

What Characters are not Allowed in Filenames?

You may only work in one operating system; however your web files will be viewed by numerous systems. Therefore, it becomes essential that you play it safe and avoid common illegal directory and filename characters. Some are illegal because a specific operating system doesn't support them, others because they are used as variables or reserved characters. Naming conventions are important in *web folders* as well as for *downloadable* files such as HTML files, images, PDFs, Word documents, and Excel spreadsheets. Folder and file names build out the path used for URLs.

Illegal Filename Characters

Do not use any of these common illegal characters or symbols in your filenames or folders:

- # pound
- % percent
- & ampersand
- { left curly bracket
- } right curly bracket
- \ back slash
- < left angle bracket
- > right angle bracket
- * asterisk
- ? question mark
- / forward slash
- blank spaces
- \$ dollar sign
- ! exclamation point
- ' single quotes
- " double quotes
- : colon
- @ at sign
- + plus sign
- ` backtick
- | pipe
- = equal sign
- emojis
- alt codes

In addition to forbidden characters, keep these rules in mind when choosing a folder name or filename:

- Don't start or end your filename with a space, period, hyphen, or underline.
- Keep your filenames to a reasonable length and be sure they are under 31 characters.
- Most operating systems are case sensitive; **always use lowercase**.
- Avoid using spaces and underscores; use a hyphen instead.