

# Package ‘MsBackendMsp’

October 13, 2025

**Title** Mass Spectrometry Data Backend for NIST msp Files

**Version** 1.12.0

**Description** Mass spectrometry (MS) data backend supporting import and handling of MS/MS spectra from NIST MSP Format (msp) files. Import of data from files with different MSP \*flavours\* is supported. Objects from this package add support for MSP files to Bioconductor's Spectra package. This package is thus not supposed to be used without the Spectra package that provides a complete infrastructure for MS data handling.

**Depends** R (>= 4.1.0), Spectra (>= 1.5.14)

**Imports** ProtGenerics (>= 1.35.3), BiocParallel, S4Vectors, IRanges, MsCoreUtils, methods, stats

**Suggests** testthat, knitr (>= 1.1.0), roxygen2, BiocStyle (>= 2.5.19), rmarkdown

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**BugReports** <https://github.com/RforMassSpectrometry/MsBackendMsp/issues>

**URL** <https://github.com/RforMassSpectrometry/MsBackendMsp>

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| hidden_aliases | <i>Internal page for hidden aliases</i> |
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Description

For S4 methods that require a documentation entry but only clutter the index.

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|              |                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| MsBackendMsp | <i>MS data backend for msp files</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|

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Description

The MsBackendMsp class supports import of MS/MS spectra data from files in NIST MSP file format. MsBackendMsp extends the `Spectra::MsBackendDataFrame()` backend directly and supports thus the `Spectra::applyProcessing()` function to make data manipulations persistent.

New objects are created with the `MsBackendMsp()` function. The `backendInitialize()` method has to be subsequently called to initialize the object and import MS/MS data from (one or more) msp files.

The MsBackendMsp backend provides an `export()` method that allows to export the data from the Spectra object (parameter `x`) to a file in MSP format.

Parameters to this function are:

- `x`: the Spectra object that should be exported.
- `file`: `character(1)` with the desired file name.
- `mapping`: named character providing the mapping between spectra variables and MSP data fields. Defaults to `mapping = spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp())`.
- `allVariables`: `logical(1)` whether all spectra variables in `x` should be exported or only those defined with `mapping`.

- `exportName`: `logical(1)` whether a NAME field should always be exported even if not provided in `x`.

See the package vignette for details and examples.

The `spectraVariableMapping()` function allows to provide the mapping between spectra variable names (i.e. the names that will be used for the spectra variables in the `Spectra::Spectra()` object) and the data field names of the MSP file. Parameter `format` allows to select pre-defined mappings. Currently supported mapping flavors are:

- `format = "msp"`: default MSP field names. Should work with standard NIST MSP files or MSP files exported from MS-DIAL.
- `format = "mona"`: MSP file format from MoNA including LipidBlast.

## Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'MsBackendMsp'
backendInitialize(
  object,
  file,
  mapping = spectraVariableMapping(object),
  ...,
  BPPARAM = SerialParam()
)

MsBackendMsp()

