

Contents for PIF Editor Help: Standard Mode

You can use PIF Editor to create or change program information files (PIFs) for non-Windows applications.

To learn how to use Help, press F1.

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Contents for PIF Editor Help: Advanced Options for 386 Enhanced Mode

You can use PIF Editor to create or change program information files (PIFs) for non-Windows applications.

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File Menu Commands

Use the [scroll bar](#) to see more commands.

New

Opens a new, untitled PIF, which contains default settings.

Open

Opens a dialog box from which you can easily select and open an existing PIF.

Save

Saves changes to the PIF you have been working on.

When you choose Save, the PIF remains open so you can continue working on it.

Save As

Saves a new or existing PIF.

When you choose Save As, the PIF remains open so you can continue working on it.

Exit

Closes the file you have been working on and quits PIF Editor.

You can save the PIF before quitting.

Mode Menu Commands

Standard

Displays PIF Editor settings for standard mode.

386 Enhanced

Displays PIF Editor settings for 386 enhanced mode.

Creating New PIFs

When you use the Setup program or Program Manager to create a program item for a non-Windows application, Windows automatically creates a PIF. When you start a non-Windows application, Windows looks for a PIF to use with that application. If there is no PIF for the application, Windows uses a default PIF. If your application doesn't work using the default PIF, you can create a new PIF.

To create a PIF

- 1 From the File menu, choose New.
- 2 From the Mode menu, choose the mode the application runs in (Standard or 386 Enhanced).
If you choose the mode you are not currently running in, a message appears. To continue setting options for the selected mode, choose the OK button.
- 3 Specify the options that apply to the application.
For information about an option, select it, and then press F1.
- 4 If you plan to run the application in both modes, use the Mode menu to switch to the other mode, and then specify the options for that mode.
- 5 From the File menu, choose Save As.
- 6 In the File Name box, type the name of the application's program file with .PIF as the extension.
- 7 Choose the OK button.

See Also

[Advanced Options for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

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Modifying the Default PIF

When you start a non-Windows application that doesn't have a PIF, Windows uses a default PIF named `_DEFAULT.PIF`. The settings in this file work with most applications. If necessary, you can modify this PIF. For example, you could specify that an application run in a window rather than a full screen.

Because Windows may use the default PIF for other applications, it is always better to create a new PIF than to modify the default file. You can use the default file as a starting point and then save the file using a new filename.

To change the default PIF

- 1 In the Program Filename box, type `_DEFAULT.COM`.
- 2 Leave the Window Title box blank.
- 3 Change any other settings as appropriate.

For information about an option, select it, and then press `F1`.

Windows does not use some settings when it uses `_DEFAULT.PIF` to start an application. However, because PIF Editor verifies the contents of these fields, you should provide complete valid settings.

- 4 From the File menu, choose Save As.
- 5 Type the filename `_DEFAULT.PIF`.
- 6 Choose the OK button.

Editing PIFs

When an application doesn't run properly, you can try editing its PIF. For example, you might want to:

- Change the path for your application.
- Specify a program parameter or change the default directory that contains your application's files.
- Allocate more memory or all available memory to the application.

Note: If the application has a program item in Program Manager, you can also change your path and default directory by using the Properties command on the File menu in Program Manager.

To edit a PIF

- 1 From the File menu, choose Open.
- 2 Type or select a filename, and then choose the OK button.
- 3 Change any options you want to.
For information about an option, select it, and then press F1.
- 4 From the File menu, choose Save.

See Also

[Advanced Options for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

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[Options for Standard Mode](#)

Options for Standard Mode

The following is a list of the options for standard mode.

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Program Filename

Type the name of the file that starts the application. If necessary, include the drive, directory, and the filename extension.

Make sure the PIF filename matches the program filename. For example, if the program filename is MP.COM (Microsoft Multiplan), the PIF filename should be MP.PIF.

If you start your application from a batch program, you can specify its filename in this box.

You can also specify an environment variable in this field. By using an environment variable, you can place a variable name in the PIF and assign it a value by using the **set** command in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. When you type the variable name, enclose it in percent signs (%).

