

Vim provides a way to recover files that had unsaved changes in them using a “swap” file. A common example of this would be you're working on the remote CS Linux servers, the server connection terminated for being idle for too long, and you had unsaved changes in a file you were working on. To recover the files follow the steps below.

For example, let's say you had a file called “main.c” that you wanted to recover.

- 1) When you login to the servers again, open the file with “vim main.c”. A message about the swap file will appear on the screen:

```
E325: ATTENTION
Found a swap file by the name ".main.c.swp"
    owned by: bfriedml    dated: Thu Jan 28 19:30:50 2021
    file name: ~/bfriedml/TEST_DIR/main.c
    modified: YES
    user name: bfriedml    host name: cs4
    process ID: 12037
While opening file "main.c"
    dated: Thu Jan 28 19:29:59 2021

(1) Another program may be editing the same file.  If this is the case,
    be careful not to end up with two different instances of the same
    file when making changes.  Quit, or continue with caution.
(2) An edit session for this file crashed.
    If this is the case, use ":recover" or "vim -r main.c"
    to recover the changes (see ":help recovery").
    If you did this already, delete the swap file ".main.c.swp"
    to avoid this message.

Swap file ".main.c.swp" already exists!
[O]pen Read-Only, (E)dit anyway, (R)ecover, (D)elele it, (Q)uit, (A)bort: █
```

- 2) Enter “r” to recover it. Then the message below will appear.

```
Swap file ".main.c.swp" already exists!
"main.c" 5L, 69C
Using swap file ".main.c.swp"
Original file "~/TEST_DIR/main.c"
Recovery completed. You should check if everything is OK.
(You might want to write out this file under another name
and run diff with the original file to check for changes)
You may want to delete the .swp file now.

Press ENTER or type command to continue █
```

- 3) Press “enter” to finish
- 4) The file will open. Immediately save the file. Although you have recovered the file, the file is still in it's unsaved state at this current moment.
- 5) When you're done with the file and are back in the terminal, you can delete the swap file. Swap files start with the period character and are always in the format “.file_name.swp” so if my file name were main.c, enter “rm .main.c.swp” to delete the swap file. By deleting the swap file, this “E325: ATTENTION” message will stop appearing.