

EA Troubleshooting Field Guide: Log Errors Decoded

When an expert advisor misbehaves, the terminal already knows why — the answer is sitting in the Experts and Journal logs as a code or a short line of text. This field guide translates the messages you will actually see and gives the fix in the order to try it.

1. Find the real message first

- ☐ Open the Experts tab (and Journal) at the bottom of the terminal. The first error after the EA was attached is the cause; later lines are usually consequences.
- ☐ Note the exact time. Match it against news releases, rollover, and your VPS restart schedule before changing any setting.
- ☐ Change one thing, then re-test. Five changes at once tells you nothing about which one worked.

2. The messages, decoded

Log message	Meaning	Fix order
Error 130 — invalid stops	Stop loss or take profit is closer than the broker's minimum distance.	Check the broker's stop level for the symbol; widen stops or let the EA's stop buffer input handle it.
Error 131 — invalid trade volume	Lot size breaks the broker's min/max/step rules.	Round lots to the broker's step (usually 0.01); check the EA's auto-lot maths on small balances.
Error 133 — trade is disabled	The symbol or account does not allow trading right now.	Check market hours, suffix symbols, and whether the account is investor-password logged in.
Error 138 — requote	Price moved while the order was being placed (MT4).	Raise deviation/slippage allowance modestly; check VPS latency; avoid rollover minutes.
Error 146 — trade context busy	Two EAs or scripts are giving orders at the same instant (MT4).	One EA per chart is fine; avoid multiple EAs trading the same symbol on one terminal.
Error 4109 — trade is not allowed	AutoTrading is off or the EA's chart permission is missing.	Enable Algo/AutoTrading globally and in the EA's attach dialog.
Retcode 10027 (MT5) — autotrading disabled	Same family as 4109, MT5 wording.	Toolbar Algo Trading button + Tools → Options → Expert Advisors.
Retcode 10018 — market closed	Order sent outside the symbol's sessions.	Check the symbol's session table in Specification; gold and indices close daily.
"Cannot load library" / DLL errors	A required .dll is missing or DLL imports are blocked.	Install the library in MQL4/Libraries; enable DLL imports only for vendors you trust.
EA silent, no errors, no trades	Conditions simply not met — or the chart symbol has a suffix the EA doesn't recognise.	Attach to the exact chart (EURUSD not EURUSD.m if the EA is strict), and wait a full session before concluding.

3. The demo-works-live-doesn't checklist

- ☐ Different spreads: the demo feed is often tighter. Record live spreads at your trading hours.

- ☐ Different execution: demo fills are instant; live fills slip, especially in the first minute of a session.
- ☐ Different account mode: an EA written for hedging accounts misbehaves on MT5 netting accounts.
- ☐ Different symbol properties: swap, stops level and contract size differ between demo and live servers more often than vendors admit.

The field rule: never fix a live problem by increasing risk. If the cure for an error is a bigger lot, a wider grid or a removed stop, the error was not the real problem.

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