


Emacs support for Make Files

Description	Keystroke	Function	Note
Make support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emacs natively supports several Make dialect modes as listed below.PEL adds several commands and user-options that add control to the editing behaviour. See:<ul style="list-style-type: none">pel-modes-activating-superword-mode : PEL automatically activates super-word-mode for make files. Use <f11> t <f2> to access the customization group.		
Open this PDF file. See also: ⌘ Help/Info	<f11> SPC M <f1> <f12> <f1>	(pel-help-pdf &optional OPEN-WEB-PAGE)	Open the ⓘ I - Make local PDF. 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.
 ⓘ I - Make	<f11> SPC M <f3> <f12> <f3>		(pel-customize-library &optional OTHER-WINDOW)
Select Make dialect mode See also: <ul style="list-style-type: none">⌘ Customize <ul style="list-style-type: none">⌘ File/Directory Variables	Emacs supports several dialects of make . It automatically selects the dialect when a file is visited using the mode and file specification association identified in the auto-mode-alist variable. The support associates the name and extensions of most make files with the corresponding dialect mode. The following make file dialect modes are supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none">makefile-mode (the based mode upon which all following modes are derived):<ul style="list-style-type: none">makefile-automake-mode : .ammakefile-bsdmake-mode : [Mm]akefile, .mk, .makemakefile-gmake-mode : GNUmakefilemakefile-imake-mode : Imakefilemakefile-makepp-mode : .makeppmakefile-nmake-mode : .mak PEL implements the makefile-nmake-mode to support Microsoft NMAKE syntax.Some projects use the .mak extension for their makefile (the dmd project for example).<ul style="list-style-type: none">With PEL, set up the association using the pel-auto-mode-alist user-option.<ul style="list-style-type: none">You can access the relevant customization buffer for this user-option by using PEL <f11> <f2> p key sequence. See ⌘ CustomizeIts also possible to use file variables to explicitly identify the make dialect mode: write something like this on the first line: <code>-*- mode: makefile-gmake; -*-</code>You can also use the following commands to manually activate one of these modes when on of them is already active.		
Activate automake mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET C-aC-c C-m C-a	(makefile-automake-mode)	Activates the automake mode <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mode-line lighter is : Makefile.am
Activate BSD make mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET C-bC-c C-m C-b	(makefile-bsdmake-mode)	Activates the BSD make mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none">BSD Make is the default make on macOS and BSD OS systems.The mode-line lighter is : BSDmakefile
Activate GNU make mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET C-gC-c C-m C-g	(makefile-gmake-mode)	Activates the GNU make mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mode-line lighter is : GNUmakefile <div>⚠ Because this key sequence ends with C-g, type the Esc key 3 times to escape from the C-c C-m prefix. You can also use a key not in the list.</div>
Activate imake mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET <tab>C-c C-m C-i	(makefile-imake-mode)	Activate the imake mode <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mode-line lighter is : Imakefile
Activate standard make mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET RETC-c C-m C-m	(makefile-mode)	Activates the major mode for editing standard Makefiles. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mode-line lighter is : Makefile
Activate makepp mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET C-pC-c C-m C-p	(makefile-makepp-mode)	Activates the makepp mode. Also called make++ <ul style="list-style-type: none">makepp is written in Perl. It is mostly useful for writing C++ specific make files, as it expands GNU Make and removes the requirement of using recursive make.The mode-line lighter is : Makeppfile
Activate NMAKE mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c RET C-nC-c C-m C-n	(makefile-nmake-mode)	Activates the nmake mode, supporting Microsoft's NMAKE makefile syntax. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The mode-line lighter is: Nmake
