FreeDOS Commands

Looking for a quick-reference guide to using FreeDOS? This cheat sheet covers the most common commands.

What do you want to do?	How to do it on FreeDOS:	Similar command on Linux:
List directory contents	`DIR`	`ls`
- in the directory "above"	`DIR ..`	`ls ..`
- in a different directory	`DIR C:\FDOS\BIN`	`ls /usr/bin`
Change the current drive	`D:`	
Change the current directory	`CD \FDOS\BIN`	`cd /usr/bin`
- "up" one directory	`CD ..`	`cd ..`
Display the contents of a file	`TYPE FILE.TXT`	`cat file.txt`
- one screen at a time	`MORE FILE.TXT`	`less file.txt`
Copy a file	`COPY FILE.TXT NEW.TXT`	`cp file.txt new.txt`
Delete a file	`DEL FILE.TXT`	`rm file.txt`

Copy a directory and its contents	`XCOPY DIR NEWDIR`	`cp -r dir newdir`
Delete a directory and its contents	`DELTREE MYFILES`	`rm -rf myfiles`
Create a new directory	`MKDIR NEWDIR`	`mkdir newdir`
Remove an empty directory	`RMDIR MYFILES`	`rmdir myfiles`
Rename a file or directory	`REN FILE.TXT FILE.OLD`	`mv file.txt file.old`
Show all lines that contain "Hello"	`FIND "Hello" FILE.TXT`	`grep "Hello" file.txt`
- without regard to case	`FIND /I "Hello" FILE.TXT`	`grep -i "Hello" file.txt`
Clear the screen	`CLS`	`clear`
Edit a text file	`EDIT FILE.TXT`	`vi file.txt`
View and set the system date	`DATE`	`date`
View and set the system time	`TIME`	`date`
Show the usage for a program	`DIR /?` (for most programs)	`ls --help`
Get more help	`HELP`	`info`
Show the command history	`HISTORY`	`history`
Show the DOS version	`VER`	`uname`

A few things to remember:

Notes:	For example:
DOS commands can be upper or lowercase	`DIR` is the same as `dir`
Pipes (`|`) are the same on DOS as on Linux	`TYPE FILE.TXT	MORE`
Output redirection (`>`) is the same too	`FIND "X" FILE.TXT > X.TXT`
`.` and `..` are the same on DOS as on Linux	`CD ..` moves "up" one directory

The directory separator is `\`	`C:\` or `C:\FDOS` or `C:\FDOS\BIN`
File names can only be 8.3 characters	`FILENAME.TXT`
DOS uses letters for each drive	`C:` is the first hard drive
A full path is a drive letter and directory	`C:\` or `C:\FDOS` or `D:\GAMES`

Batch Programming

Here's a helpful guide to batch programming under FreeDOS. Remember to reference normal batch script variables by enclosing the variable name with `%`, such as `%PATH%`.

What do you want to do?	How to do it in a batch script:
Execute another batch script from within a script	`CALL SCRIPT.BAT`

Run a command for each file in a list	`FOR %%F IN (*.TXT) DO EDIT %%F`
	
	or at the command line:
	`FOR %F IN (*.TXT) DO EDIT %F`
	
	The loop variable name can only be one character.

Print output	`ECHO Hello world`
Jump to a label in a batch file	`:LOOP` `GOTO LOOP`
Test the value of a string	`IF %VAR%==1 ECHO One`
Test if a file exists	`IF EXIST TEMP.DAT DEL TEMP.DAT`
Test the return value of the previous command	`IF ERRORLEVEL 0 ECHO Success`

Test the opposite of something	`IF NOT ERRORLEVEL 0 ECHO Fail`
A comment in a batch script	`REM This is a comment`
Set a variable	`SET TEMPFILE=TEMP.DAT`

Set the shell's search path for programs (Use `;` to separate paths)	`PATH C:\FDOS\BIN;C:\MY\BIN`
	
	or to reference the existing path:
	`PATH %PATH%;C:\MY\BIN`

Shift the command line options to a batch script (Reference options as `%1`, `%2`, and so on)	`SHIFT` or `SHIFT 1` or `SHIFT 2` or any *n* `SHIFT` with no *n* is the same as `SHIFT 1`