

Command line Editing

The command line works like a single-line word processor, allowing you to edit any part of the command at any time before you press **Enter** to execute it, or **Esc** to erase it. The command line you enter can be up to 1023 characters long.

You can use the following editing keys when you are typing a command (the words **Ctrl** and **Shift** mean to press the Ctrl or Shift key together with the other key named):

Cursor Movement Keys:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| ← | Move the cursor left one character. |
| → | Move the cursor right one character. |
| Ctrl +← | Move the cursor left one word. |
| Ctrl +→ | Move the cursor right one word. |
| Home | Move the cursor to the beginning of the line. |
| End | Move the cursor to the end of the line. |

Insert and Delete:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Ins | Toggle between insert and overwrite mode. |
| Del | Delete the character at the cursor. |
| Backspace | Delete the character to the left of the cursor. |
| Ctrl-L | Delete the word or partial word to the left of the cursor. |
| Ctrl-R or Ctrl-Bksp | Delete the word or partial word to the right of the cursor. |
| Ctrl-Home | Delete from the beginning of the line to the cursor. |
| Ctrl-End | Delete from the cursor to the end of the line. |
| Esc | Delete the entire line. |

Execution:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Ctrl-C or Ctrl-Break | Cancel the command line. |
| Enter | Execute the command line. |

Most of the command-line editing capabilities are also available when a **CMD.EXE** command prompts you for a line of input. For example, you can use the command-line editing keys when [DESCRIBE](#) prompts for a file description, when [INPUT](#) prompts for input from an alias or batch file, or when [LIST](#) prompts you for a search string.

If you want your input at the command line to be in a different color from **CMD.EXE**'s prompts or output, you can use the Display page of the [OPTION](#) dialogs, or the [InputColors](#) directive in *CMD.INI*.

CMD.EXE will prompt for additional command-line text when you include the [escape character](#) as the very last character of a typed command line. The default escape character is the caret [`^`]. For example:

```
[c:\] echo The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy^
More? sleeping dog. > alphabet
```

Sometimes you may want to enter one of the command line editing keystrokes on the command line, instead of performing the key's usual action. For example, suppose you have a program that requires a Ctrl-R character on its command line. Normally you couldn't type this keystroke at the prompt, because it would be interpreted as a "Delete word right" command.

To get around this problem, use the special keystroke **Alt-255**. You enter **Alt-255** by holding down the **Alt** key while you type **255** on the numeric keypad, then releasing the Alt key (you must use the number keys on the numeric pad; the row of keys at the top of your keyboard won't work). This forces **CMD.EXE** to interpret the next keystroke literally and places it on the command line, ignoring any special meaning it would normally have as a command-line editing or history keystroke. You can use **Alt-255** to suppress the normal meaning of command-line editing keystrokes even if they have been reassigned with [key mapping directives](#) in the `.INI` file, and **Alt-255** itself can be reassigned with the [CommandEscape](#) directive.

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