

NAME

cp – copy files and directories

SYNOPSIS

```
cp [OPTION]... [-T] SOURCE DEST
cp [OPTION]... SOURCE... DIRECTORY
cp [OPTION]... -t DIRECTORY SOURCE...
```

DESCRIPTION

Copy SOURCE to DEST, or multiple SOURCE(s) to DIRECTORY.

Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.

-a, --archive

same as **-dR --preserve=all**

--attributes-only

don't copy the file data, just the attributes

--backup[=CONTROL]

make a backup of each existing destination file

-b

like **--backup** but does not accept an argument

--copy-contents

copy contents of special files when recursive

-d

same as **--no-dereference --preserve=links**

--debug

explain how a file is copied. Implies **-v**

-f, --force

if an existing destination file cannot be opened, remove it and try again (this option is ignored when the **-n** option is also used)

-i, --interactive

prompt before overwrite (overrides a previous **-n** option)

-H

follow command-line symbolic links in SOURCE

-L, --dereference

always follow symbolic links in SOURCE

-P, --no-dereference

never follow symbolic links in SOURCE

--keep-directory-symlink

follow existing symlinks to directories

-l, --link

hard link files instead of copying

-n, --no-clobber

(deprecated) silently skip existing files. See also **--update**

-p

same as **--preserve=mode,ownership,timestamps**

--preserve[=ATTR_LIST]

preserve the specified attributes

--no-preserve=ATTR_LIST

don't preserve the specified attributes

--parents

use full source file name under DIRECTORY

- R, -r, --recursive**
copy directories recursively
- reflink[=WHEN]**
control clone/CoW copies. See below
- remove-destination**
remove each existing destination file before attempting to open it (contrast with **--force**)
- sparse=WHEN**
control creation of sparse files. See below
- strip-trailing-slashes**
remove any trailing slashes from each SOURCE argument
- s, --symbolic-link**
make symbolic links instead of copying
- S, --suffix=SUFFIX**
override the usual backup suffix
- t, --target-directory=DIRECTORY**
copy all SOURCE arguments into DIRECTORY
- T, --no-target-directory**
treat DEST as a normal file
- update[=UPDATE]**
control which existing files are updated; UPDATE={all,none,none-fail,older(default)}
- u** equivalent to **--update[=older]**. See below
- v, --verbose**
explain what is being done
- x, --one-file-system**
stay on this file system
- Z** set SELinux security context of destination file to default type
- context[=CTX]**
like **-Z**, or if CTX is specified then set the SELinux or SMACK security context to CTX
- help** display this help and exit
- version**
output version information and exit

ATTR_LIST is a comma-separated list of attributes. Attributes are 'mode' for permissions (including any ACL and xattr permissions), 'ownership' for user and group, 'timestamps' for file timestamps, 'links' for hard links, 'context' for security context, 'xattr' for extended attributes, and 'all' for all attributes.

By default, sparse SOURCE files are detected by a crude heuristic and the corresponding DEST file is made sparse as well. That is the behavior selected by **--sparse=auto**. Specify **--sparse=always** to create a sparse DEST file whenever the SOURCE file contains a long enough sequence of zero bytes. Use **--sparse=never** to inhibit creation of sparse files.

UPDATE controls which existing files in the destination are replaced. 'all' is the default operation when an **--update** option is not specified, and results in all existing files in the destination being replaced. 'none' is like the **--no-clobber** option, in that no files in the destination are replaced, and skipped files do not induce a failure. 'none-fail' also ensures no files are replaced in the destination, but any skipped files are diagnosed and induce a failure. 'older' is the default operation when **--update** is specified, and results in files being replaced if they're older than the corresponding source file.

By default or with **--reflink=auto**, cp will try a lightweight copy, where the data blocks are copied only when modified, falling back to a standard copy if this is not possible. With **--reflink[=always]** cp will fail

if CoW is not supported, while **--reflink=never** ensures a standard copy is performed.

The backup suffix is '~', unless set with **--suffix** or SIMPLE_BACKUP_SUFFIX. The version control method may be selected via the **--backup** option or through the VERSION_CONTROL environment variable. Here are the values:

none, off

never make backups (even if **--backup** is given)

numbered, t

make numbered backups

existing, nil

numbered if numbered backups exist, simple otherwise

simple, never

always make simple backups

As a special case, cp makes a backup of SOURCE when the force and backup options are given and SOURCE and DEST are the same name for an existing, regular file.

AUTHOR

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REPORTING BUGS

Report bugs to: bug-coreutils@gnu.org

Report Gentoo bugs to: <https://bugs.gentoo.org/>

GNU coreutils home page: <https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/>

General help using GNU software: <https://www.gnu.org/gethelp/>

Report any translation bugs to <https://translationproject.org/team/>

SEE ALSO

install(1)

Full documentation <https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/cp>
or available locally via: `info '(coreutils) cp invocation'`

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