How can I try to escape the disease-ridden hot-tubs known as the TEMP and Downloads directories?

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Some time ago, I described the TEMP directory as <u>a hot tub whose water hasn't been changed in over a year</u>. The Downloads folder is in a similar situation: There's all sorts of unrelated junk in there, some of which may not be very friendly to your health.

Starting in Windows 10 Version 1607,[1] you can set attributes on your executable to tell the system how to look for the DLLs to which your executable links statically.[2] To do this, pass the <u>`/DEPENDENTLOADFLAG:nnnn` command line option</u> to the linker, where `nnnn` is a value corresponding to some combination of the `LOAD_LIBRARY_SEARCH_*` values that can be passed to the `LoadLibraryEx` function.

By far the most useful value is `LOAD_LIBRARY_SEARCH_SYSTEM32`, which means "Look in the system32 directory and nowhere else."

To do this, pass `/DEPENDENTLOADFLAG:0x800`.

Versions of Windows that do not support this option merely ignore it, so it's okay to set this option unconditionally.

[1] Windows 10 Version 1607 goes by several other names: The Anniversary Update, Build 14393, and the RS1 release. It's kind of silly, really.

[2] Note that the dependent load flag applies only to DLLs that are loaded as a consequence of resolving the module's static imports. DLLs loaded dynamically via `LoadLibrary` or `LoadLibraryEx` follow the normal rules.