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PEL PDF Documents Legend

Symbol/colour	Purpose	Description and Examples
Last updated on:	2025-12-05	
Table Title	Table titles (and the equivalent PDF file titles showing in browser tabs) use a prefix symbol to identify the overall purpose of the table. Most table titles use a single symbol, some, like the tables related to Emacs Lisp, use more than one.	
➢	Document related	This table contains information related to the overall document only, such as this legend.
𝕀	Generic Emacs • global bindings • mode specific bindings	The 𝕀 symbol is used in the table titles of tables that describe general Emacs feature set such as abbreviation, bookmarks, buffers, navigation, etc… In opposition to features specific to a specific major or minor mode. • In those tables, most keys are global bindings and the key description cells for global bindings have a white background. • The keys that are specific to a major mode are highlighted with a light green or light blue background. The keys with yellow background are also available in other modes but behave differently. See description of the background colours for key bindings below.
𝔏	Emacs Lisp • mode specific bindings	This table contains information related to Emacs Lisp development.
Ⓓ	Data Serialization Languages	Identifies major modes of data serialization languages. Like CWL, JSON, YAML.
Ⓜ	Markup language - Major Mode • mode specific bindings	The stylized M letter is used in the table titles that describe a specific set of Emacs major modes specifically designed to support the editing a markup languages like reStructuredText, markdown, XML, HTML, etc…
𝔓𝔏	Programming language - Major Mode • mode specific bindings	The two stylized PL letters are used in the table titles of tables that describe a specific set of Emacs major modes specifically designed to support the editing of files written in a specific programming language.
ⓜ	Minor Mode • mode specific bindings	Information about a specific minor mode
T	Templates	The table describes a text template system used to insert templated text quickly.
𝔵	External Package	The table describes an external package; a package that is not built-in Emacs and must be installed. PEL provides logic to install the package when its corresponding **pel-use-𝔵** (where 𝔵 is the name of the external package) user-option is turned on.
🚦	Availability tables	The page contains tables that describe availability of features.
⌨ ⌨	Keys/Keyboard	The table describes use of keys such as function keys, numeric keypad, modifier keys. One of two symbols is used (the new updated use the bigger one).
🍎	macOS specific	The table describes macOS topics only. This symbol is also used inside cells describing macOS-specific Emacs features.
※	Reference	The table contains references to web pages for documentation, examples, tutorial, etc…
💻	Development Notes	Describes PEL implementation and conventions. In some cases they may describe how PEL implement some features and that might be useful for other purposes.
🚧	Todo - incomplete	Page in very early stage. Much more work left to do.
Colour Codes	The following colour codes describe the context, availability, of the key bindings described in the tables.	
Black	Standard **global** key binding	Bindings that are mostly always available in standard Emacs: global key bindings.

Underlined	Key chord keys	📦 With PEL user option **pel-use-key-chord** set to **t**, PEL activates the key-chord external package along with global and mode-specific key chord bindings identified in the **pel-key-chords** user option.
		• A key chord is a group of 2 normal, non-modifier keys that must be typed simultaneously to activate the action identified in the key chord definition.
		  • This is **not** something like C-s, where the Control key and the s key are type together to do a CONTROL-S or where M-b represents using the Meta key and the b key together.
		• PEL default for **pel-key-chords** are identified in the tables of this document with the characters underlined.
		  • In some cases the key-chord is a simple binding to execute a command. In that case the 2 key-chord keys are shown in the keystroke column alone, simply underlined.
		  • In other cases, the key-chord inserts characters and execute commands. In such as case, the 2 key-chord keys are also shown in the keystroke column alone, but instead of describing the function in the function column, the cell shows the key-chord string which represent both the character inserted and the key code for the command.
		  • For example, the key-chord that consist of typing the **<** key and the **>** key together is represented as the **<>** key-chord and the expansion is show as **`"<>\C-b"`** . The effect is to insert both angle brackets and put point in between, since **`C-b`** is bound to to command backward-char.
		• The color of the key-chord corresponds to the availability of the commands used, if any. A key-chord that depends only on Emacs standard commands or simple characters is therefore shown in black.
		• The use of key-chords can be toggled by executing `M-x key-chord-mode`, which PEL binds to **`<f11> M-k`** when **pel-use-key-chord** is set to **t**.
		• For more information on PEL key-chords see the 𝕀 Key-Chord table.

Violet	Standard global key binding for Emacs execution	Same as above except that the keys are available to provide access to the various Emacs Lisp functions by name or execution of Emacs Lisp forms from the minibuffer.
