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replace

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Applies to: ✅ 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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Replace existing files in a directory. If used with the **/a** option, this command adds new files to a directory instead of replacing existing files.

Syntax

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```
replace [<drive1>:][<path1>]<filename> [<drive2>:][<path2>] [/a] [/p] [/r] [/w]
replace [<drive1>:][<path1>]<filename> [<drive2>:][<path2>] [/p] [/r] [/s] [/w]
```

Parameters

⤢ Expand table

Parameter	Description
`[<drive1>:] [<path1>] <filename>`	Specifies the location and name of the source file or set of files. The *filename* option is required, and can include wildcard characters (* and ?).
`[<drive2>:] [<path2>]`	Specifies the location of the destination file. You can't specify a file name for files you replace. If you don't specify a drive or path, this command uses the current drive and directory as the destination.
/a	Adds new files to the destination directory instead of replacing existing files. You can't use this command-line option with the **/s** or **/u** command-line option.
/p	Prompts you for confirmation before replacing a destination file or adding a source file.
/r	Replaces Read-only and unprotected files. If you attempt to replace a Read-only file, but you don't specify **/r**, an error results and stops the replacement operation.
/w	Waits for you to insert a disk before the search for source files begins. If you don't specify **/w**, this command begins replacing or adding files immediately after you press ENTER.
/s	Searches all subdirectories in the destination directory and replaces matching files. You can't use **/s** with the **/a** command-line option. The command doesn't search subdirectories that are specified in *Path1*.

/u	Replaces only those files on the destination directory that are older than those in the source directory. You can't use **/u** with the **/a** command-line option.
/?	Displays help at the command prompt.

Remarks

- As this command adds or replaces files, the file names appear on the screen. After this command is done, a summary line is displayed in one of the following formats:

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  ```
  nnn files added
  nnn files replaced
  no file added
  no file replaced
  ```

- If you're using floppy disks and you need to switch disks while running this command, you can specify the **/w** command-line option so that this command waits for you to switch the disks.

- You can't use this command to update hidden files or system files.

- The following table shows each exit code and a brief description of its meaning:

<div align="right">⛶ Expand table</div>

Exit code	Description
0	This command successfully replaced or added the files.
1	This command encountered an incorrect version of MS-DOS.
2	This command couldn't find the source files.
3	This command couldn't find the source or destination path.
5	The user doesn't have access to the files that you want to replace.
8	There is insufficient system memory to carry out the command.
11	The user used the wrong syntax on the command line.

> ⓘ **Note**
>
> You can use the ERRORLEVEL parameter on the **if** command line in a batch program to process exit codes that are returned by this command.

Examples

To update all the versions of a file named *Phones.cli* (which appear in multiple directories on drive C:), with the latest version of the *Phones.cli* file from a floppy disk in drive A:, type:

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```
replace a:\phones.cli c:\ /s
```

Related links

- Command-Line Syntax Key

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