

## IEEE Standards Interpretations for IEEE Std 1003.1™-2001 IEEE Standard for Information Technology - Portable Operating System Interface (POSIX®)

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### Interpretation Request #39

**Topic:** pathchk -p, Filename Portability **Relevant Sections:** XCU pathchk, XBD Global Concepts

By intent (as shown in XCU page 698 lines 27053-27054), pathchk -p should succeed only on pathnames that can be moved to any conforming system. However, the formal description neglects one case: file name components that begin with "-". Under the current strict reading of the standard, for example, the command "pathchk -p ./-" must succeed even though "./-" is not a portable pathname (see XBD section 4.6 page 98 line 3071).

After XCU page 696 line 26993, add a new bullet: \* Contains any component whose first character is a hyphen.

### Interpretation Response

The standards states the requirements for portable filenames and the behavior for the pathchk utility, and conforming implementations must conform to this. However, concerns have been raised about this which are being referred to the sponsor.

### Rationale for Interpretation

It is believed that the intent of the former POSIX.1-1990 and POSIX.2-1992 standards was that the constraint on use of the hyphen character as the first character of a portable filename is a constraint on application behavior and not on implementations, since applications might not work as expected when such a filename is passed as a command line argument.