

### When to run a "Complete Format Recover"

When running a "Complete Format Recover", use only the default selected file types: .doc, .ppt, .xls, .avi, .wav, .jpeg (three types), .bmp, .pdf, .zip. These file types are used by Recover My Files to gather sufficient information to rebuild the entire missing file and folder structure at the end of the search. All file types will be found and displayed in "Folder View" of the results screen at the end of the search.

### Complete Format Recover

A "Complete Format Recover" is best used when:

- a Fast Format Recover has not located your data;
- a partition (drive letter) has been deleted or is missing (and a Fast Format Recover did not work);
- a hard drive reports as RAW or Dynamic (and a Fast Format Recover did not work);
- you have formatted your drive and it now has a new blank drive letter
- you have formatted your drive and reinstalled Windows.

A Complete Format Recover is best to run on the physical drive. The Complete Format Recover is a longer search because it scans the drive looking for files by their unique file structure in order to gather enough information to rebuild the entire file and folder structure, which it rebuilds at the end of the search.

### Step 1 - Selecting the "Complete Format Recover"

To run a "Complete Format Recover", open the Recover My Files wizard by:

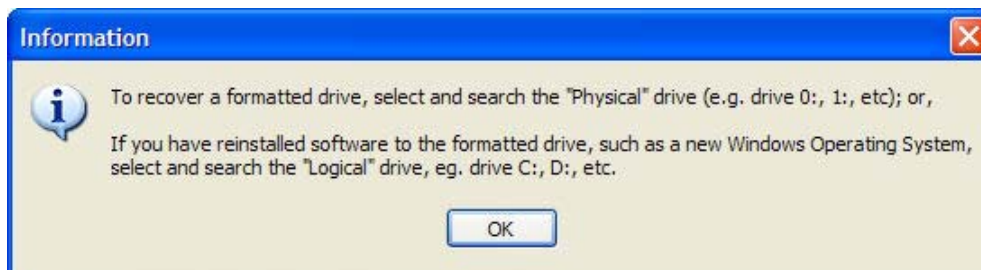
- running Recover My Files from the desktop icon (the program will open to the wizard); or,
- if you are at the main program screen, click the "Start Search" button;

select "Complete Format Recover" and then click "Next".



## Step 2 - Select the Drive To Search

You will see the following information message:



Click OK to continue to the drive selection window. Here, Recover My Files will scan to identify the devices (hard drives, digital camera, USB drive etc) that are connected to your computer.

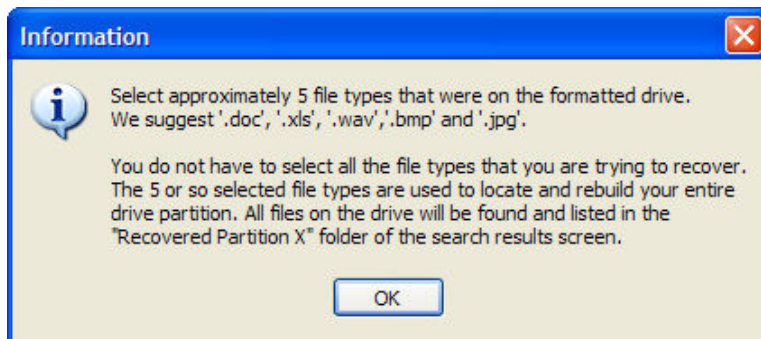
The drive selection window will list both "Logical" (drive letters) and "Physical" (hard disk drives) storage devices. [Learn more about the difference between a drive letter and a physical drive here.](#)



In a "Complete Format Recover" it is usually best to search the "physical drive". If you have more than 1 drive connected to your computer, you should be able to determine the problem physical disk by the displayed drive size. Select the device/s you wish to search by using your mouse to place a green tick in the box next to the device name. Click Next.

#### Step 4 - Selecting The File Types

You will see the following information message:



A Complete Format Recover uses a default set of common file types, .bmp, .jpeg (three types) .doc, .xls, .ppt, .pdf, .wav, .avi, and .zip to identify information about the lost file system so that at the end of the search it can rebuild the entire files system with ALL file types (not just those in the default selection).

