

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

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Interpretation Request #91

Topic: rm dot **Relevant Sections:** XCU rm

POSIX currently requires that "rm ." must output a diagnostic and then exit with status zero, contrary to common practice. The EXIT STATUS section of the specification for "rm" says that the exit status must be zero if all rmdir() or unlink() calls succeeded, but the algorithm specified on page 824 makes it clear that "rm ." never invokes rmdir() or unlink(), so "rm ." must therefore exit with status zero.

There is a similar problem with "rm /", "rm nonexistentfile", etc.

Change the following text in lines 32097-32098 from:

0 All of the named directory entries for which rm performed actions equivalent to the rmdir() or unlink() functions were removed.

to:

0 Each directory entry was successfully removed, unless its removal was canceled by a non-affirmative response to a prompt for confirmation.

Interpretation Response

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

Rationale for Interpretation: None.