Light Green	PEL **global** key bindings	• When used to highlight key sequence: denotes a key sequence available in the PEL package. • When used to highlight an Emacs Lisp command, indicates that the code is implemented by the PEL package.
Dark Green	PEL mode-specific bindings	Used to highlight key sequences available in the PEL package that are selected by the mode of the current buffer. These are special local mode bindings, but specific to the PEL system and which may be active while other modes are active. Most PEL specific bindings use function keys prefix to avoid clashes with currently popular bindings.
Light Teal	PEL prefix to external package key map	Several packages come with pre-defined key maps and prefix key suggestions. If the prefix key is different than the prefix suggested by the package but the remaining keys remain the same in the key map, this colour is used for the keys.
Teal	Hydra key	📦 With PEL user option **pel-use-hydra** set to **t**, PEL activates the **hydra external package** and also creates several Hydra key sets. The keys that activate the hydra are identified using the teal color. Example: The **`<f7> <f9>`** keys activate the pel-∑buffer and then a command can be executed by typing the <f9> key. It can then be repeated by typing the **`<f9>`** key again, and again, as long as the pel-∑buffer Hydra is active. The key binding cells show the key sequence like this, with the image used for a bullet: ✱ **`<f7> <f9> <f9>`**

Pink	Customizable prefix key	Identifies the prefix keys that can be easily modified via Emacs customization. The default value of the prefix key is shown in pink, followed by the other keys using the color describing their origin.
		• Examples of such customizable prefix keys include:
		  • the prefix key used by **lsp-mode**.
		  • the prefix key for the outline minor mode selectable via the **outline-minor-mode-prefix** user-option. See 𝕀 **Outline**
		PEL does not impose any value for these prefix keys. The PDF table describing the binding describe how to customize these prefix keys and may suggest good alternative prefix keys.

Symbol/colour	Purpose	Description and Examples
Red	Remapped Key	Identifies a key sequence normally bound by Emacs that PEL remaps for other purpose.
Orange	Key sequence not available in terminal mode	Key sequences highlighted in **orange** are not available when Emacs runs in terminal (termcap) mode. They are only available when emacs in running in graphics mode.
Brown	Key sequence not always available in terminal mode	Key sequences highlighted in **brown** or some behaviour of the associated command (such as shift marking) are available in terminal (termcap) mode under some conditions but not always. The description cell describes those conditions and the impact. The key sequences are always available when emacs in running in graphics mode.
Light Blue	Special behaviour in terminal mode	Highlight key sequences or notes that apply to the way the key binding operates when Emacs is running in a terminal (tty) frame.
Blue	Command using external package	Key sequence set-up by the PEL package that uses a command from an external package that must be installed and loaded. • The blue color is used if the key binding is defined by the external package itself. • If PEL defines it's own binding for the key then the key colouring is one of PEL's keybinding color (either light or dark green). • In all cases the description of the key includes a "requires external package" note using the 📦 symbol.
Dark Blue	Command using external package	Reserved. Consolidation of the colouring is underway in this document.
Coral	Command available only in special mode	Some commands, like debugger commands, are available through simple keys in the buffer where the mode is active, but are also available in other buffers, where the mode is not active. The commands that are available in the buffer where the mode is active are coloured in **coral** color. These constitute "local" bindings (for the specific mode) and may therefore conflict with the global binding other local binding of the same key chord.
Grey	• Translated key • Using **M-x** • Using **M-:**	The grey colour is used for the following cases: • Emacs translates some key combinations to other keys. For example Shift-F5, S-<f5>, is translated to <f5> so any binding to <f5> is also accessible if the shift key is pressed while the F5 key is pressed. The original keys do not have a specific key binding. They could have one. Of course in some case you may want to keep it unchanged (for example because the Shift key may indicate something like starting or extending the mark in transient mark mode). In any case, when such a key is described in the various tables, the colour of that key is grey. • All Emacs commands (functions that are marked interactive) can be executed via the **M-x** command. Some of the commands have no other key bindings. If there is no other pertinent information to show for the command (such as marking the command orange because it is not available in Terminal/TTY mode), then the **M-x** binding is shown it is displayed in grey as a reminder that it's not a specific binding, just a use of the (execute-extended-command) command, which is bound to **M-x**. • Emacs also allow execution of any Emacs Lisp expression using the (eval-expression) command bound to the **M-:** key. Those are also coloured grey.
Light Grey	Unused key binding	A key binding that is not necessary and could be re-used for some other functionality.