See Also

Optional Parameters

Start-up Directory

Window Title

Window Title

Type a descriptive name for your application. This description appears in the window's title bar when you run the application.

If you leave this box blank, the title bar displays the name of the application without an extension.

Note: You can also specify a window title by using the Properties command on the File menu in Program Manager. Settings made in Program Manager override settings made in PIF Editor. You can also specify an environment variable in this field. By using an environment variable, you can place a variable name in the PIF and assign it a value by using the **set** command in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. When you type the variable name, enclose it in percent signs (%).

See Also

[Program Filename](#)

Optional Parameters

Type parameters that your application uses. These are the same parameters you would type after the application's filename when starting the application from the MS-DOS command prompt. For example, to run Microsoft Word in character mode, type `/c` in this box.

If your application doesn't require parameters or you don't want to use them, leave this box blank. See the application's documentation for valid parameters.

If you want Windows to prompt you for parameters when you start the application, type a question mark (`?`).

If you start the application by using the Run command on the File menu in Program Manager or File Manager, you can override the parameters specified in the PIF by typing parameters after the application's name in the Run dialog box. You can also specify optional parameters by using the Properties command on the File menu in Program Manager. Settings made in Program Manager override settings made in PIF Editor.

Note: You can also specify an environment variable in this field. By using an environment variable, you can place a variable name in the PIF and assign it a value by using the **set** command in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. When you type the variable name, enclose it in percent signs (%).

See Also

[Program Filename](#)

Start-up Directory

Type the drive and directory you want Windows to use as a start-up directory (or "working directory"). This is usually the location of the application's program file, but can be any directory where you want the application to save files. This entry is optional. If you want Windows to determine the start-up directory, leave this box blank.

You can also specify a start-up directory by using the Properties command on the File menu in Program Manager. Settings made in Program Manager override PIF settings.

Note: You can also specify an environment variable in this field. By using an environment variable, you can place a variable name in the PIF and assign it a value by using the **set** command in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. When you type the variable name, enclose it in percent signs (%).

See Also

[Program Filename](#)

Video Mode

Using the Video Mode options, you can specify whether Windows should reserve enough memory to run your application in text mode or in graphics/multiple text mode. ("Multiple text" refers to text-mode applications that use multiple video pages to display text and therefore need more memory.) The Video Mode options specify how much memory Windows needs for saving and restoring your application's screen contents and for copying the screen contents onto the Clipboard.

For an application that runs in both text and graphics modes, select the Graphics/Multiple Text option. If you are not sure which mode to use, select Graphics/Multiple text.

Memory Requirements for Standard Mode

Type the amount of conventional memory in kilobytes (KB) that is required for the application. Check the system requirements for your application. If you don't know how much is required, leave the setting as it is.

If you are running other applications and Windows cannot provide the specified amount of memory when you start the application, a message appears. You may need to free up memory before starting Windows.

Note: Do not use the memory requirements listed in an application's documentation, which usually are an estimate of the total amount of memory your system should have, not the amount of memory that must be free for the application to run.

XMS Memory for Standard Mode

Type the amount of extended memory to reserve for the application. If your computer's extended memory conforms to the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft/AST eXtended Memory Specification, version 2.0 or later, you can use these settings. You can usually leave these settings at their default values.

This option Specifies

KB Required A minimum amount of required extended memory in kilobytes (KB). Check the system requirements for your application. If you don't know how much is required, leave the setting as it is.

Use a setting of 0 for applications that do not use extended memory.

If you are running other applications and Windows cannot provide the specified amount of memory, a message appears. You may need to free some memory before starting Windows.

KB Limit The maximum amount of extended memory in kilobytes allocated to the application.

This setting prevents applications using XMS memory from tying up all available extended memory blocks when they are not going to use them all.

The default setting of 0 prevents the application from using any extended memory, except in the high memory area (HMA). A setting of -1 allocates as much extended memory to an application as it requires, up to the limit of system memory; in general, it's not a good idea to use a setting of -1 because this can slow down your system dramatically.

See Also

[Memory Requirements](#)

Directly Modifies (Communications Ports)

Some applications use system resources in ways that prevent sharing with other applications. When you select this option, you prevent two applications from trying to use the same communications port at once.

