

# Technical Note TB17

## Notification Manager

### CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Using the Notification Manager](#)

[Notification Manager Routines](#)

[How to Call \\_NMInstall and \\_NMRemove](#)

[References](#)

[Downloadables](#)

This Technical Note describes the Notification Manager, the part of the operating system that lets an application, desk accessory, or driver alert the user.

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## Introduction

The Notification Manager, in System Software version 6.0 and later, provides the user with an asynchronous "notification" service. The Notification Manager is especially useful for background applications; the PrintMonitor application and the system alarm (set by the Alarm Clock desk accessory) both use its services.

Each application, desk accessory, or device driver can queue any number of notifications. For this reason, you should try to avoid posting multiple notifications since each one will be presented separately to the user (i.e., "you have mail," "you have mail," etc.).

The Notification Manager queue contains information describing each notification request; you supply a pointer to a queue element describing the type of notification you desire. The Notification Manager queue is a standard Macintosh queue, as described in the Operating System Utilities chapter of *Inside Macintosh*, Volume II-367. Each entry in the Notification Manager queue has the following structure:

```

TYPE NMRec = RECORD
    qLink:    QElemPtr;    {next queue entry}
    qType:    INTEGER;     {queue type -- ORD(nmType) = 8}
    nmFlags:  INTEGER;     {reserved}
    nmPrivate: LONGINT;    {reserved}
    nmReserved: INTEGER;   {reserved}
    nmMark:  INTEGER;     {item to mark in Apple menu}
    nmSIcon: Handle;      {handle to small icon}
    nmSound: Handle;      {handle to sound record}
    nmStr:   StringPtr;   {string to appear in alert}
    nmResp:  ProcPtr;     {pointer to response routine}
    nmRefCon: LONGINT;    {for application use}

```

To use the Notification Manager, you must also use `_SysEnviron`s (discussed in *Inside Macintosh*, Volume V and [M.O.V. GestaltSysenvirons](#)) to test the System Software version. If the System Software is not current and the Notification Manager routines are not present, display an alert to inform the user that your application requires System Software version 6.0 or newer, then exit.

[Back to top](#)

## Using the Notification Manager

Your program can request three types of notification:

- polite notification: a small icon that periodically appears in rotation with the Apple in the menu bar;
- audible notification: a sound to be played by the Sound Manager;
- alert notification: an dialog box containing a short message.

In addition, you can place a diamond mark next to the name of the requesting desk accessory or application in the Apple menu.

After you have notified the user as you feel necessary (placed a diamond mark in the Apple menu, added a small icon to the list of icons which rotate with the Apple in the menu bar, played a sound, and presented the user with a dialog box to acknowledge), you should call a response procedure.

## How the Notification Manager Handles Notifications

When the Notification Manager handles a notification, it does one or more of the following (in this order):

- puts a diamond mark next to the requesting application or desk accessory in the Apple menu
- adds a small icon to the list of icons which rotate with the Apple in the menu bar
- plays a specified sound
- presents a dialog box for the user to acknowledge and dismiss
- calls the response procedure

At this point, the diamond mark in the Apple menu and the icon rotating with the Apple in the menu bar remain until your application removes the notification request from the queue. The Notification Manager only presents the sound and dialog box once.

### Creating a Notification Request

To create a notification request, you must set up an `NMRec` with all the information about the notification you want:

`nmMark` contains 0 to not place a mark in the Apple menu, 1 to mark the current application, or the `refNum` of a desk accessory to mark that desk accessory. An application should pass 1, a desk accessory should pass its own `refNum`, and a VBL task should pass 0.

`nmSIcon` contains `NIL` for no icon in the menu bar, or a handle to a small icon to rotate with the Apple. (A small icon is a 16 x 16 bitmap, often stored in an 'SICN' resource.) This handle does not need to be locked, but it must be non-purgeable.

`nmSound` contains `NIL` to use no sound, -1 to use the system beep sound, or a handle to a sound record which can be played with `_SndPlay`. This handle does not need to be locked, but it must be non-purgeable.

`nmStr` contains `NIL` for no alert, or a pointer to the string to appear in the alert.

`nmResp` contains `NIL` for no response procedure, -1 for a predefined procedure that removes the request immediately after it is completed, or a pointer to a procedure which takes one parameter, a pointer to your queue element. For example, the following is how you would declare it if it were named `MyResponse`:

```
PROCEDURE MyResponse (nmReqPtr: QElemPtr);
```

Note that when the Notification Manager calls your response procedure, it does not set up `A5` and low-memory globals for you. If you need to access your application's globals, you should save your application's `A5` in the `nmRefCon` field as discussed later in this Note.

Response procedures should never draw or do "user interface" things. You should wait until the user brings the application or desk accessory to the front before responding to the user. Some good ways to use the response procedure are to dequeue and deallocate your Notification Manager queue element or to set an application global (being careful about `A5`), so the application knows when the user receives the notification.

You should probably use an `nmResp` of -1 with audible and alert notifications to remove the notification as soon as the sound has finished or the user has dismissed the dialog. You should not use an `nmResp` of -1 with an `nmMark` or an `nmSIcon`, because the Notification Manager would remove the diamond mark or small icon before the user could see it. Note that an `nmResp` of -1 does not deallocate the memory block containing the queue element, it only removes it from the notification queue.

You can also use `nmRefCon`; one convenient use is putting your application's `A5` in this field so the response procedure can access application globals. For more information about this technique, refer to the section about VBL tasks in `M.TB.MultifinderMisc`.

[Back to top](#)

## Notification Manager Routines

The system automatically initializes the Notification Manager when it boots. To add a notification request to the notification queue, call `_NMInstall`. When your application no longer wants a notification to continue, it can remove the request by calling `_NMRemove`. Neither `_NMInstall` nor `_NMRemove` move or purge memory, and you can call either of them from completion routines or interrupt handlers, as well as from the main body of an application and the response procedure of a notification request.

```
FUNCTION NMInstall (nmReqPtr: QElemPtr) : OSErr;
    Trap macro    _NMInstall ($A05E)
    On entry      A0: theNMRec (pointer)
```

`_NMInstall` adds the notification request specified by `nmReqPtr` to the notification queue and returns one of the following result codes:

Result codes	noErr	No error
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```
FUNCTION NMRemove (nmReqPtr: QElemPtr) : OSErr;

  Trap macro    _NMRemove ($A05F)
  On entry      A0: theNMRec (pointer)
```

`_NMRemove` removes the notification identified by `nmReqPtr` from the notification queue and returns one of the following result codes:

Result codes	noErr	No error
	qErr	Not in queue

[Back to top](#)

## How to Call `_NMInstall` and `_NMRemove`

If you do not yet have glue for `_NMInstall` and `_NMRemove`, you can use the following from MPW (these are in the include files for MPW 3.0):

Pascal

```
FUNCTION NMInstall (nmReqPtr: QElemPtr) : OSErr;
```

```
FUNCTION NMRemove (nmReqPtr: QElemPtr) : OSErr;
```

C

```
pascal OSErr NMInstall (QElemPtr nmReqPtr)
```

```
pascal OSErr NMRemove (QElemPtr nmReqPtr)
```

Also note that `qType` must be set to `ORD(nmType)`, which is 8.

The following short code segments demonstrate the use of the Notification Manager in MPW C:

```
#include <OSUtils.h>
#include <Notification.h>

struct NMRec    myNote;    /* declare your NMRec */
Handle          ManDoneS;  /* declare a handle for the sound */
OSErr           err;       /* declare for err handling */

myNote.qType = nmType;    /* queue type -- nmType = 8 */
myNote.nmMark = 1;        /* get mark in Apple menu */
myNote.nmSIcon = nil;     /* no flashing Icon */

/* get the sound you want out of your resources */
ManDoneS = GetResource('snd ', soundID);

myNote.nmSound = ManDoneS; /* set the sound to be played
myNote.nmStr = nil;        /* no alert box */
myNote.nmResp = nil;       /* no response procedure */
```

Before calling `_NMInstall`, you need to see if your application is running in the background. If your application is in the foreground, you really do not need to notify the user, but if your application is in the background, you should make the following call to install the notification event:

If the call to `_NMInstall` returns an error, you cannot install the notification event and must wait for the user to switch your application to the foreground before proceeding with anything else. While you are waiting for a resume event, you should take care of other events, such as updates. If you were able to install the notification, then you want to make sure to remove it when you are switched back into the foreground. The following code does just that:

[Back to top](#)

## References

*Inside Macintosh* , Volume II-367, V-591, The Operating System Utilities

[M.OV.GestaltSysenvirons](#)

[M.TB.MultifinderMisc](#)

[Back to top](#)

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