

SQL Server error 3241 - The media family on device ... is incorrectly formed

When restoring a database, the following error may occur:

SQL error 3013: RESTORE FILELIST is terminating abnormally.

SQL error 3241: The media family on device <device name> is incorrectly formed.

There are two possible causes for this error:

- This error arises if you attempt to restore a database from a backup created on a later version of SQL Server to an earlier version of SQL Server. You can only restore to the same or a later version of SQL Server. This is a SQL Server limitation.
- This error may also arise if the SQL Backup Agent service doesn't have the necessary permissions. For example, if you are restoring across a network, the SQL Backup Agent service must have read permission to access the folder containing the backups. For more information on the permissions required by the SQL Backup Agent service, see [Permissions](#).