

PHP Mode Manual

Editing PHP in GNU Emacs

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This manual documents PHP mode version 1.4.0 for use with GNU Emacs.

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1 Introduction

PHP mode is a major mode for editing PHP source code in Emacs. As an extension of Emacs's C mode, it inherits all C mode's navigation and editing functionality. Syntax elements of PHP source code is colored according to the grammar of PHP versions 3, 4 and 5. By default, the indent rules follow the PHP PEAR coding guidelines. Additional aids for developing in PHP include documentation search of the PHP manual, code completion and a class browser.

To find out what version of PHP mode you have installed run *M-x php-mode-version*.

PHP mode was first released in 1999 and was written by Turadg Aleahmad. At the time of PHP mode's initial release, version 2 of PHP (PHP/FI) was only 2 years old and the release of PHP 3 had happened the year before. In May of 2000, PHP 4 was released. Subsequent versions of PHP mode scurried to support the quickly evolving syntax of this emerging programming language.

In 2001, PHP mode became a SourceForge project and version 1.0 was released later that year. Further refinements of the Emacs library included improvements to the syntax coloring rules, portability between XEmacs and GNU Emacs, integration of various development tools available in various Emacsen.

PHP mode's support for PHP 5 first appeared in 2004, the same year PHP 5 was released. 2004 was the last year Aleahmad made a release. In 2005, Lennart Borgman combined a forked version of PHP mode with his "new XML mode for Emacs" (nXhtml). The stalled development of PHP resulted in people sharing various patches and improvements to PHP mode over the Internet.

The 1.4 release in 2008 represented a renewed commitment to the Emacs Lisp library with the addition of considerable updates and improvements – the first in over 2 years.

2 Electricity

Certain characters when inserted in Emacs have *electricity*. Emacs recognizes them as “electric” and automatically reacts in some way to their insertion. This is unlike the `self-insert-command` – the conventional manner most characters are inserted into the buffer with no side-effect.

For example, the indent commands for programming language modes – including PHP mode – are electric. Hitting `TAB` (or `C-i`) typically indents the line to the correct column based on the nested declaration blocks or conditional (control) syntax statements. Other examples of electric characters include braces (`{` and `}`), characters that are recognized as comments (`#`, `/` and `*`), and semicolons. Inserting “electric” characters causes the line to be automatically be indented appropriately by PHP mode.

Should PHP mode ever do something you wish it didn’t, like indenting incorrectly after inserting a character when you wish it didn’t, then you’ve been *electrocuted*. To avoid this, use `quoted-insert` by prefixing the character with `C-q`. For example, `C-q TAB` for a tab. Alternatively, disable the electric effect of PHP mode with `C-c C-l`. Issue `C-c C-l` again to activate the electric effect again.

3 Motion

The traditional commands for Emacs¹ and Emacs's C mode² are supported in PHP mode. The following commands are notable to mention for working with PHP or are extensions expressly provided PHP mode.

<i>C-M-f</i>	Move forward past the current syntax (forward-sexp). If point is in a string literal, move to the end of the string. If point is at the beginning of a parenthetical expression, move to the end of it. If at the beginning of statement block that is surrounded by braces, move to the end of the block. If point is at an identifier, skip to the end of it.
<i>C-M-b</i>	Same as <i>C-M-f</i> , except a syntactic element move to its beginning (backward-sexp).
<i>C-M-a</i>	Move point to the beginning of the top-level function definition (c-beginning-of-defun).
<i>C-M-e</i>	Move point to the end of the top-level function definition (c-end-of-defun).
<i>C-M-<HOME></i>	Move point to the beginning of the current function (beginning-of-defun).
<i>C-M-<END></i>	Move point to the end of the current function (end-of-defun).
<i>M-m</i>	Move to the indentation at the beginning of the line (back-to-indentation).
<i>C-c C-w</i>	Enable word motion across mixed case identifiers with forward-word and backward-word commands (c-subword-mode).

Most movement commands support prefixing the command with a *numeric argument* by using Emacs's *universal argument* command. Type ***C-u n***, where *n* is the number of times to repeat a command. If no number *n* is provided, Emacs will repeat the command 4 times by default. See [section “Numeric Arguments” in GNU Emacs Manual](#).

¹ See [section “Changing the Location of Point” in GNU Emacs Manual](#).

² See [section “Movement Commands” in CC Mode Manual](#).

