

Autosave / Backup

Operation	Keystroke	Function	Note
File Auto-Saving	By default Emacs autosaves files into file that have a name that starts and ends with ‘#’, unless there’s code that changes that behaviour. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEL uses the default auto-save file names. • Buffers not visiting files can also be autosaved if that is requested explicitly (by turning the auto-save-mode for that buffer). • When a large portion of text is deleted from a buffer, its auto-save-mode is automatically disabled temporarily to help retain that deleted text in the auto-saved copy. It is re-activated when the buffer is saved in a file (with C-x C-s) or when activating auto-save-mode. 		
Last updated on:	2025-04-30	PEL does not assign key bindings to commands that toggle backup to prevent toggling them by mistake.	
Open this PDF file (🔗 Autosave/Backup) See also: 🔗 Help/Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <f11> ? p • <f11> p 	(pel-help-pdf-select &optional OPEN-WEB-PAGE)	Prompt for a PEL PDF and open it. Prompt supports tab completion. For this PDF type backup <RET> at the prompt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the prefix argument (like C-u or M--) is used, then it opens the remote GitHub hosted raw PDF instead. If the pel-flip-help-pdf-arg user-option is set it’s the other way around.
<u>Toggle autosave of the current buffer</u>	M-x auto-save-mode	(auto-save-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle auto-saving in the current buffer (Auto Save mode). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a prefix argument ARG, enable Auto Save mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise.
<u>Toggle auto-saving directly to the file (instead of the normal auto-save file)</u>	M-x auto-save-visited-mode	(auto-save-visited-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle automatic saving to file-visiting buffers on or off. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a prefix argument ARG, enable regular saving of all buffers visiting a file if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise. • Unlike ‘auto-save-mode’, this mode will auto-save buffer contents to the visited files directly and will also run all save-related hooks.
<u>Auto-save now all buffers that need it.</u>	M-x do-auto-save	(do-auto-save &optional NO-MESSAGE CURRENT-ONLY)	Auto-save all buffers that need it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is all buffers that have auto-saving enabled and are changed since last auto-saved. • Auto-saving writes the buffer into a file so that your editing is not lost if the system crashes. This file is not the file you visited; that changes only when you save.
<u>Recovering Data from auto-saves</u>	The following commands allow recovering data from auto-saved files.		
<u>Recover content of file from its auto-saved copy.</u>	M-x recover-file	(recover-file FILE)	Visit file FILE, but get contents from its last auto-save file.
<u>Recover a session after Emacs crash</u>	M-x recover-session	(recover-session)	Recover auto save files from a previous Emacs session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This command first displays a Dired buffer showing you the previous sessions that you could recover from. • To choose one, move point to the proper line and then type C-c C-c. Then you’ll be asked about a number of files to recover.
<u>Backup Files</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By default Emacs makes a single backup file for each file edited: a file with the name ending with ‘~’. • It’s also possible to use numbered backups with our without automatic deletion of old ones. • All of this is controlled by backup user options: version-control, kept-new-versions, kept-odd-versions, deleted-old-versions and dired-kept-versions • Emacs has a set of functions that deal with backups but no explicit commands. 		
<u>Compare file with its backup</u>			
<u>Compare file with its backup</u> See also: 🔗 Diff & Merge	<f11> d e f k	(ediff-backup FILE)	Compare a file with its backup. If there are several numerical backups, use the latest. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the file is itself a backup, then compare it with its original.

Autosave/Backup — References

Topic & Link	Description
Emacs Manual - Auto-save	
Emacs Manual - Backup Files	
How do I reload a file in a buffer? @ StackExchange	Discussion that describes several aspect of reloading a file.