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. • 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:	2025-12-09	*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**	`<f11> ? p autosave`	(**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. • 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.
Toggle autosave of the current buffer	`M-x` auto-save-mode	(**auto-save-mode** &optional ARG)	Toggle auto-saving in the current buffer (Auto Save mode). • With a prefix argument ARG, enable Auto Save mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise.
Toggle auto-saving directly to the file (instead of the normal auto-save file)	`M-x` auto-save-visited-mode	(**auto-save-visited-mode** &optional ARG)	Toggle automatic saving to file-visiting buffers on or off. • 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.
Auto-save now all buffers that need it.	`M-x` do-auto-save	(**do-auto-save** &optional NO-MESSAGE CURRENT-ONLY)	Auto-save all buffers that need it. • 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.
Recovering Data from auto-saves		The following commands allow recovering data from auto-saved files.	
Recover content of file from its auto-saved copy.	`M-x` recover-file	(**recover-file** FILE)	Visit file FILE, but get contents from its last auto-save file.
Recover a session after Emacs crash	`M-x` recover-session	(**recover-session**)	Recover auto save files from a previous Emacs session. • 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.
Backup Files		• 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.	
Compare file with its backup			
Compare file with its backup 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. • 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.