes on.
2. Check your Wi-Fi is working on your phone.
3. Unplug the Echo, wait 30 seconds and plug it in.
4. Restart your router if other devices are slow too.
5. Close the Alexa app fully and open it again, then tap **Devices**.

Same network and sign-in

Make sure you are signed in to the Alexa app with the same Amazon account that the Echo is registered to. Many families have two accounts and it is easy to be signed in with the wrong one.

If you recently changed your router or Wi-Fi password, the Echo will be trying to join a network that no longer exists.

Change the Wi-Fi if needed

You can do this in the app: tap **Devices**, select the Echo, open **Device Settings**, and choose **Change or remove a Wi-Fi network**. For Echo screens other than the 2024 Spot, you change the Wi-Fi on the device itself.

Do not rush to reset

Removing the Echo from the app and setting it up again is a last resort. Try everything above first. A factory reset removes your settings on the speaker, and you would need to link all your smart devices and routines again.

When to get more help

If the Echo is offline every few days, ask for a check of your router, Wi-Fi signal and any security settings. Vision Tech can look at this remotely or in person.

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Alexa does not respond or keeps hearing me wrong

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If Alexa ignores you, answers the wrong question or wakes up by itself, the cause is usually something simple such as the microphone being off, background noise or the Echo's position.

Check the basics

1. Look at the light ring. If it is solid red, the microphone is off. Press the microphone button on top of the Echo to turn it back on.
2. Check the Echo is online. If the light ring is orange, it is struggling to connect to Wi-Fi.
3. Unplug it for 30 seconds and plug it back in.
4. Check the volume by saying, "Alexa, volume five".

Help it hear you

- Keep the Echo away from walls, corners and the TV.
- Keep it a little distance from other speakers, as they can drown out your voice.
- Say "Alexa" clearly, then pause slightly before your request.
- Speak a normal speed. Shouting does not help.

If Alexa keeps waking when nobody has said its name, the wake word may sound like something on the TV. In the Alexa app you can change the wake word to Echo, Computer or Amazon for that device. Look in the device settings. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Wrong answers

Alexa sometimes picks the wrong music or the wrong person. Be specific, for example, "Alexa, play BBC Radio 2 on TuneIn". If your voice is misheard repeatedly, you can look through your voice history in the Alexa app to see what it thought you said. Please read our guide on voice recordings first, as deleting history can make Alexa a bit less accurate.

If it is only one room

Echo speakers in the same room can both answer. Amazon devices normally decide which one is nearest, but it can be confusing. Try giving each Echo a different name or moving them apart.

When to get more help

If the Echo ignores you completely even with a good connection and the microphone on, it might need a closer look. Vision Tech can check the setup and settings with you.

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Alexa volume too low or music keeps stuttering

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Quiet playback or music that cuts out is commonly caused by weak Wi-Fi, a busy router or the Echo being in a poor spot. A few adjustments usually help.

Volume problems

- Say, "Alexa, volume ten" to set it to the top.
- Check that you are not in a speaker group, where each speaker has its own volume.
- Look at the volume in your music app too, such as Spotify. Both may be low.
- Remember Alexa has separate volumes for alarms and timers. Ask Alexa to turn it up when it rings.

Position matters

Place the Echo off the floor, away from corners and not inside a cupboard or behind the TV. Bass sounds boomy next to a wall. If the Echo is on a window sill, vibration can also change the sound.

Stuttering or cutting out

This is almost always a Wi-Fi issue.

1. Move the Echo closer to the router, or the router closer to the Echo.
2. Restart the router and the Echo.
3. Pause heavy downloads or streaming on other devices.
4. Try a different music service. If only one service stutters, the problem is with that service.
5. If you have a speaker group, try playing on one speaker to see if the problem is the group.

Other things to try

Check that the Echo software is up to date. Echo updates itself automatically when connected to Wi-Fi, so leave it switched on and connected overnight. Keep it away from microwaves and cordless phones, which can interfere with Wi-Fi.

When to get more help

If the music keeps cutting out all through the house, your Wi-Fi coverage may need improving with a mesh system or placement changes. Vision Tech can test your signal and recommend sensible fixes.

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Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

Alexa alarms, timers and reminders not working

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

If your alarm did not ring, a timer stayed silent or a reminder did not appear, the cause is usually volume, a lost Wi-Fi connection or the wrong time zone.

Check volume and connection

- Alarms and timers have their own volume. Ask Alexa to turn it up while it is ringing, or say, "Alexa, alarm volume ten".
- Make sure the Echo was online. If Wi-Fi is down, cloud-based features may fail.
- Look at the light ring when you expected the alarm.

Look at what is set

Say, "Alexa, what alarms do I have?" to hear the list. You can also check in the Alexa app. Look for alarms and timers in the device settings or the **Devices** tab. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Check that the alarm is set for the right Echo, since you can have different alarms on each. Check morning versus evening: Alexa may have heard seven in the evening rather than in the morning, so ask for the time as "7am".

Reminders

Reminders may be spoken from the Echo you asked, or may show as a notification on your phone. Check notifications are allowed for the Alexa app in your phone settings. For a spoken reminder, a yellow burst on the light ring means there is something waiting. Say, "Alexa, what are my notifications?"