**IMPORTANT:** It is very rare that you would need to make any change to the default selected files. Only make a change if you do not have any of the above file types on the problem drive (for example if your lost drive only held MP3 files).

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO CHANGE THE DEFAULT FILE SELECTION**

**IT IS NOT REQUIRED AND WILL ONLY SERVE TO SLOW DOWN THE SEARCH**

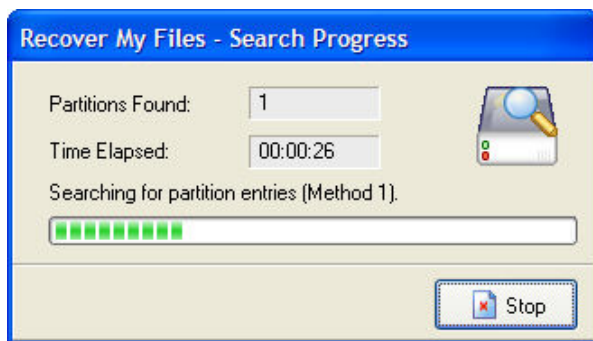
Click OK to close the message box, check that the default file types listed above are ticked, and click the START button.

### Step 5 - Running the Search

The Complete Format Recover has two functions:

1. It scans the disk to find the default selected files by their unique file structure and displays these files in "File View" of the results screen. These files are represented as **"Files Found = XX"** in the progress window.
2. It searches for the Operating System record (MFT record) for each file. This is represented in the progress window by **"OS Items Found = XX"**.

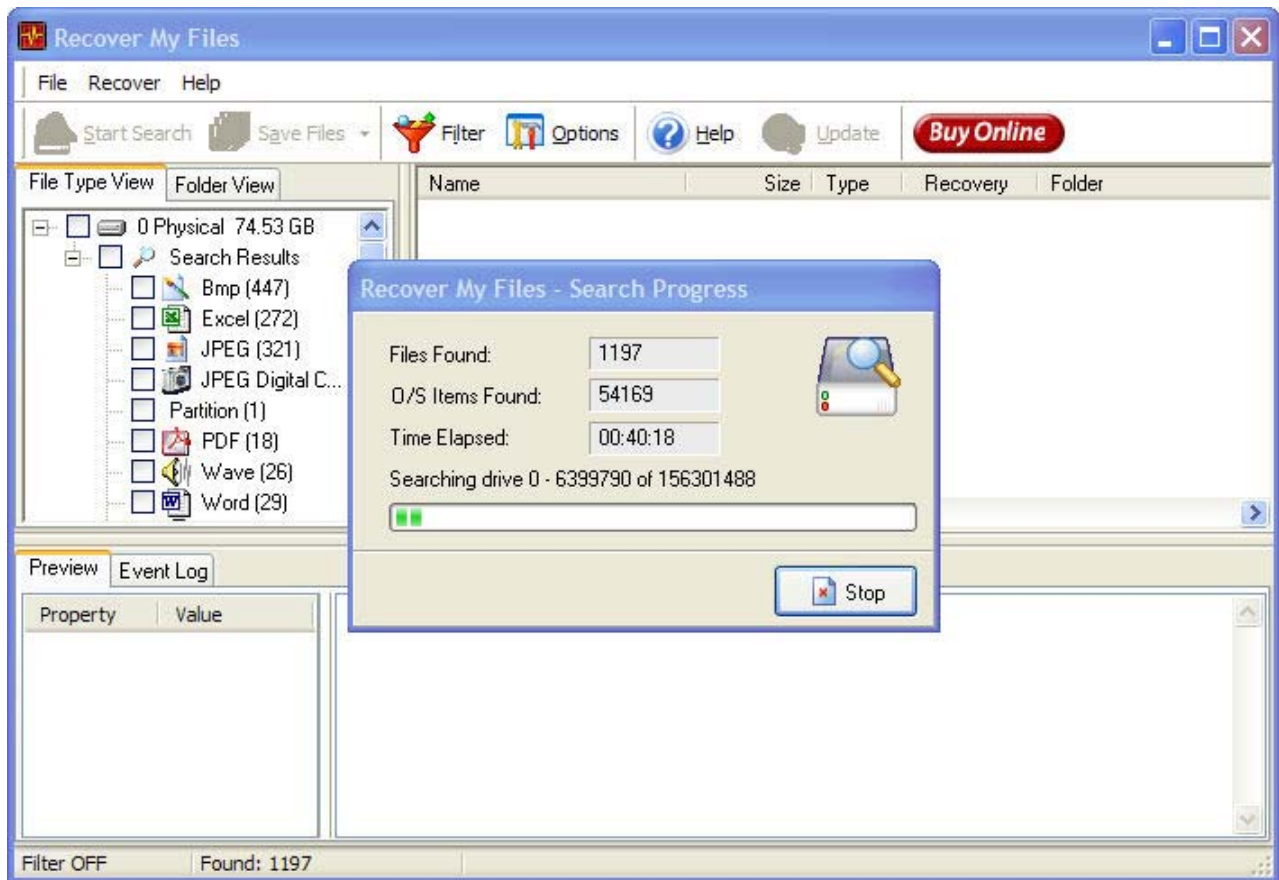
The object of a Complete Format Recover is to find as many OS Items as possible. Each OS item represents a single file with its full file and folder structure that will be reconstructed and displayed in the results screen at the end of the search.