4 Indentation

PHP mode’s indentation settings follow the PHP PEAR “Coding Standards”¹. This has the consequence in PHP mode of making the indentation commands use four spaces, and not tabs.

PHP does not appropriately indent HTML tags. See [Appendix A \[Embedded HTML\]](#), page 14.

To customize PHP mode’s indentation rules, change the following variables.

`c-basic-offset`

This style variable of CC mode controls how many columns in the level of indentation. By default this is 4 spaces in PHP mode (and in CC mode).

`indent-tabs-mode`

Variable of Emacs that determines whether indentation commands should insert the tab character or insert the equivalent number of space characters. In PHP mode, this is set to `nil` by default.

`tab-width`

This variable of Emacs determines how “wide” a tab in the buffer should be considered. This is also traditionally described as setting the distance between “tab stops”. By default, tabs are not inserted by PHP mode.

The usual commands for indenting in Emacs² and Emacs’s C mode³: are supported in PHP mode, following the indentation rules of PHP.

<code>TAB</code>	Properly indent current line, even from the middle of the line (<code>c-indent-command</code>).
<code>C-j</code>	Insert text after point to a newline, and properly indent the newline (<code>c-indent-command</code>).
<code>C-M-\</code>	Properly indent each line of region (<code>indent-region</code>).
<code>C-c C-q</code>	Properly indent each line of current top-level function or top-level class (<code>c-indent-defun</code>).

¹ <http://pear.php.net/manual/en/standards.php>

² See section “Indentation Commands” in *GNU Emacs Manual*.

³ See section “Indentation Commands” in *CC Mode Manual*.

5 Editing

M-q Fill the paragraph to current value of `fill-column`. The command does the right thing for indented code and PHP comments including Docblock comments.

C-u n C-x f Set the `fill-column` to *n* when using the *M-q* command (`fill-paragraph`).

C-M-h Mark the current function (`c-mark-function`). Puts the mark at the end and of the function and the point at the beginning. Useful if you want to kill the region with *C-w* or *M-w*, or indent the region with *C-M-* or *C-x TAB* (See [Chapter 4 \[Indentation\]](#), page 4.).

6 Completion

Completing function names, identifiers and keywords in PHP is possible in PHP mode. In PHP mode, it is possible to complete identifiers defined by PHP programming language, and functions defined by you.

For PHP mode to know the functions and keywords of PHP, it must have access to the PHP manual. Download the HTML archive of the manual made of separate files for each function.¹ Unpack the files to a directory, and define the variable `php-manual-path` to the location of these files. Configure this setting with either *M-x customize-variable RET php-manual-path RET*, or by setting the value in your Emacs initialization file (`~/.emacs`). The PHP function names

For functions and classes you define, you'll need to provide them to Emacs as a *tag file*.² Creating a tag file ('TAGS') from a PHP source code file is done by running the `etags` command on the file.³ The `etags` command can even generate tag files for providing completion across multiple files. For larger projects and PHP coded libraries, use a system like a Makefile to generate and maintain the tag tables.

Run,

```
etags file
```

to create a tags file for *file*.

To generate a tag file for all the PHP files in the current directory, run

```
etags *.php
```

To enable a tags file you need to use the following command.

C-u M-x visit-tags-table

Specify the 'TAGS' file that PHP mode should use to find completion candidates for the current buffer.

M-x visit-tags-table

Specify the 'TAGS' file that PHP mode should use to find completion candidates for all buffers, and even other modes other than PHP mode.

To avoid either

1. avoid regenerating the completion table from the PHP manual every Emacs session,
2. to generate a completion file from a facility external to Emacs tags,
3. or to provide more granular control over the completion rules for files;

consider using the variable `php-completion-file`.

Configure this setting with either *M-x customize-variable RET php-completion-file RET*, or by setting the value in your Emacs initialization file (`~/.emacs`).

For larger projects or because of other specific needs, conventional ways of setting these and other variables may be inadequate. As of 2008, third-party packages do exist for Emacs to configure Emacs settings on groups of files or for directory trees, including `'dirvars.el'`.

¹ <http://www.php.net/download-docs.php>

² See section "Tags Tables" in *GNU Emacs Manual*.

³ See section "Creating Tags Tables" in *GNU Emacs Manual*.

M-TAB

ESC TAB

C-[TAB Complete function name at point (`php-complete-function`).