For each serial communications port (COM1, COM2, COM3, COM4) that your application uses, select the check box. If you are using a communications application, check the box for the port you want to use.

When one of these options is selected, Windows and other applications do not respond to shortcut keys you press while using the application. To return to the Windows desktop, you must quit the application.

See Also

[Directly Modifies \(Keyboard\)](#)

Directly Modifies (Keyboard)

Some applications use the keyboard buffer in ways that prevent sharing it with other applications. When you select the Keyboard check box, your application has exclusive access to the keyboard. Select this option only if your application uses the keyboard buffer. If you are uncertain about whether the application uses the keyboard buffer, do not select this check box.

When this option is selected, Windows and other applications do not respond to shortcut keys you press while using the application. To return to the Windows desktop, you must quit the application.

See Also

[Directly Modifies \(Communications Ports\)](#)

No Save Screen

Use this option only when the application you are using can retain its own screen information and has a "redraw screen" command.

When you switch between applications in standard mode, Windows saves in memory the information displayed on the screen. By doing this, Windows ensures information is displayed correctly when you switch back to an application.

When you select the No Save Screen check box, Windows no longer retains the screen information for that application, and the memory becomes available to the application. The application can then perform faster. However, when you switch to that application, the screen is not restored correctly, unless the application has the capability to retain its own screen information.

No Screen Exchange

Selecting this check box prevents you from using ALT+PRINT SCREEN or PRINT SCREEN to copy "snapshots" of the screen or window onto the Clipboard.

When you select this option, memory for the screen-exchange function is not allocated, which leaves the memory available to the application.

Prevent Program Switch

Selecting this option keeps Windows from allocating memory for program switching, leaving the memory available to the application.

Selecting this option also prevents you from using ALT+TAB, ALT+ESC, or CTRL+ESC to switch to another application. If you are uncertain, do not select this check box.

To conserve memory, select this option if your application does not support switching, or when the application is a Microsoft Basic application that uses the serial communications port.

If you select this option, you must quit the application to return to Windows or to switch to another application.

Close Window on Exit

Clear this check box if you want the window (or screen) to remain open when you quit the application. This is especially useful if you are running a command or application that displays output on the screen. If the window closes too quickly, you won't see the output. By default, the window closes when you quit the application.

Reserve Shortcut Keys for Standard Mode

Select the check boxes for the shortcut keys you want to reserve for use with the application instead of with Windows.

If your application uses any of these shortcut keys, select the appropriate check boxes. This selection disables the Windows functions for the keys and allows the application to use them while it is active. When the application is not active, the shortcut keys have Windows functions.

For example, if you select the check box for ALT+TAB, you reserve that shortcut key for use with the application and it no longer performs the Windows function of switching between applications.

Options for 386 Enhanced Mode

The following is a list of the options for 386 enhanced mode.

Advanced...

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Display Usage

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Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode

Optional Parameters

Program Filename

Start-up Directory

Video Memory

Window Title

XMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode

Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode

Use these settings to allocate conventional memory to the application.

This option Specifies

KB Required The minimum amount of memory in kilobytes (KB) that your application requires. Check the system requirements of your application. If you don't know how much is required, leave the setting as it is.

If you are running other applications and Windows cannot provide the specified amount of memory when you start the application, a message appears. You may need to quit some applications or specify a smaller number before continuing. You may also need to free memory before starting Windows.

Specify 0 to indicate that the application has no minimum memory requirement; Windows allocates whatever memory is available, up to the limit set with the KB Desired option. Specify -1 to allocate the maximum amount of memory possible.

KB Desired The maximum amount of memory that your application can use. Some applications run better if more than minimal memory is provided. The limit is 640K.

Specify -1 to allocate as much memory as possible to the application.

Note: Do not use the memory requirements listed in the application's documentation, which usually are an estimate of the total amount of memory your system should have, not the amount of memory that must be free for the application to run.

Display Usage

Use these options to control how the application is initially displayed.

