

2.3.2 Diskette Damage and Prevention

Floppy diskettes are quite fragile. They can be easily damaged by spilled liquids, magnetic fields, ballpoint pens, temperature extremes, human body oils, etc. On the back of every diskette envelope are some diskette care and handling directions. If you follow them, you will minimize potential damage.

PSC - Practise Safe Computing: Always have two copies of any important diskette.

FASTFACTS

Defusing Diskette Disasters

Diskettes come in several types and it is worth your while to learn to decipher their labels. If, for example, you attempt to format an HD diskette in a DD drive, the format will fail, and you may be tempted to throw away a perfectly good diskette. The label will specify the type, but sometimes only by acronym. Here are the definitions.

- **SS (Soft-Sector) vs HS (Hard-Sector).** MS-DOS micros can use only soft-sectored diskettes. Hard-sectored diskettes are used by some word-processing equipment (AES, MICOM).
- **Single-Sided vs Double-Sided.** Some older disk drives have only one read/write head, therefore they will not correctly read a double-sided diskette.
- **DD (Double-Density) vs HD (High- or Quadruple-Density).** DD diskettes hold 360 K of data, HD diskettes hold 1.2 MB. An HD diskette will NOT format in a DD drive. A DD diskette can be formatted, written to and read in an HD drive, but will probably not work thereafter in a DD drive.

Be aware of what kind of disk drives you have, and what kind of diskettes you are attempting to use in those drives. If you are unsure, please contact the Microcentre.

2.3.3 Hard Disk Damage and Prevention

In some ways hard disks are more reliable than floppy disks, but they are also subject to damage. A damaged hard disk is very costly in terms of data loss and disk replacement. Some of the steps you can take to prevent hard disk damage include:

- **DO NOT** move the machine (even a centimetre) without parking the hard disk read/write heads. Newer technology hard disks are self-parking when not in use. Older units require parking software to perform the task. Parking involves moving the read/write heads off the recording surface. Call the Microcentre if you are unsure about parking the heads. Even with self-parking hard disks, **ALWAYS TURN THE COMPUTER OFF BEFORE MOVING IT.**