



LifeSaver Help File v2.20

For Developers

LifeSaver is a configuration file backup and restore utility, which can be used to recover from problems due to corrupt configuration files or changes to configuration files which can not be undone. Configuration files can be modified by installing new software or hardware, or changing properties in your system configuration. You should backup your configuration files before altering them, allowing you to restore them if you can not undo the changes. Restoring any configuration files should only be done as a last resort if you can not manually restore them to a previous state or if they have become corrupt. LifeSaver has many useful features which are highlighted below.

Key features:

- Backup and Restore up to seven default system configuration files
- Backup and Restore up to 10 user defined files (with Drag and Drop support)
- Run from the command line with **scheduling programs** (i.e. System Agent)
- Restore files from the command prompt (DOS) mode with **self-generating batch file**
- Quick restore with right mouse button on backup list
- Restore to an alternate directory
- Save up to 10 backups
- Enhanced reliability
- Requires PkZip and PkUnzip from PkWare
- It is FREE! (click here for details)

You can easily browse through this help file to read about all of the features by pressing the ≥> button at the top of this screen or the > key on your keyboard.

!! WARNING - WARNING - WARNING !!

Extreme caution should be exercised when using this program to restore configuration files! Any modifications made to these files after a backup will be lost. **This software is provided as is. The author accepts no responsibility for damages occurring as a direct or indirect result of using this software.**

Note: It is recommended that you restore registry files from the command prompt. If your computer fails to work properly after restoring from within Windows, then try restoring from the command prompt.

Send comments or suggestions to: Aeroblade@aol.com
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For Developers

LifeSaver was written with the 32-bit version of Visual Basic 4.0. Three OCXs from JBTools were used to provide functionality not available with Visual Basic. The three OCXs are:



MsgMan - Processes menu events and file drag/drop events.



Browser - Browse for paths including network paths.



Dial - Dial control knob.



MsgMan

The MsgMan (message manager) custom control provides menu and file drag/drop event notification. The menu events provide the capability to determine when someone has selected a menu item before it is clicked from within Visual Basic, as well as when the menu was opened and closed. The file drag drop events allow the user to drag and drop files from a file list (i.e. Explorer), and drop them onto a control (i.e. form or list box).

LifeSaver uses the MsgMan control to display the full file names in the caption of the main form while navigating the list of files for the Quick restore option. This control is also used to drop files in the list of custom files to backup.



Browser

The Browser custom control provides the ability to browse for folders/directories, even over a network. You can set the starting path, dialog caption, and customize: the status messages, title, and enable/disable the OK button each time a directory is selected. The control defaults to displaying the currently selected path in the title to provide better user feedback.

LifeSaver uses the Browser control to select the Backup, Pk files, and Alternate restore directories. Each option has a different caption for the dialog. Additional information is displayed in the title while selecting the PK files path, and when trying to select network drives for the backup path.



Dial

The Dial custom control provides a continuous precise adjustment control which can wrap around when it reaches its limits. The Dial control can use floating point values for its limits and step size, and provides more precision in setting its value than a scroll bar. The Dial control can be set to stop at the min and max values with the Wrap property. Using multiple Dial controls can also take less area on the screen than many scroll bars, without losing any accuracy in changing values.

LifeSaver uses the Dial control to set the maximum number of backups to keep.

For more information send e-mail to: Aeroblade@aol.com
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Configuration Files

LifeSaver program will backup up and restore up to seven default system configuration files. These files are grouped as follows:

- Windows registry information (System.dat, User.dat)
- Windows configuration information (Protocol.ini, System.ini, Win.ini)
- DOS configuration information (Autoexec.bat, Config.sys)

Use the Options screen to select which files to backup and restore. By right-clicking on a backup, in the list of previous backups, you can see the contents of that backup and perform a quick restore.