Time zone and time

If alarms go off an hour wrong, check the time zone in the Echo's settings in the app. UK clocks changing in spring and autumn can briefly confuse things.

Other fixes

Restart the Echo by unplugging for 30 seconds. Make a new alarm for a test, a minute or two ahead. If a Do Not Disturb schedule is on, alarms normally still sound but notifications may stay quiet.

When to get more help

If an alarm matters, for example for medication or an early start, do not rely only on an Echo. Keep a backup alarm too. Ask Vision Tech if you want help making your setup more reliable.

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Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to set up multi-room music and speaker groups with Echo

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

With a speaker group you can play the same music in several rooms at once, or in a pair of speakers for stereo sound. You need two or more Echo speakers on the same account and Wi-Fi.

What you need

Two or more compatible Echo devices, all set up on the same Amazon account and the same Wi-Fi. Give each Echo a clear name or room name in the Alexa app, such as Kitchen or Living Room. Newer and older Echoes can usually be mixed but not every model works in every group, so if one will not join, that may be the reason.

Creating a group

The exact menu names in the Alexa app change, so look for options such as groups or speakers under the **Devices** tab. In broad terms:

1. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**.
2. Tap the + icon and look for an option to create a group or add a speaker group.
3. Choose the speakers you want in the group and give it a name, such as Downstairs.
4. Save it.

Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Using the group

Say, "Alexa, play Radio 4 on Downstairs" using the name you chose. You can also say "Alexa, play music everywhere" in some cases. Then use voice or the app to change the volume. Saying "Alexa, volume six" often changes only the speaker you are talking to.

When it goes wrong

- If one speaker drops out, restart it and check it is online in the app.
- Out-of-sync sound often means weak Wi-Fi in one room.
- If a speaker is missing from the list, check it is on the same account.
- Not every music service or every radio station works in every group.

When to get more help

If a group keeps breaking up or you cannot find the option in your app, do not delete all your devices to start again. Ask Vision Tech to take a look first.

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Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

How to link Spotify, Amazon Music, BBC Sounds or TuneIn to Alexa

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Alexa can play from several music and radio services. You link the service in the Alexa app once, and after that you can simply ask for music by voice.

Linking a service

1. Open the Alexa app.
2. Look in **More** and then **Settings**, and find the option for music, which is often called **Music & Podcasts**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Choose the service you want, such as Spotify or Amazon Music.
4. Tap the option to link or enable it. For services that need an account, such as Spotify, you will be asked to sign in and allow Alexa to connect.

TuneIn is a radio service that works with Alexa and normally needs no account for basic use. BBC Sounds content is also commonly reached by asking for BBC stations on Alexa, such as "Alexa, play BBC Radio 4". Whether any service needs a paid plan depends on that service.

Choosing a default

In the same music settings area, look for an option to choose your default music service. This decides what Alexa uses when you say, "Alexa, play some jazz" without naming a service.

You can always name it directly, for example, "Alexa, play Radio 2 on TuneIn" or "Alexa, play my Discover Weekly on Spotify".

If it will not play

- Check you are signed in to the right account in that service's app.
- Free accounts on some services have limits on voice control.
- Unlink the service in the Alexa app and link it again.
- Check the Echo is online.

Unlinking

If you want to remove a service, go back to the same music settings and choose to disable or unlink it. This does not delete your account with that service.

When to get more help

If linking keeps failing or you are asked for a password you do not remember, do not guess too many times as the account may lock. Ask Vision Tech to help you recover access safely.

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How to pair an Echo with a Bluetooth speaker or your phone

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An Echo can play music from your phone over Bluetooth, or send its own sound to a separate Bluetooth speaker. Both are set up with a spoken command.

Play your phone through the Echo

1. On your phone, open Bluetooth settings and make sure Bluetooth is on.
2. Say, "Alexa, pair." Alexa will say it is ready to pair.
3. On your phone, look in the list of available devices for your Echo's name and tap it.
4. Alexa will confirm that it is connected.

Now any sound from your phone plays through the Echo. To disconnect, say, "Alexa, disconnect".

Send Echo sound to another speaker

1. Put your Bluetooth speaker into pairing mode. The speaker's booklet shows how, often by holding a button until a light flashes.
2. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**, select your Echo, then look in **Device Settings** for Bluetooth devices. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Choose the option to pair a new device and select the speaker.

Not all Echo models can send their sound to another Bluetooth speaker, and the Echo may then not hear commands as well. Check the instructions for your model.

If it will not pair

- Forget the Echo on your phone, and then pair again.
- Keep devices within a metre of each other.
- Make sure the speaker is not already connected to another phone.
- Restart the Echo.

Good to know

Bluetooth audio from a phone does not need Wi-Fi, so it can still work if the internet is down, but Alexa voice commands will not.

When to get more help

If your Echo keeps connecting to a neighbour's phone or your phone will not see it, ask for help. Vision Tech can check the settings and tidy up old paired devices.