Navigate	The standard Emacs make-mode.el package provides the 2 commands to navigate across make target/dependency statements. PEL complements this with commands to navigate across the macro definition statements.		
Move point forward to next target/dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-n<f12> <down><M-f12> <down> <f11> SPC M <down>	(makefile-next-dependency)	Move point to the beginning of the next dependency line. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Skips comments and macro definitions.
Move point backward to previous target/dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-p<f12> <up><M-f12> <up> <f11> SPC M <up>	(makefile-previous-dependency)	Move point to the beginning of the previous dependency line. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Skips comments and macro definitions.
Move point forward to next macro definition statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f12> <M-down><M-f12> <M-down> <f11> SPC M <M-down>	(pel-make-next-macro &optional N SILENT DONT-PUSH-MARK)	Move to the beginning of next N make file macro definition statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The function skips over comments.If no valid form is found, don't move point, issue an error describing the failure unless SILENT is non-nil, in which case the function returns nil on error and non-nil on success.The error message states the number of instanced searched, the regexp used and the number of instances found.On success, the function push original position on the mark ring unless DONT-PUSH-MARK is non-nil.The command support shift-marking.
Move point backward to previous macro definition statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f12> <M-up><M-f12> <M-up> <f11> SPC M <M-up>	(pel-make-previous-macro &optional N SILENT DONT-PUSH-MARK)	Move to the beginning of previous N make file macro definition statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The function skips over comments.If no valid form is found, don't move point, issue an error describing the failure unless SILENT is non-nil, in which case the function returns nil on error and non-nil on success.The error message states the number of instanced searched, the regexp used and the number of instances found.On success, the function push original position on the mark ring unless DONT-PUSH-MARK is non-nil.The command support shift-marking.
Insert & Edit	The following commands help the editing of the makefile contents.		
Insert GNU make function statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C-c TabC-c C-i	(makefile-insert-gmake-function)	Insert a GNU make function call . <ul style="list-style-type: none">Asks for the name of the function to use (with completion).Then prompts for all required parameters.
Insert target at point	C-c :	(makefile-insert-target-ref TARGET-NAME)	Complete on a list of known targets, then insert TARGET-NAME at point.
Add/remove line continuation trailing backslashes	C-c C-\	(makefile-backslash-region FROM TO DELETE-FLAG)	Insert, align, or delete end-of-line backslashes on the lines in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none">With no argument, inserts backslashes and aligns existing backslashes.With an argument, deletes the backslashes. This function does not modify the last line of the region if the region ends right at the start of the following line; it does not modify blank lines at the start of the region. So you can put the region around an entire macro definition and conveniently use this command.
Perform completion at point	C-M-i <f12> . <f6> .	(completion-at-point)	Perform completion on the text around point. The completion method is determined by 'completion-at-point-functions'. <div>⚠  The C-M-i key sequence is also often bound to flyspell command. Use <f12> . instead.</div>
Electric Insert	When the makefile-mode makefile-electric-keys user-option is turned on (it is off by default), the characters \$: = and . have special behaviour, described below.		
Insert macro reference	\$	(makefile-insert-macro-ref MACRO-NAME)	Complete on a list of known macros, then insert complete ref at point.