Custom Files

LifeSaver can backup up and restore up to 10 different user defined files. To add files to the custom list:

- Click on the "Options" button
- Click on the "Backup" tab
- Check/enable the "Custom" file group
- Click on the "Select..." button
- Add files with the "Add" button or **drag and drop** them from a file list

To restore all the custom files check the "All custom files" box on the "Restore" tab. To restore some of the custom files do not check the "All custom files" box, but keep the "Custom" file group checked. You will be prompted during the restore process to select which custom files to restore (because each backup can have different custom files). Custom files may reside on another computer over a network connection.

Command Line

LifeSaver can be run from the command line, which enables it to be run from scheduling type programs such as Microsoft's System Agent included in the Plus! pack. This way you can regularly backup your configuration files without manually running the program, and you can be sure that you can recover files no more than a day old (if you backup once a day).

Command Line Options:

/backup [backup description]

This will create a new backup using the settings from the Options screen. If a backup description is omitted, then the default description will be used (the name of the backup file without the .zip extension i.e. Backup25).

"/b" can be used instead of "/backup".

This option is used by the "Backup Now" shortcut.

/restore (backup description)

This will restore the files from a backup using the settings from the Options screen. The backup description can not omitted and must match a description in the list of previous backups. This is to help prevent accidentally restoring the wrong files. While you can restore all the files from within Windows, it is recommended that you restore registry files from the command prompt.

Debug Options:

/v - To view the PkZip/PkUnzip shelled process.

/vo - To view the PkZip/PkUnzip shelled process and remain open until closed by the user.

Backup Now

The "Backup Now" shortcut in the LifeSaver program group will create a backup using the default backup name and options. The user should be sure to set all of the required program options prior to using the "Backup Now" shortcut.

The "Backup Now" shortcut uses the /b command line option to create the backup.

Command Prompt Mode

Using DOS based programs to compress and uncompress the files allows the user to restore these files from the command prompt without starting windows. Therefore, configuration files can be restored even if Windows can not be started. Restoring registry files from the command prompt is safer than restoring them from within Windows, because Windows modifies the registry while it is closing.

To make it easier to restore files from the command prompt, LifeSaver automatically generates a **Restore.bat** file in the backup directory.
The usage for Restore.bat is: Restore [backup name]

Example: Restore Backup05

If the backup name is left blank then the program will restore your files using the most recent backup.

To use the Restore.bat from the command prompt mode:

1. Start the computer in the command prompt mode
2. Go to the backup directory
3. Type: Restore <Enter>
4. Restart your computer

Note: LifeSaver will only restore the default system configuration files from the command prompt and not any custom files. The Restore.bat file will restore the files you need to start Windows, where you can then restore your custom files.

Quick Restore

You can see the contents of a backup by clicking on it in the backup list with the right mouse button. You can then restore a file by clicking on it. You can also select to restore all of the custom files (if there are any), or all of the files in the backup. The file(s) will be restored to their default directory or to an alternate directory depending on what you selected in the options screen.

While you navigate through the list of files in a backup, the restore location for the selected file will be displayed in the caption (top) of the LifeSaver screen.

New in Version 2.20

The name of the backup file is displayed on the top of the Quick Restore menu. If you override the default backup description BackupXX, then this will allow you to know which file contains the backup for the selected item.

Alternate Directory

All files can be restored into an alternate directory. This allows you to look at previous configuration files without overwriting the current files. You can even restore to a directory over a network.

Backups

LifeSaver can save from 1 to 10 backups, set in the Options screen. Once the maximum number of backups is reached, each additional backup will cause the oldest backup to be deleted automatically. The old backups are deleted to help conserve disk space.

When selecting a path to store backup files, you may use long directory names, but it is suggested that you use short directory names for your backup directory so that you can easily find it from the command mode in case you can not start windows.

The file name for a backup will have the format Backup##.zip, where ## can go from 00-99 and will wrap after reaching 99. The backup description can be any text that the user wants to use to describe the backup, and will default to the filename without the .zip extension. The list of previous backups uses the backup description, to find out the backup file name or contents right-click on the backup from the previous backup list (see Quick restore).

