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Introduction

This section of the MSC/PATRAN Release Guide for Version 8 describes the goals and process of the BETA Test program. It is designed to help all participants derive the maximum benefit from this program.

The BETA Test program is critical to the success of MSC/PATRAN. We value your time and commitment, and appreciate your participation.

What This Section Contains

This section contains information specific to the BETA Test program. It describes what is expected from you, what to expect from MSC, whom to contact, and most importantly, critical technical information that you must know before you begin to use the BETA software.

Using the Release Guide

The Release Guide is divided into 6 chapters as shown in the following table. New features are described in detail, with an emphasis on how they are used.

MSC/PATRAN Version 8 at a Glance (p. 1)	Provides an overview of new features, information on supported platforms, and a description of how to get help and other information on MSC/PATRAN.
CAD Access Enhancements (p. 7)	Describes the new access to Unigraphics features for suppression, unsuppression, and parameter modification, improved access to CATIA geometry, and direct access to models based on the ACIS geometry kernel.
Modeling and Meshing Enhancements (p. 21)	New modeling and meshing enhancements include: -Rapid Surface Meshing -Automatic Hard Points -Curvature Based Tetrahedral Meshing -Automatic Tetrahedral Element Modification
Analysis Integration (p. 45)	This section describes the new Arbitrary Beam library, new direct access to several types of results data, and enhancements to MSC/PATRAN's Thermal capabilities.
MSC/PATRAN Database Replacement (p. 55)	This section describes the new database, which replaces InterBase.

Access to MSC/PATRAN Databases from External Programs (p. 59)

You can access MSC/PATRAN database files from external programs using the dbaccess.a archive library.

Minor Enhancements (p. 61)

This section describes various minor enhancements.

▼ Options   ◄◄   ◄   ➤   ■ Done

Goals of the BETA Test Program

The BETA Test program provides both you and MSC the opportunity to gain valuable real-world experience with MSC/PATRAN Version 8 prior to its formal release.

The benefits of this program include:

- advance knowledge and experience with new features.
- assurance that defects are corrected at the testing stage, before you encounter them in a production environment.

Purpose of BETA Software

The BETA release of MSC/PATRAN Version 8 is created for testing purposes only. We encourage you to test the software using actual production problems in order to simulate actual production environments as closely as possible.

Important: Do not use the BETA software for production work.

▼ **Options**   ◄◄   ◄   ➤   ■ **Done**

Upgrading, Converting and Maintaining Model Databases

We have made important changes to the database structure, and additional changes may occur before the production release. You may not be able to access models created in previous versions.

Important: You will not be able to access models created in the BETA version with the production version.

Converting Existing Databases

The process of converting databases (Version 7.5 and earlier) to Version 8 is extremely sensitive. It is imperative that you complete all the steps built into the p3convert routine.

Important: Always make a copy of your existing database before you attempt to convert it to Version 8.

To convert a database from a previous version that has been compacted using gbak, you must restore the database before attempting to access the model in Version 8. Failing to do so will irreversibly corrupt the model and make it impossible to access. To restore the database, uncompact using gbak -r.Interbase is still required to convert older databases. Interbase is not required to open new databases.

Interbase Version	MSC/PATRAN Version
4.0	6, 5 and 1.4, 1.4-1, 1.4-2
3.3D	1.3 or 1.3-2

Reporting Defects and Enhancement Requests

As you work with this BETA version, it is likely that you will discover software defects. You may also think of a minor change to the user interface or functionality, or a change to the documentation that would make the feature easier to use.

One of the primary purposes of the BETA Test program is to capture this information before the final release of MSC/PATRAN so that we can make the appropriate changes. It is important to us that we receive this information in a timely manner, so that we can act on it productively.

When you encounter a software defect or have a question about a specific feature, please contact MSC/PATRAN Support Services. Detailed instructions on how to contact MSC/PATRAN Support Services and the information you should report is included in of this section.