Description	Keystroke	Function	Note
Insert new target	:	(makefile-electric-colon ARG)	Prompt for name of new target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompting only happens at beginning of line. Anywhere else just self-inserts.
Insert macro defintion	=	(makefile-electric-equal ARG)	Prompt for name of a macro to insert. Only does prompting if point is at beginning of line. Anywhere else just self-inserts.
Insert special target	.	(makefile-electric-dot ARG)	Prompt for the name of a special target to insert. Supports tab completion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only does electric insertion at beginning of line. Anywhere else just self-inserts.
Indenting	In make file editing, the tab character is important. The make program distinguish the tab character from multiple space characters. <p>⚠️The C–M–q key sequence is bound to prog-indent-sexp but it does not work well in makefile. Use the other 3 commands.</p>		
Insert a tab character	<tab>	(indent-for-tab-command &optional ARG)	Inserts a tab character in a makefile.
Indent line(s) rigidly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <f6> <tab> <f11> <tab> c 	(pel-indent-lines &optional N)	Indent current or marked lines by N indentation levels. Each level uses a tab character. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with point anywhere on the line. All lines touched by the region are indented. A special argument N can specify more than one indentation level. It defaults to 1. If a negative number is specified, 'pel-unindent-lines' is used. If a region is marked, the function does not deactivate it to allow repeated execution of the command. It also modifies the region to include all characters in all affected lines. Use C–g to de-activate the region.
Un-indent line(s) rigidly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <backtab> <f6> <backtab> <f11> <tab> C 	(pel-unindent-lines &optional N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Un-indent current line or marked lines by N indentation levels. Works with point is anywhere on the line. All lines touched by the region are un-indented. If region was marked, the function does not deactivate it to allow repeated execution of the command. If a region was marked, the function does not deactivate it to allow repeated execution of the command. It also modifies the region to include all characters in all affected lines Use C–g to de-activate the region.
Indent expression	C–M–q	(prog-indent-sexp &optional DEFUN)	Indent the expression after point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When interactively called with prefix, indent the enclosing defun instead. <p>⚠️ This command does not work well in makefiles.</p>
Comment control	Although the make file modes provide the comment-region command, it's best to use comment-dwim as it works much better.		
Comment/un-comment See also:🔗 Comments	M– ;	(comment-dwim ARG)	Comment or un-comment line or region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When no marked region and no comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On empty line: insert comment starter at the proper indentation level. Typed again: move it toward end of line. On line with code: insert comment starter after the code for an end-of-line comment With marked un-commented region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comment region (each line is commented) With marked commented region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removes the comment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call the comment command you want (Do What I Mean). If the region is active and 'transient-mark-mode' is on, call 'comment-region' (unless it only consists of comments, in which case it calls 'uncomment-region'). Else, if the current line is empty, call 'comment-insert-comment-function' if it is defined, otherwise insert a comment and indent it. Else if a prefix ARG is specified, call 'comment-kill'. Else, call 'comment-indent'.
	C–c C–c	(comment-region BEG END &optional ARG)	Comment or uncomment each line in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With just C-u prefix arg, uncomment each line in region BEG .. END. Numeric prefix ARG means use ARG comment characters. If ARG is negative, delete that many comment characters instead. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strings used as comment starts are built from 'comment-start' and 'comment-padding'; the strings used as comment ends are built from 'comment-end' and 'comment-padding'. By default, the 'comment-start' markers are inserted at the current indentation of the region, and comments are terminated on each line (even for syntaxes in which newline does not end the comment and blank lines do not get comments). This can be changed with 'comment-style'. <p>⚠️ Prefer comment-dwim: it works better.</p>
Analyze	The following commands analyze the content of the make file or the file system.		
Scan current directory files, checking for targets	C–c C–f	(makefile-pickup-filenames-as-targets)	Scan the current directory for filenames to use as targets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks each filename against 'makefile-ignored-files-in-pickup-regex' and adds all qualifying names to the list of known targets.
Scan current buffer for makefile content	C–c C–p	(makefile-pickup-everything ARG)	Notice names of all macros and targets in Makefile. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix arg means force pickups to be redone. Use this to refresh the list of macros and targets located in the makefile before executing another action on those.
Update scan with latest makefile buffer content	C–c C–u	(makefile-create-up-to-date-overview)	Create a buffer containing an overview of the state of all known targets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Known targets are targets that are explicitly defined in that makefile; in other words, all targets that appear on the left hand side of a dependency in the makefile.
List macros and targets in dedicated buffer	C–c C–b	(makefile-switch-to-browser)	Open a "Macros and Target" buffer that only lists them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It operates in Fundamental mode and aside listing the macros and targets provides nothing more.

