

# C-String Assignment

Assignment means "copy the thing on the right into the storage on the left".

Instead of the assignment operator, used by the built-in types, C-strings use the `strcpy()` function, from the standard library header `<cstring>`, as shown below:



```
const size_t kMaxLen = 4096;
char dest [kMaxLen];
// Assume src is a C-style string
strcpy(dest, src);
```

Both `src` and `dest` are C-strings. (`src` is a common abbreviation for *source*, where the characters are copied *from*, while `dest` stands for *destination*, where the characters are copied *to*). `strcpy(dest, src)` copies the characters, one by one, from `src` into `dest`, stopping the `'\0'` is copied. However:

- You don't know if the **actual size** of the C-string source is less than **4095** characters (+1 for the null character). **Thus this code contains a security flaw.**
- You normally won't need anywhere near **4096** characters allocated for destination, so **the code is inefficient.**

**It is up to you to ensure** that there is enough space in `dest` to hold a copy of `src`. The icon used in front of the code does not mean that the code is buggy; instead, it means that the **function itself is intrinsically dangerous**; it's like the symbol found on rat poison.



The library function itself **makes no attempt to check whether the destination has enough room** to hold a copy of the source string. Even if there is not enough memory the function keeps copying, possibly overwriting other data; this called a **buffer overflow**.



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