Submitting Weekly Test Reports

Your feedback and comments about MSC/PATRAN are very important to us. Equally important is knowing which aspects of the product you are investigating. As part of the BETA Test process, we ask you to submit a brief weekly summary of your testing experiences.

Report Format

The table below describes the suggested format for the report. A form to submit this data is shown on the next page.

Section	Description
1) Coverage	Include the amount of time spent testing, the particular applications and modules tested, and the hardware platforms tested.
2) Defects	Include a summary of the software defects you found; CSR reference numbers are sufficient if available (a CSR number may have been assigned from Customer Support if you had reported the error).
3) Comments	Include feedback about new features and their documentation. Any general comments are welcome.

How to Submit the Report

Please submit your report to the BETA Test Manager at the end of each week. To submit a report by e-mail, send to:

patran-release.mgr@macsch.com

If e-mail is not available, please send a facsimile of the BETA Test form to Candee Sumner at:

(714) 979-2990

Summary Reports

A consolidated summary of identified defects and other relevant information will be posted on the MSC web site. The URL and password for the web pages will be sent to each BETA Test participant through e-mail. If you do not receive the URL and password, send an e-mail to the BETA Test Manager.

Beta Test Report

Product:	MSC/PATRAN	Version:	8
Tester Name:		Date:	
Testing Date(s):		No. of hours tested:	
Machine:		Model:	
O/S Level:		Graphics Board:	

New Capabilities Tested (circle all that apply):

UG Features and Parameters	Curvature Based Tet Meshing	Arbitrary Beam Library	Laminate Modeler on NT
CATIA Access	Rapid Surface Meshing	Thermal Enhancements	dbport Utility
ACIS Access	Tet Element Modification	Direct Results Access	

General Capabilities Tested (circle all that apply):

File/Import	File/Export	CAD Access	Parasolid Kernel
Geometry Menu	Finite Elements Menu	Materials Menu	Properties Menu
Loads/BCs/Cases	Fields Menu	Analysis Menu	Results Menu
Insight	X-Y Plot Menu	Help	Utilities/Shareware Menu
Group Menu	Viewport/Viewing Menus	Display Menu	Tools Menu
Preferences Menu	User Interface	Graphics	Database/DB Convert

General comments and feedback:

_____

_____

_____

No. of errors found:	No. of crashes:	

Scopus IDs (indicate VVPR or CSR):

_____

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Support for the BETA Test Program

In addition to the weekly reports submitted to the BETA Test Manager, (patran-release.mgr@macsch.com), you may also report software defects and ask questions about specific features of MSC/PATRAN Version 8 by contacting MSC/PATRAN Support Services.

Contacting MSC/PATRAN Support Services

The most efficient way to contact MSC/PATRAN Support Services is to send an e-mail message to:

mscpatran.support@macsch.com

You can also call 1-800-732-7284 or 1-714-444-5000 and ask for MSC/PATRAN support.

Reporting BETA Software Defects

When reporting defects, please specify that you are using Version 8 BETA software. This will help customer support personnel assist you more efficiently.

Information to Supply to Support Services

Please include the following specific information to help the support engineers resolve your problem more effectively:

- Identify yourself as an MSC/PATRAN BETA test customer.
- Give your name, company name, and telephone number.
- Indicate the category of the problem, as follows:

Category	Product
Core & Applications	PATRAN, Insight, Mass Properties
Geometry Integration	CADDS, CATIA, Euclid 3, IGES, Pro/ENGINEER, Unigraphics
Analysis Integration	ABAQUS, ANSYS, DYTRAN, LS-DYNA3D, MARC, NASTRAN, PAMCRASH, SAMCEF, SINDA
Application Modules	ADVANCED FEA, ANALYSIS MANAGER, FATIGUE, FEA, LAMINATE MODELER, MATERIALS, THERMAL
System	Installation, PCL

- Specify your hardware type and operating system level (e.g., SUN UltraSPARC Solaris 2.5.1).
- Indicate whether you are using the hardware graphics option and what graphics device you are using (e.g., OpenGL on Solid Impact).
- Provide a sufficiently detailed description of the problem.