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erase

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evntcmd

expand

extract

fc

find

findstr

finger

flattemp

fondue

for

forfiles

freedisk

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> ftp

ftype

fveupdate

getmac

gettype

goto

gpfixup

gpresult

gpupdate

grftabl

help

helpctr

hostname

icacs

if

ipconfig

ipxroute

irftp

jetpack

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erase

Article • 02/03/2023 • 8 contributors •

Applies Windows Server 2025, Windows Server 2022, Windows Server 2019, Windows Server 2016, Windows 11, Windows 10, Azure Stack HCI, versions 23H2 and 22H2

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In this article

[Syntax](#)

[Related links](#)

Deletes one or more files. If you use **erase** to delete a file from your disk, you can't retrieve it.

Note

This command is the same as the [del command](#).

Syntax



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```
erase [/p] [/f] [/s] [/q] [/a[:<attributes>] <names>
del [/p] [/f] [/s] [/q] [/a[:<attributes>] <names>
```

Parameters



Expand table

Parameter	Description
<names>	Specifies a list of one or more files or directories. Wildcards may be used to delete multiple files. If a directory is specified, all files within the directory will be deleted.
/p	Prompts for confirmation before deleting the specified file.
/f	Forces deletion of read-only files.
/s	Deletes specified files from the current directory and all subdirectories. Displays the names of the files as they are being deleted.

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/q	Specifies quiet mode. You are not prompted for delete confirmation.
/a[:] <attributes>	Deletes files based on the following file attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• r Read-only files• h Hidden files• i Not content indexed files• s System files• a Files ready for archiving• I Reparse points• - Used as a prefix meaning 'not'
/?	Displays help at the command prompt.

Remarks

- If you use the `erase /p` command, you'll see the following message:

```
FileName, Delete (Y/N)?
```

To confirm the deletion, press **Y**. To cancel the deletion and to display the next file name (if you specified a group of files), press **N**. To stop the **erase** command, press CTRL+C.

- If you disable command extension, the `/s` parameter will display the names of any files that weren't found ,instead of displaying the names of files that are being deleted.
- If you specify specific folders in the `<names>` parameter, all of the included files will also be deleted. For example, if you want to delete all of the files in the `\work` folder, type:

Copy

```
erase \work
```

- You can use wildcards (* and ?) to delete more than one file at a time. However, to avoid deleting files unintentionally, you should use wildcards cautiously. For example, if you type the following command:

Copy

```
erase *.*
```

The **erase** command displays the following prompt:

```
Are you sure (Y/N)?
```

To delete all of the files in the current directory, press **Y** and then press ENTER. To cancel the deletion, press **N** and then press ENTER.

Note

Before you use wildcard characters with the **erase** command, use the same wildcard characters with the **dir** command to list all the files that will be deleted.

Examples

To delete all the files in a folder named Test on drive C, type either of the following:

Copy

```
erase c:\test
erase c:\test\*.*
```

To delete all files with the .bat file name extension from the current directory, type:

Copy

```
erase *.bat
```

To delete all read-only files in the current directory, type:

Copy

```
erase /a:r *.*
```

Related links

- [Command-Line Syntax Key](#)
- [del command](#)

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