Use	To
Full Screen	Start the application in a full screen. Running an application in a full screen saves memory. You switch between a full-screen application and the Windows desktop by pressing ALT+TAB. You cannot share information between full-screen applications and other applications as easily as you can when they are running in a window. (You can press ALT+PRINT SCREEN to copy an image of the entire screen onto the Clipboard when an application is running in a full screen.)
Windowed	Start the application in a window. Running an application in a window uses more memory. However, you gain the advantages of running in a window, including easily sharing information between applications.

To switch an application from a full screen to a window, or vice versa, press ALT+ENTER. Some applications can only run in a full screen because they display graphics, or have direct access to the part of memory used by the screen. In these cases, a message is displayed when you try to switch from a full screen to a window.

Execution Background

Select this check box if you want the application to be able to run when it is not the active application.

If you select this option, the application runs in the background (calculating numbers, for example) while you are working with another application. Other applications run more slowly when sharing resources with background applications. If you don't select this option, the application runs only when it is the active application.

See Also

[Execution Exclusive](#)

[Background and Foreground Priority](#)

Execution Exclusive

Select this check box if you want the application to have exclusive use of resources when it is the active application. If you select this option, no other applications, including those with the Background option set, can run when this application is active.

You can select this option both for applications that run in a window and in a full screen. However, an application running in a window does not receive all the computer's resources. Windows reserves some resources for itself and for running Windows applications.

See Also

[Execution Background](#)

Advanced Options for 386 Enhanced Mode

The following is a list of the advanced options for 386 enhanced mode.

Multitasking Options

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Detect Idle Time

Memory Options

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Display Options

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Monitor Ports

Retain Video Memory

Other Options

Allow Close When Active

Allow Fast Paste

Application Shortcut Key

Reserve Shortcut Keys for 386 Enhanced Mode

Background and Foreground Priority

When you specify Background and Foreground priority, you are determining how CPU (processor) resources are allocated to the applications. The numbers you specify set the priority of the application relative to the other applications that are running. (Therefore, these numbers cannot be translated into a fixed percentage of CPU time.) The higher the priority an application has, the more CPU resources are allocated to it.

Priorities range from 0 to 10000. Default foreground priority is 100. Default background priority is 50.

The Foreground Priority is the application's priority when it is the active application. For example, to ensure that an application receives all of the processing time it needs without interruption, set this option to 10000.

The Background Priority is the application's priority when it is not the active application.

Note: When an application is running in a window, you can also change its priorities by using commands on the Control menu.

See Also

[Execution Background](#)

[Execution Exclusive](#)

Detect Idle Time

If you select this check box, another application gets more CPU (processor) resources when this application is waiting for keyboard input.

Generally, you should select this option because it allows other applications to run faster.

Some applications do not run correctly when this option is selected. To determine whether the application will work, select the check box. If the application doesn't run properly, clear the check box; otherwise, leave it selected.

EMS Memory

When running in 386 enhanced mode, Windows simulates expanded memory for applications that use it.

Use EMS Memory options to specify the amount of expanded memory to allocate to an application.

Note: When running in virtual mode, Windows allocates EMS and XMS memory from the same memory pool, using the application's memory strategy: either the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft (LIM) Expanded Memory Specification or the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft/AST eXtended Memory Specification.

This option Specifies

KB Required	The minimum amount of expanded memory in kilobytes (KB) that your application requires. Check the requirements for your application. If you don't know how much EMS memory is required, leave the setting as it is. If you are running other applications and Windows cannot provide the specified amount of memory, a message appears. You may need to free some memory before continuing. Use a setting of 0 for applications that do not require expanded memory.
KB Limit	The maximum amount of expanded memory your application is allocated. This option prevents an application from taking more expanded memory than it needs. The default setting is 1024. A setting of -1 allocates as much expanded memory to an application as it requests, up to the limit of system memory. This can slow down the rest of your system. A setting of 0 prevents the application from using EMS memory.

See Also

[Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

[XMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

EMS Memory Locked

Select this check box to specify that the expanded memory allocated to the application is locked into memory and won't be swapped to the hard disk.

Most applications run well with expanded memory unlocked. Two cases where an application does not run well with expanded memory unlocked are when you have a memory-resident application or an MS-DOS device driver that uses expanded memory. In both cases, you may need to lock EMS memory.

