

Best Practices for Loose Drive Processing

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Description

This article describes some of the best practices for processing loose drives with Blancco Hardware Appliances.

At least some of the mentioned items are also applicable if you have set up your own permanent installation of Blancco Drive Eraser for loose drive processing.

Recommended Process for Connecting Loose Drives

1. Start with an appliance with no loose drive connected.
2. Connect a loose drive, press "Refresh drive list", check if the drive is detected (quickly check that the drive has the right capacity, vendor, model, etc.):
 - a. Wait at least 5 seconds between the moment you connect the drive and the moment you press "Refresh drive list" to allow the drive sufficient time to power on/spin up and be ready to be detected.
 - b. If the drive is detected, repeat the operation: connect another loose drive, press "Refresh drive list", check if the drive is detected and so on.
 - c. If the drive is not detected, disconnect the drive: this drive is probably faulty and could mess up the other drives.
3. Once the appliance is full (all slots occupied with loose drives), start the erasure. Wait until all drives are erased and their reports saved before disconnecting them and connecting another batch.

Connect/disconnect drives when other drives are erasing might cause some instabilities, especially if you are using an erasure standard that includes firmware-based erasure command steps (these steps occur during the erasure of remapped sectors or with standards such as NIST, please refer to the BDE user manual for details on the erasure standards steps).

Processing and Configuration Tips

- Always use anti-static equipment such as anti-static wrist strap or gloves while manipulating loose drives to prevent shortcuts that could disrupt the operation and hurt the operator
- Setting a hotplug timeout of 60 seconds should cover most of the cases, including drives that are slow to respond.
 - Otherwise hotplug timeout should be set to the recommended timeout based on the processed drive interface (more details in the BDE user manual):
- It is recommended to process batches of similar drives: same interface (SATA, SAS...), type (HDD, SSD...), capacity, if possible vendor/model.
- It is recommended to restart the appliance at least once every 2-3 days. This will reset the machine and reduce any possible issue caused by faulty drives.
- To save time, you can start the erasure of a drive right after connecting it (especially if you are using an erasure standard doing normal overwriting). Similarly, you can disconnect a drive after it has finished the erasure and its report has been saved.
- To avoid the chance a drive will power off before the erasure is started, disable spinning down the idle disks (especially if the erasure is started manually).
- When a drive is not detected, you can try re-detecting it a second time. If the drive is not detected after the second attempt, disconnect it and put it aside: the BDE session will disable the "Refresh drive list" button in case a drive is not detected after 3 attempts (to prevent possible instabilities).
 - A drive that is not detectable might be faulty and/or generate internal errors in the appliance. Such drive should be sent to repair or scrapped.
- Blancco IBR Workflows can help to automate this process further, start the erasure automatically with the adequate standard or save the report automatically after the erasure is complete.
 - If you are not using Workflows yet, contact your Blancco Sales Representative for more details.