Emacs & Makefile— References

Document	Notes
Make tools	
GNU Make Manuals	GNU Make manual. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GNU Make Top page GNU Make - Appendix A - Quick Reference
Makepp home page	Makepp, also called make++ is a GNU Make replacement, written in Perl. It addresses the recursive make problem.
Make generic information	
Recursive Make Considered Harmful - Steve Miller	PDF paper (from the wayback machine archive) written by Steve Miller in 1997 describing the concept of recursive make technique showing why it causes several problems and what can be done to avoid them.
Non-Recursive Make Considered Harmful	A march 2016 PDF paper from Andrey Mokhov, Neil Mitchell, Simon Peyton Jones and Simon Marlow describe how even a non-recursive make based build system can be difficult to maintain and they propose something based on the Shake Haskell library.

GNU Make Rules

GNU Make Rules						
Topic	Rule syntax format			Description		
Rule Syntax	targets : prerequisites recipe ...			• Multiple line recipe, the on mostly used. • The recipe lines must start with a TAB character (or the string identified by the .RECIPEPREFIX pseudo-variable.		
	targets : prerequisites ; recipe recipe ...			• It is also possible to to identify a recipe on the same line as the prerequisites, separated from them by a semicolon. • This allow writing a single-line rule.		
Wildcards	Wildcards can be used in targets and prerequisites. • They are expanded in target and prerequisites • They are not expanded in variable definitions: • See wildcard examples • But wildcard functions can be use to expand in variable definition as in: <code>objects := \$(wildcard *.o)</code>			*	All files, like '*.c'	
				?	Expand to characters	
				[...]		
				~	At beginning of path name, like ~/bin expands to your home bin directory	
				~ <i>user</i>	Expands the the home directory of specific user	
Searching directories	VPATH	The value of the VPATH make variable specifies a list of directories that make should search. • Each directory in the list can be separated by space or : • On MS-DOS, Windows: space or ;			Example: VPATH = src:../headers	
Selective search	vpath directive	Same as VPATH but more selective: only applies to a particular class of file names. The path statement format is one of the 3 forms. The last 2 clear search path for the specified scope (file patter or all): • vpath <i>pattern</i> <i>directories</i> • vpath <i>pattern</i> • vpath			The first form sets the directory search for a specified file name pattern, like the following: vpath %.h ../headers	
Directory search for Link Libraries	Note: that make treats prerequisites of the form -lname as library names. The -lname is expanded to the full path of the library name with starts with the 'lib' prefix. For example: foo : foo.c -lcurses cc \$^ -o \$@ will cause the following command to be executed if needed: cc foo.c /usr/lib/libcurses.a -o foo This behaviour is customizable by the .LIBPATTERNS special variable.					
Phony Targets	• A phone target is a target that is not really the name of a file, it's just a name for a recipe to be executed when you make an explicit request. • Use it to avoid a conflict with the name of a file, and to improve performance: implicit rule search is skipped for .PHONY targets. • Example: .PHONY: clean clean: rm *.o temp • Also useful for recursive makes processing multiple directories with loops, and other case. See the GNU manual					
Special Built-in Targets	These include: .PHONY .SUFFIXES .DEFAULT .PRECIOUS .INTERMEDIATE .SECONDARY .SECONDEXPANSION .DELETE_ON_ERROR .IGNORE .LOW_RESOLUTION_TIME .SILENT .EXPORT_ALL_VARIABLES .NOTPARALLEL .ONESHELL .POSIX					
GNU Make Implicit Rules						
Implicit Rule Topic	Description					
Using Implicit Rules	• To use them refrain from writing the recipe for a kind of target. • Each implicit rule has a target and prerequisite patterns. • Write a rule to identify extra prerequisites like header files prerequisites to an object file. • There may be several implicit rules for the same target (for example a rule to generate object file from C files, another rule to generate object file from C++ files). • See the catalogue of built-in-rules . It is possible to cancel an implicit rule . • Make searches for implicit rules for: • each target that has no recipe, • each double-colon rule that has no recipe, • a file that is only mentioned as a prerequisite. • The Implicit Rule Search Algorithm describes how the search for an implicit rule is done. • A chain of implicit rules can be used to make the target from a prerequisite. But only one instance of an implicit rule can only be used in the chain. • It's possible to define last-resort default rules to override part of another makefile . • To prevent an implicit rule to apply to a specific target create an empty recipe for that target.					
Variables used in Implicit Rules						
Variable Name	Description	Default value	Flag Variable		Description and default value (if any)	
AR	Archive-maintaining program	ar	ARFLAGS	Flags to give the archive-maintaining program; default ' rv '		
AS	Program for compiling assembly files	as	ASFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the assembler (when explicitly invoked on a '.s' or '.S' file)		
CC	Program for compiling C files	cc	CFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the C compiler.		
CXX	Program for compiling C++ files	g++	CXXFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the C++ compiler.		
CPP	Program for running the C preprocessor, with results to standard output	\$(CC) -E	CPPFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the C preprocessor and programs that use it (the C and Fortran compilers).		
FC	Program for compiling or preprocessing Fortran and Ratfor files	f77	FFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the Fortran compiler.		
			RFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the Fortran compiler for Ratfor files.		
M2C	Program to compile Modula-2 files	m2c				
PC	Program to compile Pascal files	pc	PFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the Pascal compiler.		
CO	Program for extracting a file from RCS	co	COFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the RCS co program.		
GET	Program for extracting a file from SCCS	get	GFLAGS	Extra flags to give to the SCCS get program.		
LEX	Program to use to turn Lex grammars into source code	lex	LFLAGS	Extra flags to give to Lex.		
YACC	Program to use to turn Yacc grammars into source code	yacc	YFLAGS	Extra flags to give to Yacc.		
LINT	Program to use to run lint on source code	lint	LINTFLAGS	Extra flags to give to lint.		
MAKEINFO	Program to convert a Texinfo source file into an Info file	makeinfo				
TEX	Program to make TeX DVI files from TeX source	tex				
TEXI2DVI	Program to make TeX DVI files from Texinfo source	texi2dvi				
WEAVE	Program to translate Web into TeX	weave				
CWEAVE	Program to translate C Web into TeX	weave				
TANGLE	Program to translate Web into Pascal	tangle				

