

# SOLUTIONS

## Why General Protection Fault error messages occur and what to do to minimize them

Not another one! Why am I getting General Protection Fault Error Messages?

Every application that you run requires "space" in the computer's memory. There isn't enough space in memory to hold all the information about each application you have running, however, so Windows moves the saved information around to ensure that it's available when needed. Some of this information is stored in actual or "real" memory; other information is stored in virtual or "temporary" memory on your hard disk.

Sometimes one of the applications — or Windows itself — *forgets* where it had saved some of its

information. This results in the application either trying to place an "invalid instruction" in memory or trying to read information that makes no sense because it's being read from the wrong place in memory. Windows tries, as best it can, to stop this problem by shutting down the offending application to minimize its effect on other applications. If possible, Windows will try to warn you that things are going awry by giving you "system error" messages before the final, fatal General Protection Fault, and will prompt you to save your work and exit the offending application. Heed this advice!

SIGNET will be upgrading all workstations to a more

recent version of Windows — "Windows for Workgroups." Even though enhancements to managing virtual memory in Windows for Workgroups will allow you to have more applications open at the same time, the basic system is the same. General Protection Fault Errors will still happen...only later.

Although no one can promise that these problems will go away altogether (no, not even with Windows 95), you can reduce your chances of getting a General Protection Fault error message and losing valuable work by following this basic rule:

**Make sure that you have open only those applications which are necessary at any given time.**

The simple fact is, the less the number of things you are asking Windows to accomplish at any given time, the less the chance you have of Windows doing its equivalent of throwing up its hands in disgust and saying, "I'm lost!"

## The Year 2000 Date Problem

There has been a lot in the media lately about the coming of the year 2000. This millennial event will have repercussions for all organizations that use computers. Most computers and their software normally store the calendar year with only two digits.

To ensure that DFAIT is fully prepared for any problems that may arise, the Information Management and Technology Bureau (SXD) has named Brian Kirk of the Direction and Planning Division (SXP) as the Department's Year 2000 Coordinator. With the assistance of a recently formed "Year 2000 Departmental Working Group," Brian will be identifying 'date' problems in all of DFAIT's technology platforms and then formulating action plans to quickly resolve any difficulties that may arise.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Brian Kirk at 944-0967. We will keep you informed about this activity on a regular basis.