C-. Show in the minibuffer the argument list for the current function at point (`php-show-arglist`). The argument list is generated by finding and jumping to the respective function's location specified in the tag file (see above). The argument list is then read and printed to the minibuffer.

7 PHP Comments

The usual commands for inserting, managing and editing source code comments in Emacs Emacs¹ and Emacs’s C mode²: are supported in PHP mode. The following commands are notable to mention for working with PHP and are expressly provided for PHP mode.

- `M-;` Insert comment at point (`comment-dwim`). If comment already exist, indent comment (`comment-indent`).
- `M-j` Insert a newline in a comment on the next line with the comment starting at the same place as the current line (`c-indent-new-comment-line`).
- `C-x ;` Set the current column as the column to start comments from in the buffer (`comment-set-column`). This affects the variable `comment-column`.
- `C-c C-c` Comment out the current region (`comment-region`). If region is already commented, the region is uncommented.
- `M-- C-x ;`
- `C-u M-;` Kill the comment on the current line (`comment-kill` called by `comment-set-column` or `comment-dwim`).
- `C-u n M-;` Kill the next *n* comments (`comment-dwim`).
- `M-x comment-box`
 Surround region with comment characters.

¹ See section “Manipulating Comments” in *GNU Emacs Manual*.

² See section “Comment Commands” in *CC Mode Manual*.

8 PHP Documentation

PHP mode supports the online documentation available from <http://www.php.net/>. These commands are handled by `browse-url`. Run the Emacs command *M-x customize-group RET browse-url RET* to configure how `browse-url` behaves.

C-c C-m

C-c RET Browse PHP manual in a Web browser.

C-c C-f Search PHP manual using identifier at point.

9 Index Menu

PHP mode provides a menu of the functions and classes defined in the current buffer. The menu is pretty simple, but is helpful when navigating large files. The contents of the menu also provide a good overview to the user about the file's contents.

To enable this menu, run the following command.

M-x imenu-add-menubar-index

Scan the file for functions and class declarations, then add a menu item called “Index” to the menu bar.

In the menu are any one or more of the following menu items.

‘**Functions**’

A sub-menu containing the names of functions defined in the current buffer. Clicking on a function name will visit the location of the function's definition.

‘**Classes**’ A sub-menu containing the names of classes defined in the current buffer. Clicking on a class name will visit the location of the class's definition.

‘***Rescan***’

Rescan the contents of the current buffer, and update both the indexes the entries in the menu.

To have Emacs automatically rescan the current buffer, change the setting for `imenu-auto-rescan` to non-nil with either *M-x customize-variable RET php-completion-file RET*, or by setting the value in your Emacs initialization file (`‘~/.emacs’`).

10 Change Logs

PHP mode can help generate ‘**ChangeLog**’ files, a widely-adopted format for documenting the changes made to source code, especially software. PHP mode and Emacs will determine the current function, file name, author information and date and use it all to prepare a properly formatted entry for the file.

The **add-change-log-entry** commands can be run from within a buffer containing a PHP buffer, or from a buffer in Diff mode with a revision patch to a PHP source file. See [section “Diff Mode” in GNU Emacs Manual](#).

C-x 4 a Add an entry in a ChangeLog file opened in another window, or add a new line to the already begun entry (**add-change-log-entry-other-window**). Provides the file name and the respective function name, when applicable, for the current point

11 Speedbar

FIXME: Document speedbar support for PHP mode.

12 Customization

Customization for PHP mode can be done using Emacs’s Customize feature¹, or by adding bits of Emacs Lisp to your Emacs initialization file (`~/.emacs`).

M-x customize-group RET php RET

Start a `*Customize*` buffer with the customizable settings for PHP mode.

¹ See section “Customization” in *GNU Emacs Manual*.

Appendix A Embedded HTML

The PHP programming language is commonly embedded with HTML but also with other markup formats. Unfortunately, PHP mode is currently unable to recognize these other bits and provide commands that behave appropriately. Other modes for Emacs for properly indenting are available, including HTML mode, SGML mode and XML mode.

For example, when editing the HTML sections found in a PHP file, consider turning on HTML mode with *M-x html-mode*. Use the the mode-specific commands for manipulating the HTML. When finished, turn back on PHP mode with *M-x php-mode* to return working on the PHP sections of the file.

Alternatively, consider using a *multiple major mode* like mumamo, mmm-mode or multi-mode. These modes allow a single buffer to appoint different major modes to respective portions of the buffer.

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