Locking an application's memory can slow down the rest of your system and reduce available memory.

See Also

[Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

[XMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

XMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode

Use the XMS memory options to specify the amount of extended memory available to your application. Because few applications require extended memory, you can usually leave these options at their default settings.

This option Specifies

KB Required	<p>The minimum amount of extended memory in kilobytes (KB) required by your application. Check the system requirements for your application. If you don't know how much is required, leave the setting as it is.</p> <p>If you are running other applications and Windows cannot provide the specified amount of memory when you start the application, a message appears. You may need to free some memory before continuing.</p> <p>Use a setting of 0 for applications that do not require extended memory.</p>
KB Limit	<p>The maximum amount of extended memory in kilobytes to be allocated to the application.</p> <p>Use this setting to prevent an application from reserving all available extended memory blocks.</p> <p>The default setting is 1024. A setting of -1 allocates as much extended memory to an application as it requests, up to the limit of system memory. This can slow down the rest of your system. A setting of 0 prevents the application from using extended memory, except the <u>high memory area</u> (HMA).</p>

See Also

[EMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

[Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

XMS Memory Locked

Select this check box to specify that the extended memory allocated to the application is locked into memory. Most applications run well with extended memory unlocked. The advantage of having the memory unlocked is that your application can use virtual memory. This means that if the application needs more memory than your computer has, the least-used information is swapped to the hard disk, giving the appearance of having more memory than is actually present.

Two cases where an application does not run well with extended memory unlocked are when you have a memory-resident application or an MS-DOS device driver that uses extended memory. In both cases, you may need to lock XMS memory so that the application uses only physical RAM.

Locking an application's memory can slow down the rest of your system and reduce available memory.

The high memory area (HMA) is always locked, and therefore this setting has no effect on it.

See Also

[EMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

[Memory Requirements for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

Uses High Memory Area

Select this check box to specify that an application has access to the high memory area (HMA) of RAM. If you have installed extended memory that conforms to the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft/AST eXtended Memory Specification, version 2.0 or later, you can use this setting.

If the HMA is available when Windows starts, each application can allocate its own HMA. However, the HMA is used by some memory-resident applications, such as network software. If such a utility is using the HMA when you start Windows in 386 enhanced mode, no other application can use the HMA.

In most cases, you can select this option because each application has its own HMA, which is independent of all the other applications' HMAs. Clear this check box if you have an application that cannot use HMA.

See Also

[EMS Memory](#)

[XMS Memory for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

Lock Application Memory

When you select this check box, Windows keeps the application in memory instead of swapping parts of it to the hard disk. Selecting this option speeds up the application, but slows down the rest of your system.

Select this option only when necessary, because it limits the number of applications you can run with Windows. The option is provided for applications that do not work when extra time is taken to read from and write to the hard disk.

This option applies only to the application's conventional memory. The locking of XMS and EMS memory is controlled by other options in the Advanced Options dialog box.

See Also

[EMS Memory Locked](#)

[XMS Memory Locked](#)

Video Memory

With this option, you specify the video mode you want the application to start in. Windows allocates system memory to display the application in accordance with the video mode you specify. Text mode uses the least amount of memory, and High (resolution) Graphics mode uses the most.

If you specify a mode that allocates too little memory for displaying information, you won't be able to start the application after specifying the mode. Windows displays a message saying there is insufficient memory to run the application.

Some applications can run in several modes. If you switch to a mode that requires less memory or if you run an application in a full screen, Windows frees the extra memory for use by other applications. If you switch back to a mode that requires more memory for video display, the memory may not be available, and display information may be partially or totally lost.

To prevent this loss from occurring when you switch modes, you can select both the High Graphics and (in the Advanced dialog box) Retain Video Memory settings. This way, you always have the memory needed to display the application, regardless of the mode the application is running in. However, the memory is not available to run other applications even when the memory is not in use.

Some display adapters, such as Hercules and color graphics adapters (CGAs), have only one graphics mode, so there is no difference between the Low Graphics and High Graphics options.

