

2.1.3.3 The Filespec Laws

When you create files (usually with an application program), they must be given names so they can be stored on and retrieved from a disk. Because of the way DOS organizes disks, there are laws governing the specification of files.

The File Specification or *filespec* tells DOS where to look for a file and consists of three parts: the drive specifier, the filename, and the filename extension. The general form of a *filespec* is:

[d:]filename [.ext]

d: Denotes the disk drive that contains the file. This part is optional and, if omitted, DOS assumes that the file is located in the Default Drive/Directory.

filename Denotes the file's name. It may be from 1 to 8 characters in length and may not contain the following characters:

. « / \ [] : | < > + = ; , or Space

.ext Denotes the filename extension and consists of a period [.] followed by 1 to 3 characters. The extension is optional (in fact, it is provided automatically by many application programs), and has the same list of invalid characters as the filename.

Examples of legal filenames are:

BUDGET1.WK1, 127654.DOC, JOHNNY, A:SALESS.123

Also note that the following names are reserved by DOS and may not be used as filenames:

CON, AUX, COM1, COM2, PRN, LPT1, LPT2, LPT3, and NUL

Other than the above restrictions, you may create any filename you desire. Try, however, to make the filenames as meaningful as possible.

FASTFACTS

Grouping Files

- Use the filename extension to group files of similar type. For example, you may give all your memos an extension of .MEM and all your letters an extension of .LET. This will make it easier to perform DOS commands on files of similar type with WILDCARDS.
- Some programs automatically supply extensions. Microsoft Word will supply the extension .DOC if you do not specify otherwise. Lotus 1-2-3 supplies the extension .WK1 when saving or retrieving a worksheet. If you give your worksheets extensions other than .WK1, 1-2-3 will not display them during Save or Retrieve (the full name must be specified at the prompt).

2.1.3.4 Wildcards (Global Filename Characters)

Most of the DOS commands that work on files will allow you to specify more than one file at a time by using the wildcards: