

# Package ‘MsBackendMsp’

October 9, 2025

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

**Version** 1.13.0

**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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**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**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| object       | Instance of MsBackendMsp class.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| file         | character with the (full) file name(s) of the msp file(s) from which MS/MS data should be imported or exported.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| mapping      | 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 spectraVariableMapping(): character(1) specifying for which MSP <i>flavour</i> the mapping should be returned. Currently supported are: format = "msp" (generic MSP format, for example for MS-DIAL MSP files) and format = "mona" (MSP files in MoNA flavour).                                                                                                          |
| x            | For export(): a <a href="#">Spectra::Spectra()</a> object that should be exported to the specified MSP file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**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*

## 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

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>f</code>       | character(1) with the path to an MSP file.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <code>msLevel</code> | 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.                                                                       |
| <code>mapping</code> | named character vector to rename MSP fields to spectra variables (see <a href="#">spectraVariableMapping()</a> help). This allows to correctly import also custom fields or data from files with different MSP <i>flavors</i> . |
| <code>BPPARAM</code> | parallel processing setup. See <a href="#">BiocParallel::bpparam()</a> for more details.                                                                                                                                        |
| <code>...</code>     | 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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