

Adobe® Customer Support

Making a Bootable Floppy Disk (Windows 3.1x)

What's Covered

Summary

Making a Bootable Floppy from a DOS Prompt

Making a Bootable from Windows

Additional Files to Copy

Booting from a Floppy Disk

Summary

DOS computers need to read several files from a disk drive in order to start or “boot.” Usually computers boot from an internal hard disk. If the hard disk is damaged, the computer can be booted from a floppy disk. You may also boot from a floppy disk to eliminate variables when troubleshooting system or application errors. A floppy disk created for this purpose is called a “bootable” or “system” floppy disk. Special files must be added to a floppy disk to make it bootable.

NOTE: Most DOS computers can only boot from a floppy disk in the A: drive. If a computer has more than one floppy drive, the other drives may not have the same physical characteristics as the A: drive. Whenever possible, make a boot/system floppy in the computer's A: drive. If another computer or drive is used, be sure the disk format is compatible with the A: drive of the computer to be booted from the floppy.

Formatting will erase all the information on the disk being formatted. Do not format a floppy disk until you're sure it contains no important files.

Making a Bootable Floppy from a DOS Prompt

To create a floppy disk from a DOS prompt, type the following command:

```
FORMAT A: /s
```

The “/s” switch is required and tells DOS to create a “boot sector” on the floppy disk and copy three additional files necessary for DOS to function.

Making a Bootable Floppy from Windows

1. Open the Windows File Manager and choose “Make System Disk...” from the Disk menu.
2. Insert a disk into the A: drive
3. Answer “Yes” when asked: Are you sure you want to copy system files onto the disk in drive A:?

Additional Files to Copy

Using the DOS COPY command from the DOS prompt or “Copy” in File Manager, copy the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files from the root directory of the hard drive to the boot floppy. These files may contain information necessary to successfully boot the computer. DOS looks for these files only in the root directory of the disk from which it boots. If you boot from a floppy in A:, DOS will not find the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files on the hard drive.

If you’re using Double Space, a hard disk compression utility included with DOS version 6.0 and later, copy DBLSPACE.BIN to the boot floppy. Without this file, DOS won’t be able to read the hard disk that’s been compressed using Double Space. The CONFIG.SYS file will also contain a reference to DBLSPACE.SYS. If you want to boot without accessing any files on the hard disk, copy DBLSPACE.SYS to the boot floppy also, and make the necessary changes to the copy of CONFIG.SYS on the floppy. For instructions, see “Changes to the CONFIG.SYS File.”

Changes to the AUTOEXEC.BAT File

Make sure you edit the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on the floppy disk, not the AUTOEXEC.BAT file on the hard drive.

For a “minimum” AUTOEXEC.BAT file, remark out all but the following lines then save the file in text-only format:

```
PROMPT $p$g
PATH=C:\;C:\DOS;C:\WINDOWS
SET TEMP=C:\TEMP
```

NOTE: Inserting the word “rem” followed by a space at the beginning of the line “remarks it out” so that it is not read by DOS. Make sure you don’t remark out any lines necessary to boot your computer.

Changes to the CONFIG.SYS File

Make sure you edit the CONFIG.SYS file on the floppy drive, not the CONFIG.SYS file on the hard drive.

Using a text editor that saves in text-only format (e.g., Windows Notepad, MS-DOS Editor), open CONFIG.SYS file on the boot floppy. To make a “minimum” CONFIG.SYS file, remark out all but the following lines then save the file in text-only format:

```
DEVICE=C:\WINDOWS\HIMEM.SYS
FILES=50
BUFFERS=20
STACKS=9,256
```

NOTE: Inserting the word “rem” followed by a space at the beginning of the line “remarks it out” so that it is not read by DOS. Make sure you don’t remark out any lines necessary to boot your computer.

Booting from the Floppy Disk

Place the disk in the A: drive and press the reset switch. If the computer has no reset switch, remove any disks from the floppy drives and turn off the computer. Wait at least fifteen seconds for the hard disk drive to come to a complete stop. Insert the boot floppy in the A: drive and turn on the power switch.