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How to set up Alexa routines for morning and bedtime

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A routine lets one phrase or a set time trigger several actions, such as turning on the lights, reading the news and telling you the weather. They are set up in the Alexa app.

Planning your routine

Decide what should start it and what it should do. For example, a morning routine at 7:30 could turn on the hall light, tell you the weather and play the BBC news. A bedtime routine, started by saying "Alexa, goodnight", could turn off lights and plugs and set an alarm.

Creating a routine

1. Open the Alexa app and look for **Routines**. It is usually found under **More**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
2. Tap the + icon to make a new routine.
3. Give it a name.
4. Choose what starts it. Options include your voice, a time, or a smart-home device.
5. Add the actions, such as smart-home controls, news, weather or music.
6. Choose which Echo should carry it out.
7. Save it.

Testing and changing

Say the phrase out loud and watch what happens. If something is missing, open the routine again, edit and save. You can switch a routine off without deleting it by using the on/off switch next to it.

Common problems

- A routine set for a time will not run if the Echo is offline.
- If a smart plug or light does not respond, check that device is working in the app first. See our guide on a device being unresponsive.
- Two routines with similar phrases may confuse Alexa.
- Check the right Echo is chosen, especially if you have more than one.
- Time zone and daylight saving can cause an hour difference. Check the settings if so.

When to get more help

If a routine fails and you cannot see why, or you want a more complicated one, ask for help. Please do not give someone else your Amazon login to fix it.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

How to use shopping lists and to-do lists with Alexa

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Alexa can keep a shopping list and a to-do list that you add to by voice and see on your phone. It is handy for jotting things down while your hands are full.

Adding items

Say, "Alexa, add milk to my shopping list" or "Alexa, add ring the dentist to my to-do list". Alexa will confirm. You can add several things, one at a time.

Seeing your lists

1. Open the Alexa app.
2. Look for **Lists** in the menu. It is often under **More**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Tap Shopping List or To-Do List to see, tick off or delete items.

On an Echo Show you can say, "Alexa, show my shopping list".

Taking things off

Say, "Alexa, remove milk from my shopping list", or tap the item in the app. Ticking off an item does not always delete it, so you may need to clear completed items.

Sharing with family

Lists belong to the Amazon account. If you share a household in Alexa, others may see and add to the list. Ask your family which account the Echo is on, so the list does not end up somewhere unexpected. Look in the app for household sharing options.

When it does not work

- Check you are online.
- Say the item clearly. Alexa sometimes mishears names.
- Try opening and closing the app, or checking that the app is updated.
- A list may be sitting in a different app, such as a list from an old shopping service. Look at what lists the app offers.

When to get more help

If your lists have vanished, avoid deleting and re-adding the Echo. Ask for help to check you are using the right account.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to link smart plugs and bulbs to Alexa, and fix "device unresponsive"

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Alexa can switch plugs, bulbs and heating if they are made by a brand that works with Alexa, such as Hive, Ring, Tapo or TP-Link. The idea is the same for most of them.

Linking a device

1. Set up the device first in its own app, such as Tapo, Kasa or Hive, and check it works there.
2. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**, then **+**, then **Add Device**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Choose the brand. Alexa may ask you to enable the brand's skill or sign in with that brand's account.
4. Allow the link.
5. Tap to discover devices. They should appear in your list.

Give each device a simple name, such as Lounge Lamp, as this is what you will say.

When Alexa says the device is unresponsive

This means Alexa cannot reach the device. Usually it is not Alexa's fault.

1. Check the device has power and is on the Wi-Fi. Test it in its own app.
2. If it fails there too, restart the device, then your router.
3. Check the Echo is online.
4. In the Alexa app, remove the device, then do a fresh discovery.
5. If the brand's account is linked, disable and re-link the skill.
6. Check the brand's app has not been logged out or asked for a new password.

Some tips

- Most plugs and bulbs work only with 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi when first set up. If setup fails, check your phone is on 2.4 GHz.
- Weak signal causes most random failures.
- Make sure device names are unique and easy to say.

Be careful

Use unique passwords for the brand accounts. Do not turn off security features, such as two-step verification, to make linking easier.

When to get more help

If a device keeps going unresponsive, it may be a Wi-Fi coverage issue. Vision Tech can check your signal and the setup.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 1 min read

How to group smart devices into rooms in Alexa, and Philips Hue basics

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Putting devices in rooms and groups lets you say, "Alexa, turn off the living room lights", and control several at once. Philips Hue lights work well with Alexa.

Rooms and groups

In the Alexa app, devices can be placed in groups, which are usually rooms. Tap **Devices**, look for your device, and open its settings to choose a group or room. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Give the Echo a room too, as Alexa may then know "the lights" means the ones in the same room.

Making a group

1. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**.
2. Tap **+** and look for the option to add a group.
3. Give it a name, such as Bedroom Lights.
4. Choose the devices.
5. Save.

Now say, "Alexa, turn on Bedroom Lights".

Philips Hue

Hue bulbs usually connect through a Hue Bridge, a small box plugged into your router. Set up the lights in the Hue app first. Then in the Alexa app, add the Hue skill or integration from the **Add Device** menu, and press the button on the Bridge if asked. Alexa will find your lights and rooms. Newer Echo models may act as a bridge for some devices, but that depends on the models.

If something is missing

- Say, "Alexa, discover devices".
- Rename duplicates.
- Check the Bridge is on and online.
- If the lights show as unresponsive, see our guide on that.

When to get more help

If your Hue and Alexa get in a mess, do not factory reset everything. Ask Vision Tech to go through it with you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to control your TV with Alexa, and what to do when it stops working

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

With the right setup you can say, "Alexa, turn on the TV" or "Alexa, pause". How it works depends on whether you have a Fire TV or a different TV, so the first step is working out which.

Fire TV and Fire Stick

If you have a Fire TV Stick or Fire TV device, link it to your Echo in the Alexa app. Look in **Devices** and **+** then **Add Device**, and choose the TV or Fire TV option. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Once linked you can ask Alexa to open apps, search for shows, pause, play and rewind. Turning the TV on and off by voice may depend on the TV supporting HDMI-CEC. That is a setting on the TV itself, often called Anynet+, Bravia Sync, Simplink or something similar.

Other smart TVs

Many smart TVs from big brands have an Alexa skill or link in their own settings. Install the skill in the Alexa app, sign in to the TV brand account and allow the link. Then discover devices.

When it stops working

1. Check the TV and Fire Stick are on, and on the same Wi-Fi as your Echo.
2. Restart the Fire Stick by unplugging it for a few seconds.
3. Check the TV's own settings to make sure HDMI-CEC or network control is still on after any TV update.
4. In the Alexa app, check the TV is still shown as linked. If not, remove it and add it again.
5. Say the TV's name clearly, as Alexa may hear it differently.

If only the power fails

Often Alexa can turn the TV on but not off, or the other way round. That usually points to a TV setting such as eco or quick start. Look in the TV's menus. We cannot say exactly where, as it varies for each brand.

When to get more help

If you have changed your TV, soundbar or Wi-Fi and it all stopped working, ask for help rather than repeatedly removing devices. Vision Tech can set it up properly.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

Fire TV Stick shows a black screen or no signal

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

A black screen or a No Signal message usually means the TV is not looking at the Fire Stick, or the stick is not getting enough power. Start with the easy checks.

Check the TV input

1. Press the **Input** or **Source** button on your TV remote.
2. Choose the HDMI input the Fire Stick is plugged into. It is often labelled HDMI 1, 2 or 3.
3. Wait a few seconds.

Check the power

Plug the Fire Stick power adapter into a wall socket, not into the TV's USB port. TV USB ports often cannot supply enough power, and the stick can keep restarting or show a black screen. Use the adapter and cable that came with it.

If you have a Fire Stick with a short HDMI extender, make sure it is pushed in firmly.

Restart and swap

1. Unplug the Fire Stick from power. Leave it for about 30 seconds.
2. Plug it back in and wait a couple of minutes.
3. Try a different HDMI port on the TV.
4. If you have another TV nearby, try it there. If it works, the problem is the first TV's port or settings.

Display settings problem

If you see a picture that is flickering, or the picture is lost after changing a display setting, the screen resolution may not be supported by the TV. The way to reset the display depends on your exact model, so look up the instructions for it rather than guessing at button combinations.

Check the remote

If you only get a black screen because the remote is dead and you cannot get past a menu, see our guide on remote problems.

When to get more help

If you still have no picture after trying another TV, the Fire Stick may be faulty, and it may be covered by a guarantee. Do not factory reset unless you are told to. Ask Vision Tech for advice.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

Fire TV remote not working, or how to pair it again

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

If your Fire TV remote stopped working, the cause is usually flat batteries or the remote needing to be paired again. This guide covers the usual fixes.

Try the simple things

- Fit fresh batteries. Try new alkaline batteries.
- Keep the remote within about 3 metres of the Fire TV, and not behind a closed cabinet door.
- Unplug the Fire TV, wait five seconds and plug it in again.

Pair the remote again

The steps are:

1. Press and hold the **Home** button for about 10 seconds, until you see a message saying to press Play/Pause to start.
2. If that does not work, take out the batteries, wait 30 seconds, put them back and hold **Home** again.
3. If that fails, press and hold **Left**, **Menu** and **Back** together for 12 seconds, then press **Home** again.

When it pairs, you should see a message on the lower right of the screen.

A phone can help

If the remote is dead, you can use the Fire TV app on your phone as a remote. It needs your phone to be on the same Wi-Fi as the Fire TV. Use it to pair a replacement remote.

Alexa voice remote

The voice remote has a microphone button. Hold it and speak, for example, "Open BBC iPlayer" or "Find Strictly". If the button does nothing, re-pair the remote as above. The TV volume and power buttons only control the TV if the remote has been set up for it, and not all models have these.

Good to know

A maximum of seven controllers can be paired at once, so remove an old one before adding another.

When to get more help

If a new remote will not pair at all, there may be a fault with the Fire Stick. Vision Tech can help work out which one needs replacing.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Fire TV Stick Wi-Fi problems and buffering

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Buffering, freezing and "cannot connect to the network" on a Fire Stick are nearly always down to Wi-Fi strength or speed. Here is how to find which.

