

NAME

m4 – macro processor

SYNOPSIS

m4 [*OPTION*]... [*FILE*]...

DESCRIPTION

Process macros in *FILE*s. If no *FILE* or if *FILE* is ‘–’, standard input is read.

Mandatory or optional arguments to long options are mandatory or optional for short options too.

Operation modes:

- help** display this help and exit
- version**
output version information and exit
- E, --fatal-warnings**
once: warnings become errors, twice: stop execution at first error
- i, --interactive**
unbuffer output, ignore interrupts
- P, --prefix-builtins**
force a ‘m4_’ prefix to all builtins
- Q, --quiet, --silent**
suppress some warnings for builtins
- warn-macro-sequence[=*REGEXP*]**
warn if macro definition matches *REGEXP*,
default `\$\{([^\}]*)\}[[0-9][0-9]+\)`
- W, --word-regexp=*REGEXP***
use *REGEXP* for macro name syntax

Preprocessor features:

- D, --define=NAME[=*VALUE*]**
define *NAME* as having *VALUE*, or empty
- I, --include=DIRECTORY**
append *DIRECTORY* to include path
- s, --synclines**
generate ‘#line NUM "*FILE*"’ lines
- U, --undefine=NAME**
undefine *NAME*

Limits control:

- g, --gnu**
override **-G** to re-enable GNU extensions
- G, --traditional**
suppress all GNU extensions
- H, --hashsize=PRIME**
set symbol lookup hash table size [509]
- L, --nesting-limit=NUMBER**
change nesting limit, 0 for unlimited [0]

Frozen state files:

- F, --freeze-state=FILE**
produce a frozen state on *FILE* at end

-R, --reload-state=FILE
 reload a frozen state from FILE at start

Debugging:

-d, --debug[=FLAGS]
 set debug level (no FLAGS implies ‘aeq’)

--debugfile[=FILE]
 redirect debug and trace output to FILE (default stderr, discard if empty string)

-l, --arglength=NUM
 restrict macro tracing size

-t, --trace=NAME
 trace NAME when it is defined

FLAGS is any of:

a show actual arguments

c show before collect, after collect and after call

e show expansion

f say current input file name

i show changes in input files

l say current input line number

p show results of path searches

q quote values as necessary, with a or e flag

t trace for all macro calls, not only traceon’ed

x add a unique macro call id, useful with c flag

V shorthand for all of the above flags

If defined, the environment variable ‘M4PATH’ is a colon-separated list of directories included after any specified by ‘-I’.

Exit status is 0 for success, 1 for failure, 63 for frozen file version mismatch, or whatever value was passed to the m4exit macro.

AUTHOR

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REPORTING BUGS

Report bugs to: bug-m4@gnu.org
 GNU M4 home page: <http://www.gnu.org/software/m4/>
 General help using GNU software: <http://www.gnu.org/gethelp/>

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SEE ALSO

The full documentation for **m4** is maintained as a Texinfo manual. If the **info** and **m4** programs are properly installed at your site, the command

info m4

should give you access to the complete manual.