See Also

[Monitor Ports](#)

[Retain Video Memory](#)

Monitor Ports

This option specifies that Windows verify that the values assigned to the display adapter are the same as those used by the application when it is running in a specified mode (Text, Low Graphics, or High Graphics). For example, both the display adapter and the application can determine what the cursor looks like. As long as the values are the same, these options are not needed. However, the application may not be displayed correctly if its values and the display adapter's values differ. For most applications, you can leave these options at their default settings.

When none of these options is selected, the application accesses the full-screen display more quickly. However, you may be unable to restore your application's screen display properly. These options have no effect when the application is running in a window.

If you do not select any of the Monitor Ports options and the application's screen display is not restored correctly when the application is run in a full screen, select the option that corresponds to the mode the application is running in. If the screen display is still not restored correctly, select the other Monitor Ports options one by one.

Selecting these options does not affect some display adapters.

Use	To
Text	Monitor all video operations when the application is running in text mode.
Low Graphics	Monitor all video operations when the application is running in low-resolution graphics mode. CGA-mode adapters can run in text or low graphics.
High Graphics	Monitor all video operations when the application is running in high-resolution graphics mode. Most applications require this option. Video graphics adapters (VGAs) and enhanced graphics adapters (EGAs) can run in text, low, or high graphics.

See Also
[Video Memory](#)

Emulate Text Mode

Many applications run with the screen display in text mode and use the standard ROM BIOS services for their output. When this check box is selected, the screen update of these applications runs faster.

If the application's screen display becomes garbled or the cursor appears in the wrong place, clear this check box.

Retain Video Memory

If you select this check box, Windows sets the amount of memory needed for the video mode the application starts in, and does not return any memory to the system, even if you switch video modes while running the application.

Some applications can run in several video modes. If this option is not selected, Windows adjusts the system memory allocated to the application according to the video mode the application is running in. If less memory is needed in the new mode, video memory is returned to the system so that it can be used by other applications. However, if the application switches back into a video mode that requires more memory and memory is not available, you may lose information that the application is displaying. (You can make this information visible again by freeing some memory.)

See Also

[Video Memory](#)

Allow Fast Paste

Select this check box to specify that Windows use a fast method of pasting information to the application. With some applications, you cannot use this method. Test it by trying to paste information from the Clipboard into the application. If the paste operation is successful, you can use the option.

Allow Close When Active

Select this check box to allow Windows to close the active application automatically when you quit Windows. This lets you quit Windows without having to first quit the application. Because some applications should not be closed this way, PIF Editor displays a message when you select this option.

If you are uncertain, do not select this option, as it may result in lost data or damaged MS-DOS files.

Select this option only for applications that do not write to a disk. Never select this option for applications that use the disk regularly, such as word processors, databases, and spreadsheets.

Reserve Shortcut Keys for 386 Enhanced Mode

Select the check boxes for the shortcut keys you want to reserve for use with the application instead of with Windows.

If your application uses any of these shortcut keys, select the appropriate check boxes. This ignores the Windows functions for the keys, and allows the application to use them while it is active. When the application is not active, the shortcut keys have Windows functions.

Application Shortcut Key

Specify a shortcut key that, when pressed, causes the application to become the active application. A shortcut key must have an ALT or CTRL modifier. You can also specify SHIFT, but not by itself. You cannot use ESC, ENTER, TAB, SPACEBAR, PRINT SCREEN, or BACKSPACE keys. For example, the key combinations CTRL+Y, ALT+F4, CTRL+SHIFT+F11, and CTRL+ALT+7 are all valid.

To specify a shortcut key, press the key combination you want to use. If the keys you type are invalid, a dialog box appears. Press BACKSPACE to delete a shortcut-key definition, or press SHIFT+BACKSPACE or leave the box blank to set the definition to none. (You cannot otherwise edit this option.)

Because the shortcut key you specify works system-wide, no other application can use this key combination. If the shortcut key conflicts with an access key in a Windows application or dialog box, the access key is disabled.

You can also specify a shortcut key by using the Properties command on the File menu in Program Manager. Settings made in Program Manager override settings made in PIF Editor.

See Also

[Reserve Shortcut Keys for 386 Enhanced Mode](#)

Advanced Button

Choose the Advanced button to display the advanced options for 386 enhanced mode.