Check the connection

1. Press **Home** on the remote and go to **Settings**.
2. Look for **Network**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Select your Wi-Fi name. It may show the signal as weak, fair or good.

If the Wi-Fi is not connected, choose it again and type the password carefully.

Easy improvements

- Restart your router and the Fire Stick.
- Use the HDMI extender that came in the box. It moves the stick away from the back of the TV, which can block the signal.
- Move the router closer, or higher up and in the open.
- Pause downloads and other streaming in the house.
- Wi-Fi from a router in another room, upstairs, or behind a fireplace can be weak.

Speed

HD streaming needs a steady connection, and 4K needs more. If your speeds are poor, test them on your phone near the TV. If your broadband is slow in the evening, buffering may be down to your provider.

Fire Stick settings

In **Settings** and the section about the Fire TV or device, look for a way to restart. Keeping the Fire TV up to date may also help. Leave it plugged in and connected so updates can arrive.

Other options

Some people find a Wi-Fi extender or a mesh system helps. Using a wired connection through an adapter is possible for some Fire TV devices, but not every model supports it, so check yours.

When to get more help

If buffering continues after trying these, ask for a Wi-Fi check. Vision Tech can look at your router and signal strength and advise safely.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 1 min read

Fire TV Stick storage full: how to clear space and cache

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Fire Sticks have limited storage. When it fills up, apps slow down, crash or refuse to install. Clearing out apps you no longer use usually sorts it.

See what is using space

1. Press **Home** on the remote and go to **Settings**.
2. Choose **Applications**, then **Manage Installed Applications**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. You should see how much storage is used and a list of apps.

Clear the cache

The cache holds temporary files. Clearing it is safe and does not delete your account.

1. In the list of apps, choose the app that is misbehaving, such as Netflix or BBC iPlayer.
2. Choose **Clear cache**.
3. Open the app again.

There is also a **Clear data** option. This signs you out of the app and removes its settings, so use it only if clearing the cache did not help. You will need your login for that app again.

Remove apps you do not use

1. In the same list, choose an app you never use.
2. Choose **Uninstall** and confirm.

Do not remove anything you are unsure about, especially things that look like system apps.

Other tips

- Restart the Fire Stick.
- Keep fewer apps. Games are often large.
- Do not install apps from unknown sources. This can bring risk, and we advise against switching off security settings to do it.

When to get more help

If you have removed apps and space is still short, you may need a different model with more storage. Vision Tech can advise on this.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

How to install BBC iPlayer, ITVX and Netflix on a Fire TV Stick

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Installing an app on a Fire Stick takes a minute. The steps are the same for BBC iPlayer, ITVX, Netflix and most others from the official Amazon Appstore.

Find the app

1. Press **Home** on the remote.
2. Choose **Find**, then the magnifying glass, or use the Alexa microphone button on the remote and say, "Find BBC iPlayer".
3. Type or select the name of the app. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Install it

1. Select the app from the results.
2. Choose **Get** or **Download**.
3. Wait until it says it is ready, then choose **Open**.

The app will then appear on your Home screen and in the apps list.

Sign in

- **BBC iPlayer:** you need a free BBC account. You also need a valid TV licence to watch or use iPlayer to watch live TV.
- **ITVX:** has a free tier with adverts, and may ask you to sign in or register with a free account.
- **Netflix:** needs a paid Netflix subscription. Use your own Netflix login.

Many apps show a code on the TV and ask you to enter it on your phone at the app's website. Only do this on the official site of that app, and never enter your password on a page you reached from a link in an unexpected message.

If you cannot find it

The app may not be available on that type of device, or your Fire Stick needs an update. Check Fire TV updates. Also check you are signed in to your Amazon account on the Fire TV.

Staying safe

Only install from the official Amazon Appstore. Be wary of videos online telling you to switch off security features to install free TV apps. This is how people end up with problems.

When to get more help

If the app will not install or crashes, see our guide on apps not loading, or ask Vision Tech to help.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Fire TV apps will not load, crash or freeze

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

When an app on your Fire Stick sticks on a logo, shows an error or closes by itself, work through these steps, starting with the easiest.

Quick fixes

1. Close the app and open it again.
2. Restart the Fire TV. Press and hold the Select and Play/Pause buttons together for a few seconds, or unplug it for 30 seconds. If the button method does not work on your model, unplugging it is fine.
3. Check your Wi-Fi. See our guide on Wi-Fi problems and buffering.
4. Check the service is not down. Try it on your phone.

Clear the app's cache

1. Go to **Settings**, then **Applications**, then **Manage Installed Applications**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
2. Choose the app.
3. Choose **Clear cache** and try again.
4. If that fails, **Clear data**, but note this signs you out of that app and you will need your login.

Update

Check the Fire TV software is up to date. Look in **Settings**, then **My Fire TV** or the device section, then **About**, and look for a **Check for Updates** option. If an update is found, let it install and restart. Apps usually update automatically, but you can look for the app in the Appstore for an update option.

