
HP OpenVMS Calling Standard

December 2003

This standard defines the requirements, mechanisms, and conventions that support procedure-to-procedure calls for HP OpenVMS VAX, HP OpenVMS Alpha, and HP OpenVMS Industry Standard 64. The standard defines the run-time data structures, constants, algorithms, conventions, methods, and functional interfaces that enable a 32-bit or 64-bit native user-mode procedure to operate correctly in a multilanguage and multithreaded environment on VAX, Alpha, and Intel® Itanium® processors.

Revision/Update Information:

Software Version: HP OpenVMS Industry Standard 64
Evaluation Release Version 8.1 for
Integrity Servers

Operating System: HP OpenVMS I64 Eval V8.1

Hewlett-Packard Company

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Evaluation Release Version 8.1
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Hewlett-Packard Company
Palo Alto, California

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ZK5973

This document was prepared using DECdocument, Version 3.3-1b.

Contents

Preface	xv
1 Introduction	
1.1 Applicability	1-2
1.2 Architectural Level	1-2
1.3 Goals	1-2
1.4 Definitions	1-4
2 OpenVMS VAX Conventions	
2.1 Register Usage	2-1
2.1.1 Scalar Register Usage	2-1
2.1.2 Vector Register Usage	2-2
2.2 Stack Usage	2-2
2.3 Calling Sequence	2-3
2.4 Argument List	2-3
2.4.1 Format	2-4
2.4.2 Argument Lists and High-Level Languages	2-5
2.4.2.1 Order of Argument Evaluation	2-5
2.4.2.2 Language Extensions for Argument Transmission	2-5
2.5 Function Value Returns	2-6
2.5.1 Returning a Function Value on Top of the Stack	2-7
2.5.1.1 Returning a Fixed-Length or Varying String Function Value	2-8
2.6 Vector and Scalar Processor Synchronization	2-8
2.6.1 Memory Synchronization	2-9
2.6.2 Exception Synchronization	2-9
3 OpenVMS Alpha Conventions	
3.1 Register Usage	3-1
3.1.1 Integer Registers	3-1
3.1.2 Floating-Point Registers	3-2
3.2 Address Representation	3-3
3.3 Procedure Representation	3-3
3.4 Procedure Types	3-3
3.4.1 Stack Frame Procedures	3-4
3.4.2 Procedure Descriptor for Procedures with a Stack Frame	3-5
3.4.3 Stack Frame Format	3-9
3.4.3.1 Fixed-Size Stack Frame	3-9
3.4.3.2 Variable-Size Stack Frame	3-10
3.4.3.3 Fixed Temporary Locations for All Stack Frames	3-12
3.4.3.4 Register Save Area for All Stack Frames	3-12
3.4.4 Register Frame Procedure	3-14

3.4.5	Procedure Descriptor for Procedures with a Register Frame	3-15
3.4.6	Null Frame Procedures	3-20
3.4.7	Procedure Descriptor for Null Frame Procedures	3-20
3.5	Procedure Call Stack	3-22
3.5.1	Current Procedure	3-23
3.5.2	Procedure Call Tracing	3-24
3.5.2.1	Referring to a Procedure Invocation from a Data Structure	3-24
3.5.2.2	Invocation Context Block	3-25
3.5.2.3	Getting a Procedure Invocation Context with a Routine	3-27
3.5.2.4	Walking the Call Stack	3-27
3.5.3	Invocation Context Access Routines	3-28
3.5.3.1	LIB\$GET_INVO_CONTEXT	3-28
3.5.3.2	LIB\$GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT	3-29
3.5.3.3	LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT	3-29
3.5.3.4	LIB\$GET_INVO_HANDLE	3-29
3.5.3.5	LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE	3-30
3.5.3.6	LIB\$PUT_INVO_REGISTERS	3-30
3.6	Transfer of Control	3-31
3.6.1	Call Conventions	3-31
3.6.2	Linkage Section	3-34
3.6.3	Calling Computed Addresses	3-36
3.6.4	Simple and Bound Procedures	3-36
3.6.4.1	Bound Procedure Descriptors	3-37
3.6.4.2	Bound Procedure Value	3-38
3.6.5	Entry and Exit Code Sequences	3-39
3.6.5.1	Entry Code Sequence	3-39
3.6.5.2	Exit Code Sequence	3-41
3.7	Data Passing	3-42
3.7.1	Argument-Passing Mechanisms	3-42
3.7.2	Argument List Structure	3-43
3.7.3	Argument Lists and High-Level Languages	3-44
3.7.4	Unused Bits in Passed Data	3-44
3.7.5	Sending Data	3-46
3.7.5.1	Sending Mechanism	3-46
3.7.5.2	Order of Argument Evaluation	3-47
3.7.6	Receiving Data	3-47
3.7.7	Returning Data	3-47
3.7.7.1	Function Value Return by Immediate Value	3-48
3.7.7.2	Function Value Return by Reference	3-48
3.7.7.3	Function Value Return by Descriptor	3-49
3.8	Data Allocation	3-50
3.8.1	Alignment	3-51
3.8.2	Record Layout Conventions	3-52
3.8.2.1	Aligned Record Layout	3-53
3.8.2.2	OpenVMS VAX Compatible Record Layout	3-54
3.9	Multithreaded Execution Environments	3-54
3.9.1	Stack Limit Checking	3-55
3.9.1.1	Stack Guard Region	3-55
3.9.1.2	Stack Reserve Region	3-55
3.9.1.3	Methods for Stack Limit Checking	3-55
3.9.1.4	Stack Overflow Handling	3-58

