

# There's a group policy for Action Center, and another one for Action Center

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A customer wanted to know how to disable the Action Center, the control panel that lets you access settings for the firewall, SmartScreen, that sort of thing. The reason is that the customer is developing a locked-down system with a fixed set of applications, and they want to disable notifications about the settings that are locked down, since there's no point informing the user about something they can't do anything about. (And risk the change the user will try to "fix" the issue and just make things worse.)

Okay, well, before we can answer the question, let's get some terminology straight.

There have been multiple features in Windows that have gone by the name "Action Center". In Windows 7 and Windows 8, Action Center was the name for the thing that gives you quick access to firewall and other security settings.

Meanwhile, Windows Phone 8.1 introduced its own concept also called "Action Center". It provided quick access to a few system settings, as well as gathering all your recent notifications.

Windows 10 brought the Windows Phone Action Center to the desktop, and the old Action Center was renamed "Security and Maintenance Center".

This means that when you say "Action Center", different people will hear the phrase and think of different things.

The customer who asked about disabling the Action Center was asking about the Windows 8 Action Center, as confirmed not only by their description of its contents, but also by a screen shot included with the question. If that's what you want to disable, then you can use the group policy called "Remove the Action Center icon". (This policy was renamed to "Remove the Security and Maintenance icon" in Windows 10.)

The customer replied, "But if we disable that, then will the user be able to toggle Wi-Fi or Tablet Mode?"

Okay, now the customer changed gears and is now asking about the Windows 10 Action Center.

If you want to disable the Windows 10 Action Center, then the policy you want is called “Remove Notifications and Action Center.”

I apologize for the confusion. This is what happens when Marketing chooses the names of things: They see a cool name and decide to reuse it. This happened before with *Surface*, which used to refer to the table-sized device, but now refers to a line of PC tablets and laptops (and these giant wall-sized things) and the old table-sized devices are now called *PixelSense*. Earlier, it happened with Access, which used to refer to a terminal emulator program but now refers to a database program.

At least the engineering team recognizes the importance of not reusing names. That’s why there is no DirectX 4.

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