Saving a ShopBot Backup

There are many times when our computer controlled machines seem to have been taken over by gremlins. Usually, these "gremlins" are erroneous settings that cause unexpected actions in the machine, or unexpected reactions to commonly used commands. Windows (all versions) has long been plagued by errors that occur when the OS is closed abruptly. The same is true for most Windows software. SB3 and the SB Link are no exceptions.

Since ShopBot 3 and the ShopBot Link both require a large number of settings be stored accurately to enable our machines to operate properly, keeping a backup copy of these settings is essential to a quick and painless recovery from a software crash. There are a number of causes for these crashes, many are a result of external electrical charges, or in some cases, the machine has hit a limit switch or experienced a power surge or flicker.

Without going into what can cause these crashes, I will show you how to recover from them and be back up and running in a few minutes. Of course, before we can restore from a backup, we must first create a backup. Here is the method I have shown to a good number of users. There are many ways to accomplish these simple tasks, this one uses Windows Explorer and select, copy and paste mouse commands. On some computers, you may have (or wish) to select these commands from a menu or drag and drop instead of using a mouse click. Use the method that you are the comfortable with.

Note: In cases where a user would call ShopBot Tech support, they will ask you to install the latest version of the software and proceed as per instructions. This method gives Tech Support a known baseline that will allow them to repair most software related problems. Installing a new version of SB3 overwrites many of the settings and customized files we users have stored in our machines. My method allows us to keep our current software version, all of our custom settings and files intact, and should take less time than a call to support.

If you are not comfortable using Windows Explorer to copy and paste files have someone help you, as it is important to get this right. This procedure cannot replace tech support for all users, but in cases where the user has fairly competent computer skills, will allow him/her to self repair without a great deal of effort.

Create a Backup Folder:

Open My Computer > Double click to open "C:" drive (may be named something like C: "special name")

Select C:\ then R click and create new folder, name "SB BKUP" or "ZBKUP" to have your folder displayed at the bottom of C:\ drive contents. If you have multiple drives on your machine, locate the BACKUP folder on one other than C:\.

SB3 Control Software:

Find (if you have saved a local copy) the SB3 version that was used to install your current Control software. For example the latest version is named: "Setup_sb3_6_44.exe". Once located, R click and select copy. Navigate to where the SB BKUP folder is visible, R click and select paste. Verify that the file has been copied there. You can download the SB3 software, but I prefer the speed of a local copy. Saving a local copy also keeps you from forgetting which version is your "known working". When downloading a software version from the ShopBot website you have the option to "Save As". Navigate to your SB BKUP folder and save your preferred version there.

SbParts\Custom Folder:

With the C:\ folder open, double click to open the "SbParts" folder, R click on the "Custom" folder, select copy. Navigate to where the SB BKUP folder is visible, R click and select paste. Verify that the file has been copied there. You should repeat this copy/paste (select overwrite) anytime a change has been made to the software, your custom files or setup. A routine should be implemented to backup these files at least once a month.

SB3 Settings:

The next step assumes that SB3 is running, all your settings for speeds, ramps, homing (via the SB Setup), etc. are to your liking AND your machine has been homed and sitting at the 0,0 location. Do not make the SB3 backup unless your machine is working error free.

From the SB3 Console enter **[U]**tilities **[S]**ave Current Settings to a Custom Settings File. In the Save dialog box, navigate to the C:\SB BKUP (or your other location) folder and save the file as, in my case, "GC SB3 Settings.sbd" Use a name that you will recognize as your SB3 software settings. This file will store all your current settings, most of which we users do not know exist. Make sure that the proper file extension is not overwritten.

IF you are a not ShopBot Link user, skip the next section and go to the "Restoring Your Settings" paragraph. For Link users, the procedure is similar to SB3, but has an extra step:

ShopBot Link:

Like SB3, make sure that your Link Settings are as you prefer them and are working well. I usually go into the **[Load]** dialog and select **[Clear All]** to remove any parts loaded, but this is not important.