Reinstall

Uninstall the app from **Manage Installed Applications** and install it again from the Appstore. You will have to sign in again, so make sure you know your password.

Check storage and time

If storage is nearly full, apps struggle. See our guide on storage. A wrong date or time can also stop apps, though Fire TV normally sets this itself.

When to get more help

If every app fails, a factory reset may be the next step. See our guide, which includes a warning. Ask before doing it, as it removes all your apps and settings.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to sign out or change the Amazon account on a Fire TV or Echo, and fix Prime login problems

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Devices are tied to one Amazon account. If you bought a second-hand device, share a home with someone with a different account, or cannot log in to Prime Video, you may need to change the account.

Before you start

Changing the account on a Fire TV removes the old account's apps, settings and purchases from that device. They are not lost, as they stay on the old account. Make sure you know the email address and password for the account you want to use, and that you can receive any security code Amazon sends.

On a Fire TV

The menu names change between versions, but the idea is the same.

1. Press **Home** and go to **Settings**.
2. Look for **My Account** or **My Fire TV**.
3. Choose your Amazon account and look for the option to sign out or deregister.
4. Confirm and wait for the device to restart.
5. When asked, sign in with the other account.

On an Echo

In the Alexa app, an Echo can be moved to another account by deregistering it first. See our guide on selling or giving away an Echo.

Prime login problems

- Check you are using the correct email address for your Amazon account. People often have two.
- Reset your password using the **Forgotten password** option.
- If a code is sent to your phone or email, check the right one.
- Make sure Prime is active, since it may have expired or the payment failed.
- Restart the device and try again.

Staying safe

Amazon will not phone you to ask for your password or ask you to buy gift cards. Do not turn off two-step verification to make logging in easier.

When to get more help

If you are locked out of your Amazon account, use the account recovery option on the Amazon website, and ask for help if it is not working. Vision Tech can guide you through recovery safely.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Advanced | 2 min read

How to factory reset a Fire TV Stick

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

A factory reset wipes the Fire Stick and returns it to how it was when new. It can fix stubborn problems, but it also removes your apps, logins and settings. Try the simpler fixes first.

Please read first

This will erase your apps, downloaded files, Wi-Fi details and account sign-in from the Fire Stick. Your Amazon account itself is not deleted. Before you start:

- Have your Wi-Fi password ready.
- Have your Amazon login ready, and any security code device.
- Know your logins for apps such as Netflix and BBC iPlayer.
- Try a restart, clearing the app cache, or checking for updates first.

Reset using the menu

1. Press **Home** and go to **Settings**.
2. Choose **My Fire TV**. On some versions it is called **Device** or **System**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Choose **Reset to Factory Defaults**.
4. Read the warning and confirm.
5. Wait. The Fire Stick will restart and may take several minutes.

If you cannot use the menu

On many models you can press and hold the Back and right buttons on the remote together for about ten seconds, then choose to continue on screen. This may vary by model, so look up your model before trying it.

After the reset

1. Choose your language and Wi-Fi.
2. Sign in to your Amazon account.
3. Reinstall your apps, and sign in to each one.
4. Check your parental controls and PIN, as these will need setting up again.

Selling or giving it away

If you are passing the Fire Stick on, do a factory reset first, so the new owner cannot see your account.

When to get more help

If the reset does not fix the problem, the device may be faulty. Please ask Vision Tech before trying anything further.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Fire TV parental controls, PIN and kids' profiles

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

You can protect a Fire TV with a PIN, limit what children can watch and set up a profile for them. Menu names change, so this guide gives the general approach.

Set a PIN

1. Press **Home** and go to **Settings**.
2. Choose **Preferences**, then look for **Parental Controls**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Turn parental controls on and choose a PIN. Pick one that your children would not guess, and write it down somewhere safe.

The PIN can be required for things such as purchases, certain content ratings and some apps. Use the options on screen to choose what it protects.

Control what is watched

In the same section you may be able to set viewing restrictions by age rating. Streaming apps, like Netflix and BBC iPlayer, also have their own controls, so set them in the app as well. Those need setting up in each service.

Profiles and Amazon Kids

Fire TV supports profiles, so each person can have their own recommendations. Amazon also has a children's service, Amazon Kids. The exact names, prices and menu paths change, so look for the Parent Dashboard or Amazon Kids settings in the Alexa app. If an Echo has Amazon Kids switched on, voice-deleting commands do not work on it.

Purchases

Also set a PIN for purchases so that children cannot buy rentals or apps.

If you forget the PIN

Amazon has a way to reset a parental controls PIN using your Amazon account details. Follow the prompts on the device. If it does not work, ask for help.

When to get more help

If your child has a profile that will not open, or you want a full family setup, Vision Tech can go through it with you. Please keep PINs private.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to mirror your phone to a Fire TV Stick

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

You can show your phone screen on the TV using a Fire Stick, but how it works depends on your phone and your Fire TV model.

What you need

Your phone and Fire Stick must be on the same Wi-Fi network. Not all models support mirroring, and not all phones do either. Generally, many Android phones can mirror, using a feature with a name such as Smart View, Cast or Screen Mirroring. iPhones work differently and may need an app or a model that supports AirPlay. Support varies between models, so check what your Fire TV offers.