Header Cell Colours	Most header cells are grey, just like this one. Some other cells use a different background colour to help highlight the purpose of the group of commands and make it easier to quickly find a topic. The list and meanings of these colours follow.	
	Customization and access to Customization buffers.	
	Navigation commands.	
	Navigation, cross-reference commands.	
	Outlining commands	
	Search commands.	
	Help command; Emacs, local, man or web-based help.	
	Completion commands,	
	Replace commands	
	File opening, from prompt (with and without completion) or from text at point.	
	Copy commands	
	Merge text from several files	
	Move (possibly copy/paste), code/layout re-reorganization commands.	
	Paste, yank commands	
	Insertion commands : insert text, insert templates, skeletons, etc…	
	Indentation control	
	Compilation, evaluation	
	Highlighting commands.	
	Hiding/showing, Folding commands. New colour added Oct 30 2025. Not all pages use it yet.	
	Syntax checking commands (flymake, flycheck,…)	
	Kill, cut commands. The information is stored inside the kill ring buffer and can be retrieved through that.	
	Delete (text, bookmark, data, etc..) without the content placed inside the kill ring buffer. **Close** (buffer, window).	
Key Cell Colours	The background colour of the key cells describes the scope of the key binding. The following rows provide more information.	
	White background. Global key binding available everywhere.	A key binding that exists globally and is available in all normal file buffers and their major modes.
	Light green. Local buffer key binding set by PEL overriding Emacs global binding to same key	In some specialized modes, like the CC modes, PEL binds a specialized command to a key that Emacs normally binds globally. In most cases, when PEL binds a key like that the command chosen is similar to the original Emacs command but has some more behaviour required for the mode where it is used. Also in most case PEL binds the original Emacs command to a **<f12>** key prefix with the same key, so the user can still access the original behaviour with the original key prefixed with **<f12>**.
	Light yellow. Key binding where function adjust behaviour between major modes	A global key binding to a command that adapt its behaviour to the current major mode.
	Light blue. Key binding active only in specific **major mode**	Used to colour cells of tables describing generic concepts. In those tables where most keys have global bindings, • the keys with global bindings have a white background. • the keys with a light blue background describe key bindings specific to a some major mode, described in the key description. In tables describing the bindings of the specific major modes, this background colour for the same command key binding is not used.
	Light red. Key binding active only when a specific **minor mode** is active.	Used to colour cells of tables describing generic concepts. In those tables where most keys have global bindings, • the keys with global bindings have a white background. • the keys with a light red background describe key bindings specific to a some minor mode, described in the key description. In tables describing the bindings of the specific major modes, this background colour for the same command key binding is not used.

Symbol/colour	Purpose	Description and Examples
	Light red (darker) Key binding active only when a specific **minor mode** is active inside a specific text area.	Some minor modes (like **iedit-mode)** activate a different key map for highlighted text to activate some commands when the point is over these areas. This is the same colour as the minot mode colour, just a little darker.
	Light blue and light red. Key binding active in a specific **major mode** with specific **minor**	Used to colour cells of tables describing key bindings that are active in a major mode with a specific minor mode active.
	Darker red. Key bindings active only for when minor mode is active and over **buttons**	Some minor modes activate key bindings that are only active over text that is transformed into clickable buttons. For example: **goto-address-mode** The keys activated over these buttons for these modes are showing in a cell with this colour.
	Lilac. Key bindings active only for input completion during a prompt.	Emacs support prompts with input completion. Various special keys involved in the completion are available in various modes. This color is used in the key sequence cells for completion keys. See **Completion/Input**.
	Darker Lilac. Key bindings active in the completion window	During input completion, if a command is issued to mode point into the completion window where all possible completions are listed, these keys have special meaning. See **Completion/Input**.
Notes		
📘	**PEL Manual** Reference	Identifies that more information on a this specific topic is available in a section of the **PEL Manual**. ☝ The word "Description" in the left column title of each PDF table is also a link to the appropriate section of the PEL Manual.
★★	Powerful command	Used in the **Keystroke** column to highlight commands that are specially powerful in the sense that they integrate a relatively large and useful set of features. The description of these commands should be read carefully and fully understood.
🍀	Command enhanced by PEL	PEL enhance the behaviour of commands that have this mark. These commands are normally enhanced through Emacs Lisp **advice** and the additional behaviour controlled by customizable PEL user-options. The name of the user-option is shown beside the 🍀 symbol.