From the main screen, press the **[Export]** button. Navigate to the C:\SB BKUP folder and select **[OK]**. A command window will appear, the file is created, and you will be prompted to "press any key to continue". The name of this file cannot be modified during the save procedure, so navigate to the C:\SB BKUP (or your location) folder, R click on the file named "ShopBotLink1-0-xx.cab" and select rename. (xx refers to current Link version) Rename this file, in my case, "GC Link Settings.cab", in yours, select an appropriate name for you. Make sure that the proper file extension is not overwritten.

Restoring Your Settings:

In most cases the control software does not need to be reinstalled. IF you feel that it does, remove the current version using Windows Uninstall. The path to this varies a little between versions, but "Add or Remove Programs" or "Programs and Features" are located in the Windows Control Panel. Select "ShopBot 3 version 3.6.xx" from the list and press "Uninstall". You may choose to skip this step, if so, proceed to "SbParts\Custom:" below.

SB3 Control Software:

Once Windows has completed the uninstall procedure you may want to reboot the computer and possibly run a registry checker to remove or repair any errors. Next, navigate to your SB BKUP folder, double click on the "Setup_sb3_6_xx.exe" file to install SB3. For this install it does not matter which of the install options you select as we will overwrite all the OEM with your saved files.

SbParts\Custom Folder:

Next, navigate and open the C:\BKUP. R click and select the "Custom" folder, R click and select copy. Now navigate to the C:\ drive, R click on the SbParts folder, and select Paste. When prompted, select overwrite or replace, depending on your windows version. I have a trimmed down version of SbParts with no OEM files in it. I usually delete all the existing prior to paste of the backup files. Unless you have a large number of modified files, you can skip this step. You should now have a clean version of SB3 installed and have kept your user defined variables and customized (if any) files.

SB3 Settings:

Turn on your machine, Start SB3, square the gantry, zero the X & Y axes (home) and leave (or move) the cutting head at (or to) the 0,0 location. From the SB3 Console, enter **[U]**tilities **[R]**eset Default Settings, Load…… Select **[YES]** to the "Do You Want to Clear the System Log…." dialog box. Select **[Yes]** to the "Do You Want to Load the Default Settings or Load a Custom Settings File……" dialog box. Select **[OK]** to the "Select and Load Settings…." dialog box.

Navigate to your SB BKUP folder and select the "Your Saved Name SB3 Settings.sbd" file. SB3 will load all those settings that were saved when you made the backup. SB3 Settings are done.

If you are not a SB Link user, you are done and should have a machine that responds as expected. Once you go thru this process a couple times you can accomplish it in a few minutes, and knowing how to do this may save you a good number of calls to SB Tech Support.

SB Link Settings:

Open the SB Link, and from the main screen press **[Import].** Navigate to your SB BKUP folder and select your "Your Saved Name SB Link Settings.cab" file. That's all there is to it. You are good to go.

In most cases this will repair lost or erroneous settings caused by a software crash. In the cases that it didn't, you will most likely have to install the latest version of the control software and possibly call support. In other cases there may be a bad component or computer problem that these settings fixes cannot repair. In any case you still will have the ability, once your machine is up and running, to cherry pick Custom files, variables or user modified files from your backup folder. When doing this, make sure you save the existing OEM file with another name, in case there is a problem with your backup version of that file.

If you are able to diagnose that your problems are isolated to either SB3 or SB Link settings, you can restore those settings alone, but if you are not able to diagnose and isolate which is the cause, Follow the steps above, In Order!

Winter, and its never ending supply of static making dry air is almost upon us. Hopefully, this procedure will give you a way to recover from software crashes caused by this static and some of the other gremlins that make our ShopBotting experience not so fun. I would recommend that if your experience these problems more than once a month, that you make a concerted effort to find and repair the root cause. You can also save your SB BKUP folder to a thumb drive and use these files to transfer to another computer and have the exact settings as your original.

Hopefully, this will allow you to get up and running quickly after a crash and truly have a "5 Minute Software Fix"

(Note: Many versions of SB3 software contain improvements over the previous versions. This method does not allow you to take advantage of these improvements)