CTANGLE	Program to translate C Web into C	tangle						
RM	Command to remove a file	rm -f						
			LDFLAGS	Extra flags to give to compilers when they are supposed to invoke the linker, 'ld', such as -L. Libraries (-lfoo) should be added to the LDLIBS variable instead.				
			LDLIBS	Library flags or names given to compilers when they are supposed to invoke the linker, 'ld'. Non-library linker flags, such as -L, should go in the LDFLAGS variable.				
			LOADLIBES	Deprecated (but still supported) alternative to LDLIBS.				
Automatic Variable	Expands to		Notes and examples					
\$@	File name of the target . For archive(member): name or archive .							
\$(@D)	The directory part of the target		If the target is just a file name, then the value of \$(@D) is .					
\$(@F)	The file name (with extension) of the target							
\$\$	File name of target archive member							
\$(%D)	The directory part of the target archive member							
\$(%F)	The file name (with extension) of the target archive member							
\$<	Name of the first prerequisite							
\$(<D)	The directory part of the prerequisite							
\$(<F)	The file name (with extension) of the prerequisite							
\$?	Names of all prerequisites newer than target with spaces between them. <ul style="list-style-type: none">For archive(member), only contain the member.		Also useful in explicit rules when the receipt must operate on only the prerequisites that have changed.					
\$(?D)	List of the directory part of all prerequisites newer than target							
\$(?F)	List of the file name (with extension) of all prerequisites newer than target							
^^	The names of all prerequisites with spaces between them. <ul style="list-style-type: none">For archive(member), only contain the member.No duplicates in the list		Does not contain order-only prerequisites.					
^(D)	List of the directory part of all prerequisites (no duplicates)							
^(F)	Lis of the file name (with extension) of all prerequisites (no duplicates)							
++	The names of all prerequisites with spaces between them. <ul style="list-style-type: none">For archive(member), only contain the member.Duplicates are allowed in the list in the same order as received		Useful when linking where it might be required to repeat the name of a library					
\$(+D)	List of the directory part of all prerequisites (with duplicates)							
\$(+F)	List of the file name (with extension) of all prerequisites (with duplicates)							
\$	The names of all order-only prerequisites with spaces between them.							
\$*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For implicit rule: the stem which an implicit rule matches.For explicit rule, there is no <i>stem</i> : expands to the target name minus the suffix.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implicit rule: if target is <i>dir/a.foo.b</i> and the target pattern is <i>a.%b</i> then the stem is <i>dir/foo</i>Explicit rule: If target is <i>foo.c</i>, then <i>\$*</i> expands to <i>foo</i>.					
\$(*D)	The directory part of the stem							
\$(*F)	The file name (with extension) of the stem							

Suffix Rules - Obsolete Old-fashioned Suffix Rules

Kinds of old-fashioned suffix rule	Example of suffix rule	Corresponding pattern rule	Description
double-suffix	.c.o	%o : %c	Matches any file whose name ends with the target suffix.
single-suffix	.c	% : %c	Matches any file name, and the corresponding implicit prerequisite name is made by appending the source suffix
	The old-fashioned suffix rules are obsolete because the pattern rules are more general and clearer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffix rules cannot have any prerequisites of their own. Suffix sure without recipe are meaningless. 		

Assignment operators

OP	Description	Example
	Rules	
:		non-terminal
::	Makes the rule terminal: it's prerequisite may not be an intermediate file.	
	Variables	
=	Non-terminal recursively expanded variable assignment. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two-flavours of Variables Setting Variables 	The following will echo Huh?: <pre>foo = \$(bar) bar = \$(ugh) ugh = Huh? all:;echo \$(foo)</pre>
:=	Simply expanded variables See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two-flavours of Variables 	The following: <pre>x := foo y := \$(x) bar x := later</pre> is equivalent to: <pre>y := foo bar x := later</pre>

OP	Description	Example
:=	Simply expanded variables - 2012 POSIX standard compliant. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two-flavours of Variables 	<p>The following:</p> <pre>x ::= foo y ::= \$(x) bar x ::= later</pre> <p>is equivalent to:</p> <pre>y ::= foo bar x ::= later</pre>
?=	Set variable if it is not already set. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting Variables 	<p>The following:</p> <pre>FOO ?= bar</pre> <p>is equivalent to:</p> <pre>ifeq (\$(origin FOO), undefined) FOO = bar endif</pre>
!=	Shell assignment operator: used to execute a shell script and set a variable to its output. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting Variables 	<p>For example, if you don't expect a \$ character to be part of the output string:</p> <pre>hash != printf '\043' file_list != find . -name '*.c'</pre> <p>If you expect \$ character(s) to be part of the output, then it's better to use another form:</p> <pre>hash := \$(shell printf '\043') var := \$(shell find . -name "*.c")</pre>