## S4 method for signature 'MsBackendMsp'
spectraVariableMapping(object, format = c("msp", "mona"))

## S4 method for signature 'MsBackendMsp'
export(
  object,
  x,
  file = tempfile(),
  mapping = spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp()),
  allVariables = TRUE,
  exportName = TRUE,
  ...
)
```

## Arguments

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>object</code>  | Instance of <code>MsBackendMsp</code> class.                                                                                                                                |
| <code>file</code>    | character with the (full) file name(s) of the msp file(s) from which MS/MS data should be imported or exported.                                                             |
| <code>mapping</code> | named character vector to rename MSP fields to spectra variables. This allows to correctly import also custom fields or data from files with different MSP <i>flavors</i> . |

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ...          | Currently ignored.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| BPPARAM      | Parameter object defining the parallel processing setup to import data in parallel. Defaults to BPPARAM = SerialParam(). See <a href="#">BiocParallel::bpparam()</a> for more information. Parallel processing would make most sense for import from a large set of individual MSP files, but could also improve performance for import from a (very large) single MSP file. |
| format       | For <code>spectraVariableMapping()</code> : <code>character(1)</code> specifying for which MSP <i>flavour</i> the mapping should be returned. Currently supported are: <code>format = "msp"</code> (generic MSP format, for example for MS-DIAL MSP files) and <code>format = "mona"</code> (MSP files in MoNA flavour).                                                     |
| x            | For <code>export()</code> : a <a href="#">Spectra::Spectra()</a> object that should be exported to the specified MSP file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| allVariables | <code>logical(1)</code> whether all spectra variables in x should be exported or only those defined with mapping.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| exportName   | <code>logical(1)</code> whether a NAME field should always be exported even if not provided in x.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### Value

MsBackendMsp() and backendInitialize() return an instance of a MsBackendMsp class. `spectraVariableMapping()` a named character vector with the mapping between spectra variables and MSP data fields.

### Note

Format requirements/assumptions of MSP files:

- Comment lines are expected to start with a #.
- Multiple spectra within the same MSP file are separated by an empty line.
- The first n lines of a spectrum entry represent metadata.
- Metadata is provided as "name: value" pairs (i.e. name and value separated by a ":").
- One line per mass peak, with values separated by a whitespace or tabulator.
- Each line is expected to contain at least the m/z and intensity values (in that order) of a peak. Additional values are currently ignored.

### Author(s)

Steffen Neumann, Michael Witting, Laurent Gatto and Johannes Rainer

### Examples

```
## Import spectra from a MSP file from LipidBlast
f <- system.file("extdata", "small-export-LipidBlast.msp",
  package = "MsBackendMsp")
be <- backendInitialize(MsBackendMsp(), f)
be
be$msLevel
```

```
be$intensity
be$mz

## precursor m/z are however all missing
be$precursorMz

## Default spectra variable mapping
spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp())

## In fact, to read MSP files in "LipidBlast flavour" (same as MoNA) we
## should use a different spectra variable mapping
spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp(), "mona")

## Importing the data with this will correctly retrieve data
be <- backendInitialize(MsBackendMsp(), f,
  mapping = spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp(), "mona"))
be$precursorMz

## Other fields are also correctly mapped, but might need to be converted
## to e.g. numeric, such as "exactmass"
be$exactmass

be$exactmass <- as.numeric(be$exactmass)

be$adduct
be$formula

## Exporting Spectra objects in MSP format.

sps <- Spectra(be)
export(MsBackendMsp(), sps, file = stdout())
```

---

readMsp

*Reading MSP files*

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## Description

The `readMsp()` function imports the data from a file in MGF format reading all specified fields and returning the data as a [S4Vectors::DataFrame\(\)](#).

Format constraints for MSP files:

- Comment lines are expected to start with a #.
- Multiple spectra within the same MSP file are separated by an empty line.
- The first n lines of a spectrum entry represent metadata.
- Metadata is provided as "name: value" pairs (i.e. name and value separated by a ":").
- One line per mass peak, with values separated by a whitespace or tabulator.
- Each line is expected to contain at least the m/z and intensity values (in that order) of a peak. Additional values are currently ignored.

**Usage**

```
readMsp(  
  f,  
  msLevel = 2L,  
  mapping = spectraVariableMapping(MsBackendMsp()),  
  BPPARAM = SerialParam(),  
  ...  
)
```

**Arguments**

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| f       | character(1) with the path to an MSP file.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| msLevel | numeric(1) with the MS level. Default is 2. This value will be reported as the spectra's MS level <b>unless</b> the source MSP file defines the MS level.                                                                    |
| mapping | named character vector to rename MSP fields to spectra variables (see <code>spectraVariableMapping()</code> help). This allows to correctly import also custom fields or data from files with different MSP <i>flavors</i> . |
| BPPARAM | parallel processing setup. See <a href="#">BiocParallel::bpparam()</a> for more details.                                                                                                                                     |
| ...     | Additional parameters, currently ignored.                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**Value**

A `DataFrame` with each row containing the data from one spectrum in the MSP file. `m/z` and intensity values are available in columns `"mz"` and `"intensity"` in a list representation.

**Author(s)**

Laurent Gatto, Steffen Neumann, Johannes Rainer

**Examples**

```
f <- system.file("extdata", "minimona.msp", package = "MsBackendMsp")  
  
readMsp(f)
```

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