

Input Message File Format

The input message file is a standard ASCII file containing three types of lines:

- Comment lines
- Component identifier line
- Component message lines

Comment Lines

Comments may appear anywhere in the file **except** between the component identifier line and the first message line. A comment line must begin with a semicolon (;) in the first column.

Example:

```
; This is a sample of an input  
; message file for component DOS  
; starting with three comment lines.
```

Component Identifier Line

A single line holding the three-character component identifier. This identifier is prefixed to all message numbers.

In the example, the identifier is DOS.

Component Message Lines

Each message line consists of a **message header** followed by the ASCII text of the message.

Message Header

The header is composed of the following fields, written contiguously:

1. Three-character component identifier (e.g., DOS).
2. Four-digit message number (e.g., 0100).
3. A single character indicating the message type (see table below).
4. A colon (':').
5. A single blank space separating the header from the message text.

Format: COMPNNNT: message text

Message Types

Code	Type	Meaning
E	Error	Error message
H	Help	Help text
I	Information	Informational message
P	Prompt	Prompt (user input expected)
W	Warning	Warning message
?	(unused)	Placeholder for a number with no message text

Numbering and Placeholder Entries

- Message numbers may start at any value, but **must appear in strictly ascending sequential order** in the file.
- When a particular number is not used, a placeholder entry is required. A placeholder consists of the full header with the type ? and **no message text** after the colon and blank.

Example: MAB0101? :

Special Characters in the Message Text

The percent sign (%) has special meaning when used inside message text.

Suppressing the Trailing Newline ("%0")

If the sequence %0 appears as the very last characters of a message text, the DosGetMessage API will **not** append a carriage return and line feed (CR+LF). This is typically used for prompts so that user input can follow on the same line.

Inserting Variable Strings ("%1" - "%9")

Sequences %1 through %9 mark positions where variable strings are inserted at runtime. The actual values are provided via the Itable and IvCount parameters of the DosGetMessage call.

Example: the message %1 files copied will have %1 replaced by an appropriate string (e.g., a number of files).

Complete Input File Example

```
; This is a sample of an input
; message file for component MAB
; starting with three comment lines.
MAB
MAB0100E: File not found
```

```
MAB0101?:  
MAB0102H: Usage: del [drive:][path] filename  
MAB0103?:  
MAB0104I: %1 files copied  
MAB0105W: Warning! All data will be destroyed!  
MAB0106?:  
MAB0107?:  
MAB0108P: Do you wish to apply these patches (Y or N)? %0  
MAB0109E: Divide overflow
```

- MAB - component identifier.
- MAB0100E - error message.
- MAB0101? - placeholder for an unused number.
- MAB0104I - informational message with variable insertion (%1).
- MAB0108P - prompt with %0 to suppress the trailing newline.

From:

<https://osfree.org/doku/> - **osFree wiki**

Permanent link:

<https://osfree.org/doku/doku.php?id=en:docs:tk:formats:msgsrc>

Last update: **2026/05/28 06:23**