Enhanced Reliability

To enhance the backup reliability, LifeSaver now checks the contents of each backup upon completion to verify that it contains all of the requested files.

LifeSaver also checks for temp disk space before backing up to ensure all of the files can be copied before compressing them. Files are copied and then compressed to make sure that they are not accessed during the compression process.

Prior to restoring, a list of files to be restored is displayed to allow you to identify any files you may not want to restore.

New in Version 2.20

LifeSaver now automatically makes sure the registry files contain all updated information before they are backed up. Prior to version 2.20 the help file stated "The safest way to back up the registry files is to do so immediately after starting Windows." This is no longer required to assure a safe backup.

Restoring registry files from within Windows is now more reliable, although restoring them from the command prompt is the safest method and should be used if there are any problems restoring them from Windows.

LifeSaver checks for conflicts with your "temp" directory to make sure there will not be any problems while backing up or restoring.

Requirements

To use this program you must already have a copy of PkZip and PkUnzip from PkWare on your computer! This program has been tested with PkZip and PkUnzip version 2.04g.

This program requires Windows 95, and has not been tested with any other operating system.

Free!

If you find LifeSaver to be a useful program, it would be appreciated if you would send \$10 or whatever you feel saving your life is worth to:

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LifeSaver is freeware for personal use only, and may only be distributed with all of its original files. LifeSaver may not be used in any commercial, governmental, or educational institutions without purchasing a site-license from the author (Jeffrey Becker).

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File name and description for the next Backup. The file name will have the format Backup##.zip, where ## can go from 00-99 and will wrap after reaching 99. The description can be any text that the user wants to use to describe the backup, and will default to the filename without the .zip extension. To find out the file name of a previous backup right-click on the backup from the list below.

List of previous backup file descriptions to restore from. This list is sorted by date with the most recent backup on the top, and the oldest backup on the bottom. By right-clicking on a backup you can see the backup file name and contents of that backup, and select file(s) to restore.

Date and time of currently selected backup.

View very important information about this program.

Backup using the file name and description on left.

Restore using the currently selected backup.

Delete the currently selected backup.

Set the and Backup/Restore options.

Stop using this fabulous program.

Open the LifeSaver help file.

Location to store backup files. You may use long directory names, but it is suggested that you use short directory names for your backup directory so that you can easily find it from the command mode in case you can not start windows.

The maximum number of backups which will be saved. This number can range from 1-10. Once the maximum number of backups is reached, each additional backup will cause the oldest backup to be deleted automatically. The old backups are deleted to help conserve disk space.

The location of the PkZip and PkUnzip files from PkWare. You must have these files to use this program. Using these DOS based programs to compress and uncompress the files allows the user to restore these files from the command prompt without starting windows, which means the configuration files can be restored even if Windows can not be started.

Select which files you wish to save in the all future backups (until you change them here). Unchecking a group is a quick way to not include any of the files in that group in your backups.

Select which files you wish to restore in the all future restores (until you change them here). Unchecking a group is a quick way to not include any of the files in that group when you restore. Since each backup may contain different files, only files contained in that backup and are selected for restoring will be restored. These options are overridden when a user directly selects which file(s) to restore by right-clicking on the list of backups to restore from.

Choose an alternate path to restore to. All files will be restored to this location if "Use Alternate Path" is selected. This allows you to look at previous configuration files without overwriting the current files.

Double-click or press the <Enter> key to select a path. Press the <Insert> key to create a new directory under the current path.

List of files which start with PK in the current path. This is to help you find where the PkZip and PkUnzip files are located.

List of custom files to backup. You may select up to 10 files to backup by clicking the Add button, or dragging and dropping files from a file list.

List of custom files which are in the backup you are restoring from. Select which files to restore from this list by clicking on the file(s) while holding down the <Ctrl> key.

Add files to the custom file list. You can also add files by dragging and dropping files from a file list.

Select all of the custom files to restore.

Delete the selected files from the custom file list.

Do not select any of the custom files to restore.

Number of custom files in the list.

Number of custom files to restore / number of files in the list.

