



Knowledge Base Topic:

Using Relative Paths in External References (XREFs)

Software: AutoCAD all versions

XREFS

AutoCAD searches for XREFs in the following locations, in order, until it finds the external file:

1. The location specified in the XREF dialog,
2. The same folder as the current drawing,
3. The folders specified by PROJECTNAME,
4. The folders that make up the library path,
5. The current folder (the folder from which AutoCAD was started).

RELATIVE PATHS

- .\ means current folder *(not necessary syntax for drawings in a current file)*
- ..\ means back up 1 folder
- ..\.\ means back up 2 folders

Example: Current drawing located in this folder and containing XREFs in various folder locations:

```
E:\Projects\123456789\Roadway\Segment1\CURRENT.dwg
E:\Projects\123456789
    \Roadway
    \Roadway\Segment1
    \Roadway\Segment1\Options
    \Roadway\Segment2
    \Survey
```

XREF Full File Location	It's Relative Path	What is happening
E:\Projects\123456789\ Roadway\Segment1\XREF.dwg	.\XREF.dwg or XREF.dwg	ACAD starts from the current folder and find file
E:\Projects\123456789\ Roadway\XREF.dwg	..\XREF.dwg	ACAD looks back one folder from the current drawing folder to file
E:\Projects\123456789\ Roadway\Segment1\Options\XREF	.\Options\XREF.dwg	ACAD sees nested folders as group in the current folder than forward to Options folder and file
E:\Projects\123456789\ Roadway\Segment2\XREF.dwg	..\Roadway\Segment2\XREF.dwg	ACAD backs up one folder to Roadway folder, then goes forward into Segment2 folder
E:\Projects\123456789\ Survey\XREF.dwg	..\..\Survey\XREF.dwg	ACAD backs up two folders to Survey then forward to file

Screenshot of XREF manager showing references loaded correctly with relative paths

Reference ...	Status	Size	Type	Date	Saved Path
DSGNRD01*	Opened	2.88 MB	Current	9/23/2011 1:09:0...	
ALGNRD04	Loaded	1.25 MB	Overlay	9/23/2011 4:47:3...	..\ALGNRD04.DWG
RWDTRD01	Loaded	1.26 MB	Overlay	9/23/2011 1:10:0...	..\RWDTRD01.DWG
TOPORD01	Loaded	9.29 MB	Overlay	9/23/2011 1:09:5...	..\..\survey\TOPORD01.DWG