📦	Requires External Package	This symbol identify features that depend on external packages. • Some of PEL's features require the use of external packages, packages that are not part of the standard Emacs installation and which must be installed separately. Most are Emacs Lisp packages, but some also require external applications. • PEL customization capabilities allow you to identify whether or not you want to use the features that depend on such external packages. PEL also attempt to use or implement code that can help you install the required package(s).
	PEL Customizable	This feature is customizable via the **Pel** customization group or Inside Emacs there are several ways to access the customization system: • **`M-x customize`** : access Emacs top-level customization system • **`M-x customize-group`** : access to the group itself. For Pel, type: `M-x customize-group Pel` • **`M-x customize-option:`** customize a specific user option variable. ☝ Read the ☝ note below. It applies to PEL user option variables as well.
🎛	Customizable	This (non-PEL) feature is customizable through the list of user options described in the cell. ☝ All user options variables can be set in Emacs customization (see commands in the row above) and stored in file that is loaded when Emacs starts. You can also set these variables in directory local files and also inside files (via the file local settings). So you can have a general setting for a variable, specialize it for a directory tree and specialize it further for a given file. Emacs allows you to fine tune these user options at the level you want. This is very powerful and flexible. See: • Emacs Customize • Per directory local variables • Per file local variables
	Dynamic behaviour selection of commands	PEL provides several commands that select of the behaviour of other commands for an Emacs editing session, without affecting the longer term customization. This icon Identifies these commands: the commands that select/modify the behaviour of other commands. • For example, the command **pel-set-ido-use-fname-at-point** select Ido's ability to use the filename at point as a starting suggestion when using Ido to open files. • 🚧 The icon was introduced after PEL version 0.4, so it is still not used everywhere. I will add the icon as I modify the various PDF spreadsheets and review command bindings to increase its cohesiveness, ease of use and deductability.
✨	Uses AI (artificial intelligence)	Used to represent a command that uses a local or remote AI system. • Note that when a *remote (ie, non-local)* AI system s used, the cloud icon, shown next, is also used.
☁️	Uses external Internet-hosted service	This symbol indicates that the package or command communicates and uses an externally hosted service. • It's possible that not all commands interact with the external service; read more about it to ensure that your data stays private.
🧰	External Command Line Tools recommended	Some packages require or perform better with some external and independent command line tools. This icon identifies a list of such command line tools.
	Recommendation	Provides a recommendation that will satisfy most uses of the described command or concept.
⚠️	Caution / Limitations	Describes surprising impacts or behaviours that might have important negative impacts. It is also used to highlight limitations.
✂	Key Binding Modification	The PEL package mostly tries to avoid modifying the binding of standard Emacs keys. But there are exceptions. This symbol is used to indicate such exception.
☛	General Note	A mention of something to remember.
☝	Awareness Note	Highlights a comment describing how the command works or a way to use it to achieve specific goals.
💡	Idea	Identifies an interesting, useful, use of an Emacs feature.
	Historical Note	Describes key sequence bindings that were available in versions of Emacs older than version 26. Often contains a reference to a command, functions or variable alias still supported to permit the execution of code that still uses the old names.
	OS Identifier: Linux	Indicates a note that applies to th eLinux OS implementation of Emacs or shows that a OS-specific implementation support Linux.
	OS Identifier: macOS	Indicates a note that applies to the macOS implementation of Emacs or shows the a OS-specific implementation supports macOS.
❖	OS Identifier: Windows	Indicates a note that applies to the Windows OS implementation of Emacs or shows the a OS-specific implementation supports Windows.
	Tramp aware command	Commands with this symbol are capable of running an external executable file located on a remote host accessed by **Tramp** when the current buffer visit a file located on that remote host. • In some case this can be quite useful. For example if the local host is macOS and the buffer holds a file from a remote Linux host where a program only available on Linux (for example) is available: you can invoke that program on the remote host just as if it was local. ⚠ This is a new icon for PEL (as of early 2025) and it's not yet applied everywhere it should. It's essentially present to raise awareness.
⌨	Key selection note	Notes describing the background behind selection of the keys for a specific command.
🚧	Work in Progress	Identifies an incomplete area, more work is required to complete the information presented. Often accompanied with an explicit TODO note.

Symbol/colour	Purpose	Description and Examples
🐞	Bug	Identifies a bug detected in software or documentation. Normally used to identify problems in software or documentation used by PEL. In some cases, I have submitted a bug report (in which case the link to the bug report is included).
🗂️	Technical Detail - file locations	Several features store information in various locations. Notes describing where implementation files are stored are identified with this icon.
🛠️	Development Note	A note that helps investigating an Emacs feature.