You will see that in a "Complete Format Recover" that the number of "OS Items Found" should rise rapidly within the first few hours of the search. This is because it has found missing "Master File Table" which contains the Operating System record for each file.

### Can I Speed Up a "Complete Format Recover Search"?

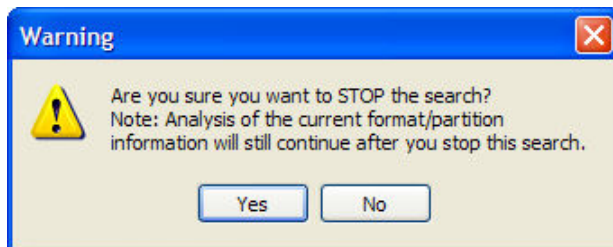
It is usually not necessary to let a "Complete Format Recover" search run all the way to its completion. You can see in the screen capture below that after a 40:18 minutes scan, 54169 OS Items has been found (each OS Item represents a single file with its full file and folder name).



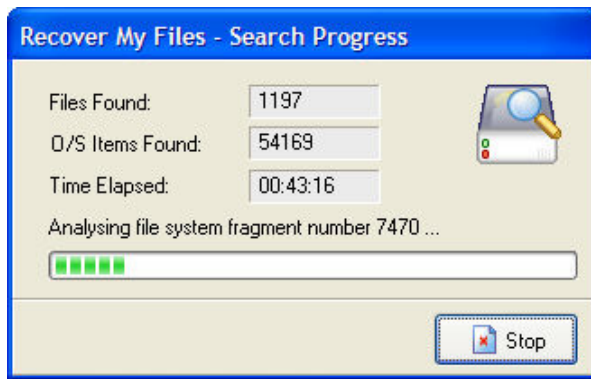
As:

- a). 54,169 is the approximate number of files that were on this drive:
- b). the OS Items number had stabilized at 54,169 and had not changed for some time;

It is reasonable to stop the search and allow the partition to rebuild. When the STOP button in the progress window is pressed, the following information message appears:



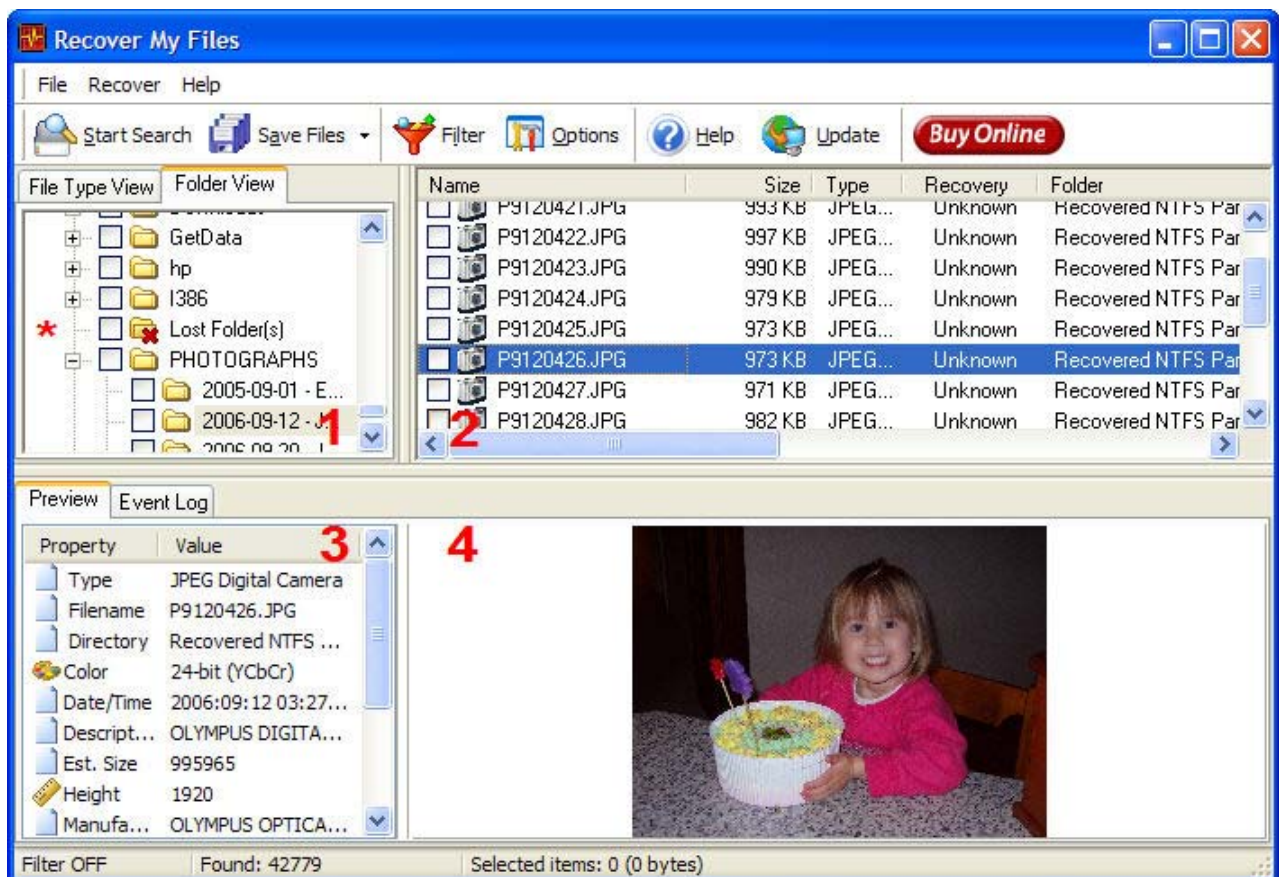
When "Yes" is selected, Recover My Files moves into the process of rebuilding the file and folder structure (if the search was let it run its full course this is the normal rebuilding process at the completion of the search).



## Step 6 - Understanding the "Complete Format Recover" Search Results

A Complete Format Recover will:

- list the default selected file types in "File View" of the results screen. These files will not have their original names.
- recover an entire file system with full file and folder names and display the results in "Folder View" of the results screen as shown in the screen capture below":



1. Folder View (Window 1)

The file and folder structure is displayed under Folder View in the top left window.

2. The File List (Window 2)

Click on a Folder (in Folder View) to display the list of files found in top right hand window. Important aspects of this file list include:

- files can be sorted by clicking on the column headings;
- each file has a "[recovery rating](#)";
- the "path" indicates the original location of the file which will be used when the file is saved;
- clicking on a file in this list will display, if available, the properties of the file in Window 3 and a preview of the file in Window 4.

3. The Selected File Properties (Window 3)

- This window shows the selected files properties.

4. The Selected File Preview (Window 4)

- This window shows a preview of the file selected in Window 2.

Other important items in the search results screen are shown in the bottom bar of the program: The status of the Filter; The number of files found; The number of items selected to be saved and the volume of files selected to be saved.