Switch mirroring on at the Fire TV

1. Press **Home** and go to **Settings**.
2. Look for **Display & Sounds** and an option such as **Enable Display Mirroring**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Select it. The Fire TV will wait for your phone.

Connect your phone

1. On an Android phone, open the quick settings by swiping down and look for the Cast or Smart View button.
2. Choose your Fire TV from the list.
3. Accept any prompt on the TV.

To stop, turn off mirroring on the phone.

Other ways

Many apps, such as Netflix and BBC iPlayer, have a Cast icon in the app. That is often better quality than screen mirroring and keeps your phone free to use.

If it fails

- Check both are on the same Wi-Fi, not a guest network.
- Restart the Fire Stick and phone.
- Mirroring has a slight delay and may not suit games.
- Do not mirror private screens, such as banking, while others watch.

When to get more help

If your phone never finds the Fire TV, there may be a router setting at fault. Please do not turn off security settings. Vision Tech can check it safely.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Alexa calls, messages and Drop In: how they work and how to keep them private

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Echo devices can make calls and send messages to other Alexa users, and a feature called Drop In lets approved people start talking to your Echo without you answering. It is worth understanding so you are in control.

What each one does

- **Calls and messages:** you can call a contact who also uses Alexa, or send a voice message. The Echo's light ring pulses green for an incoming call, and spins green during a call or Drop In.
- **Drop In:** an approved contact can connect straight to your Echo, like an intercom. It is meant for family. You choose who is allowed.

Controlling who can contact you

Calling and messaging need setting up with your phone number and contacts in the Alexa app. Look for Communication or Calls and Messages in the app's settings. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

In those settings, look for options for who can Drop In, such as nobody, only your household, or chosen contacts. If you do not want it, choose the most limited option, or turn the feature off. Also look for Do Not Disturb, which can stop calls arriving at certain times.

Privacy sensible steps

- Only approve people you trust, and review the list now and then.
- If you have an Echo Show, remember a Drop In may show video. Use the camera shutter or camera button when you do not want that.
- Pressing the microphone button turns the microphone off, and the ring goes red. The device is then not listening.
- Tell any visitors if an Echo is in the room.

Stopping an unwanted call

Say, "Alexa, hang up" or "Alexa, end call". If you keep getting calls from someone you do not know, block the contact in the app and change the settings above.

When to get more help

If you think someone has accessed your Echo without your permission, change your Amazon password straight away and ask for help to review the settings. Vision Tech can go through the privacy settings with you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Easy | 2 min read

Echo Show camera and privacy shutter, and how to turn the microphone off

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

You are always in control of an Echo's microphone, and an Echo Show's camera. There are physical controls on the device itself, as well as settings in the app.

The microphone button

Every Echo has a microphone button, normally on the top. Press it once. The light turns solid red. This means the device microphone is disconnected and Alexa is not listening. Press it again to turn it back on.

If you turn the microphone off, Alexa will not answer your voice, and alarms may still sound. You will need to press the button to use voice again.

The camera on an Echo Show

Echo Show models usually have a camera, with a sliding cover or a camera button, depending on the model. If your Show has a shutter, slide it across to block the lens. Some Shows have a button that switches off the camera and the microphones together. When the red light is on, on camera-equipped devices video will not be shared. Check your model's booklet for where yours is.

Where the camera is used

The camera can be used for video calls and, if you allow it, for Drop In. You choose who can contact you in the app's Communication settings. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Good habits

- Close the shutter when you are not on a call, or if the Show is in a bedroom or bathroom.
- Do not put Echo devices in places you would find uncomfortable being overheard.
- If you are having a private conversation and want certainty, press the microphone button until you see the red ring.

When to get more help

If your camera shutter or microphone button seems stuck, or the ring stays red, restart the Echo first. If the problem remains, contact the shop or Amazon for a replacement, or ask Vision Tech for advice.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to review and delete Alexa voice recordings, and Alexa privacy basics

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Alexa keeps a history of what you say to it, so you can see and delete it. Please read the warning in the next section first.

A warning before you delete

Voice recordings help Alexa understand you better, so deleting them may make Alexa a little less accurate. Deleting voice history cannot be undone, so only delete what you are sure about. Also note that some records, such as shopping, may be kept separately for a different reason.

Review and delete in the app

The steps are:

1. Open the Alexa app.
2. Tap **More**.
3. Tap **Alexa Privacy**.
4. Choose **Review Voice History**.
5. Use the filters to narrow by date, device or person.
6. Select the conversations you want to remove and delete them.

Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Deleting by voice

You can switch on a feature so Alexa deletes recordings when you ask, with commands such as "Delete what I just said", "Delete everything I said today" or "Delete my entire voice history". To turn it on, go to **More, Alexa Privacy, Manage Your Alexa Data**, then **Voice and Typed Requests**. This command is not available for Alexa+ accounts or for devices with Amazon Kids switched on. The same area may also offer automatic deletion after a set time.