💻	Implementation detail	A note describing how the command is implemented.
👽	Special technical note	The document includes description of some boundary technical situations you may very well want to skip unless you are interested by internal details for the sake of technical interest. But for most people these will probably not be useful, might even look alien, and won't need to know that to use the Emacs feature or command.
Key bullet	The keystroke column lists the keys, key sequences, key-chords available to involve specific commands. When more than one keystroke is available then a bullet is placed before each keystroke. Some of these bullets have a special meaning. Those are listed here.	
✱	**Hydra** key	This bullet indicates that the key or key-sequence identified opens a key **Hydra**. The hydra head key(s) are show in **teal** while they remaining hydra keys are in **light-green**. Examples: ✱ `<f7> n` Several Hydras use only one key as the Hydra head, `<f7>` here. Once the Hydra head key is typed, the other keys can be typed alone, without requiring you to type the Hydra head. In this example the `n` is not part of the Hydra head and once the hydra is entered, you only need to type `n` to execute the command. ✱ `<f7> M-i d` This hydra uses 2 keys for the hydra head. Once it is entered the `d` can be typed alone.
Special Key Indicator	The following symbols are used in the description of key bindings.	
⊛	Generic key	Sometimes used to indicate a *wild card* key in a key sequence. They key binding description describes which exact keys are used. For example, the 𝕀 Inserting Text table describes the `<f9>` ⊛ key binding that can be used to insert greek letters where ⊛ can be a latin letter key.
Modifier Keys	Most key binding description in the various tables use the standard Emacs key sequence notation like `M-a` (meaning Meta key and 'a' key down together). But sometimes, other keys are described with the following symbols.	
❖	Windows Key	Identifies the Windows key on a Windows OS PC.
⌘	macOS Command key	Identifies the macOS Command key, often used as the Emacs super (s-) key modifier. These keys are only used in the graphical version of Emacs.
⌥	macOS Option	Identifies the macOS Option key, often used as the Emacs meta key. ☝Inside macOS Terminal.app you can **toggle the meaning of that key** between macOs Option and Meta by typing **⌘⌥o.** While using Emacs in Terminal.app make sure that the key is set as Meta. You can use the **⌘⌥o** chord to quickly change it when typing accentuated letters or other symbols without having to change Emacs input method.
⇧	Shift	
^	Control	
⌦	Delete forward	That symbol is often used in Apple keyboards and other documents. It also visually describes the forward deletion operation.
⌫	Detete backward	This symbol is sometimes used to represent backward deletion. It also visually describes the backward deletion operation.
Fonts	Most of the text in the various tables follows a convention in the use of fonts. These conventions are listed here.	
Table Title	**Helvetica Neue - Bold- 20 pt.**	Used at the top of every table.
Section level 1	**Helvetica Neue - Bold- 15 pt.**	Top level section in most tables. Sometimes the first level is skipped and the second level is used first if the title contains too many letters and we want to reduce the vertical size of the row.
Section level 2	**Helvetica Neue - Bold- 13 pt.**	Identifies a secondary (sometimes a primary level - see above) section in the table.
Section level 3	**Helvetica Neue - Bold- 12 pt.**	Lowest grouping of lines.
Line title	**Helvetica Neue - Bold- 11 pt.**	What is shown in the first column of this line.
Main text	Helvetica Neue - 10 pt.	The section main text uses that font. If a key or code concept is included it uses the following fonts.
Keys	`Courier - Bold - 11 pt.`	To make key bindings, like **`C-M-u`**, stand out.
Code Concepts/ Keywords	**American Typewriter, bold, 10 pt.**	To make code concepts, keywords or lexical elements stand out like **if**, **`#define`**, **`#error`**, **{**, **}**, **>>**, etc…
Names	**PEL Code Naming Conventions** - See also: 💻**PEL Naming Conventions**	
pel-	'public' function or command	A PEL function or interactive command that can be executed from anywhere.
pel--	'private' function	A PEL function that should not be used externally; these are meant to be used only by appropriate PEL code.
pel-∑-	public' **hydra** command	These are 'public' commands that can be used anywhere. The ∑ symbol is used instead of the word '**hydra**' in command names to shorten them a little. This helps showing a larger portion o the command name when the prefix key is typed and which-mode shows the list of commands in the minibuffer. • ☝Under macOS, typing ∑ is done using the **⌥w** key combination. • Note that when Emacs runs in terminal mode you can use **⌘⌥o** to switch the meaning of the ⌥ key between Option and Meta.