Other privacy basics

- Use the microphone off button when you want privacy.
- Set a voice purchase code if you do not want orders by voice.
- Choose carefully who can Drop In.
- Use a strong, unique password and two-step verification on your Amazon account. Do not turn security features off.
- Review Alexa Privacy now and then.

When to get more help

If you are unsure what to delete or keep, ask before removing anything. Vision Tech can go through the privacy settings with you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Alexa Guard, Brief Mode and Follow-up Mode: what they do

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

These are three extra features you may meet in Alexa settings. This guide explains what they are in plain words. Availability and the exact menu names depend on your device, region and the app version, so check what you see in your own app.

Brief Mode

Brief Mode makes Alexa answer with a short chime or light instead of speaking a full confirmation. For example, when you say "Alexa, turn on the lamp", it may just chime. It is useful if the spoken confirmations annoy you. The setting is in the Alexa app's settings for Alexa responses, but the exact menu path varies, so look through the **More** and **Settings** menus.

Follow-up Mode

Follow-up Mode lets you ask a second question without saying "Alexa" again. After the first answer, the ring may briefly stay lit, ready to listen. A teal bar means that Alexa is ready for you to speak without the wake word. If Alexa keeps listening when you do not want it to, you can switch Follow-up Mode off in the device settings.

Alexa Guard

Alexa Guard is an optional feature designed to keep an ear on the home while you are out. It may listen for sounds such as smoke alarms or glass breaking, and can notify you. It may need a compatible Echo, and some of its features may need a paid plan or specific devices. The exact features vary by device and change over time, so look at what the Alexa app offers for your Echo.

It should not replace a proper smoke alarm.

Turning things on or off

In the Alexa app, look through **Devices**, your Echo, and its settings, as well as **More** and **Settings**. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

If you do not want a feature, you can switch it off at any time. Think about privacy before turning on listening features.

When to get more help

If you want Alexa to help with home safety, speak to Vision Tech about the right kit. Please do not rely on a smart speaker as your only alarm.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

Alexa scams and unexpected purchases: how to stop them

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Echo devices can order from Amazon by voice, and scammers sometimes pretend to be Amazon. A few settings and habits keep you safe.

Set a voice purchase code

You can set a 4-digit voice code to confirm purchases. In the Alexa app:

1. Tap **More**, then **Settings**.
2. Go to **Account Settings**.
3. Choose **Voice Purchasing**.
4. Select **Purchase Confirmation**, then **Manage**.
5. Switch on the voice code and create a 4-digit number.

Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.

Keep the code private. Do not say it when visitors are around. In the same area you can also switch voice purchasing off if you never want it.

Check your orders

Look at your Amazon orders for anything you did not expect, and at your voice history in the Alexa app. If a child or a TV advert could have triggered an order, you may find it there. See our guide on voice recordings first, as deleting history removes the evidence.

Cancel or return

On the Amazon website or app, go to your orders and cancel or return the item if it has not been sent. The website walks you through it.

Spotting scams

- Amazon will not phone and ask you to confirm a payment, or tell you to buy gift cards.
- Do not install software or remote control tools on request from a caller.
- Emails and texts about an Echo order you did not make may be fake. Do not click the link. Go to Amazon's website or app yourself.
- Never give out your password or one-time codes.
- Do not turn off security features at the request of anyone.

If you have been caught out

Change your Amazon password at once, turn on two-step verification, and contact your bank if you gave out card details.

When to get more help

If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank first and report it to Action Fraud. Vision Tech can help secure your accounts and devices afterwards.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Amazon Alexa, Echo & Fire TV | Medium | 2 min read

How to sell, give away or return an Echo (deregister it first)

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Before passing on an Echo, you should remove it from your Amazon account, so the next person cannot use your account and you do not lose track of it. Please read the warning.

A warning first

Deregistering removes the Echo from your account and clears your settings from it. Your smart-home links, routines and music links for that Echo will go. Make a note of anything you want to recreate on a new Echo. This cannot easily be undone.

Deregistering in the app

The exact path changes, but in outline:

1. Open the Alexa app and tap **Devices**.
2. Choose **Echo & Alexa**, then select the Echo. Menu names in the Alexa app change from time to time, so if yours looks slightly different, look for the closest wording rather than worrying.
3. Open **Device Settings**.
4. Look for **Registered to** or **Deregister** and confirm.

Alexa may then put the Echo into setup mode. The orange ring means it is in setup mode, .

Factory reset the Echo

Deregistering is the main step, but a factory reset on the device itself also clears your Wi-Fi details. The method depends on your Echo model, usually by holding certain buttons for several seconds. The exact buttons depend on your model, so look them up rather than guessing. On an Echo Show, there is a reset option in the device's settings on the screen.

Other housekeeping

- Remove it from any groups, rooms or routines.
- Think about deleting your voice history first. See our guide on this and read the warning.
- Check with your Amazon account that the device no longer appears.
- Keep the box and charger if you are selling, to get a better price.

If you have bought one second-hand

If the Echo is still registered to someone else, ask them to deregister it. Do not try to get round this.

When to get more help

If you cannot find the Deregister option or the Echo will not reset, ask for help before selling. Vision Tech can check your account to make sure it is clean.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.