4 OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.1	Register Usage	4-1
4.1.1	Partitioning	4-1
4.1.2	I64 General Register Usage	4-2
4.1.3	I64 Floating-Point Register Usage	4-4
4.1.4	I64 Predicate Register Usage	4-4
4.1.5	I64 Branch Register Usage	4-5
4.1.6	I64 Application Register Usage	4-5
4.1.7	User Mask	4-7
4.1.8	Additional Register Usage Information	4-8
4.2	Address Representation	4-8
4.3	Procedure Representation	4-9
4.4	Procedure Types	4-9
4.5	Memory Stack	4-10
4.5.1	Procedure Frames	4-10
4.5.2	Stack Overflow Detection	4-12
4.5.2.1	Stack Limit Checking	4-13
4.5.2.2	Methods for Stack Limit Checking	4-13
4.6	Register Stack	4-15
4.6.1	Input and Local Registers	4-16
4.6.2	Output Registers	4-16
4.6.3	Rotating Registers	4-17
4.6.4	Frame Markers	4-17
4.6.5	Backing Store for Register Stack	4-17
4.7	Procedure Linkage	4-18
4.7.1	The GP Register	4-18
4.7.2	Types of Calls	4-19
4.7.3	Calling Sequence	4-19
4.7.3.1	Direct Calls	4-19
4.7.3.2	Indirect Calls	4-22
4.7.4	Parameter Passing	4-23
4.7.5	Parameter Passing Mechanisms	4-24
4.7.5.1	Allocation of Parameter Slots	4-26
4.7.5.2	Normal Register Parameters	4-27
4.7.5.3	Argument Information (AI) Register	4-29
4.7.5.4	Memory Stack Parameters	4-30
4.7.5.5	Variable Argument Lists	4-30
4.7.5.6	Pointers to Formal Parameters	4-30
4.7.5.7	Languages Other than C	4-31
4.7.5.8	Rounding Floating-point Values	4-31
4.7.5.9	Order of Argument Evaluation	4-31
4.7.5.10	Examples	4-31
4.7.6	Return Values	4-32
4.7.7	Simple and Bound Procedures	4-33
4.8	Procedure Call Stack	4-36
4.8.1	Current Procedure	4-36
4.8.2	Procedure Call Tracing	4-37
4.8.2.1	Invocation Context Block	4-37
4.8.2.2	Invocation Context Handle	4-40

4.8.3	Invocation Context Block Access Routines	4-40
4.8.3.1	Initializing the Invocation Context Block	4-40
4.8.3.2	Walking the Call Stack	4-41
4.8.3.3	LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_CONTEXT	4-41
4.8.3.4	LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT	4-42
4.8.3.5	LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT	4-43
4.8.3.6	LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_HANDLE	4-43
4.8.3.7	LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_HANDLE	4-44
4.8.3.8	LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE	4-44
4.8.3.9	LIB\$I64_PREV_INVO_END	4-45
4.8.3.10	LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS	4-45
4.8.4	Supplemental Invocation Context Access Routines	4-47
4.8.4.1	LIB\$I64_GET_FR	4-47
4.8.4.2	LIB\$I64_SET_FR	4-47
4.8.4.3	LIB\$I64_GET_GR	4-48
4.8.4.4	LIB\$I64_SET_GR	4-48
4.8.4.5	LIB\$I64_SET_PC	4-49
4.8.4.6	LIB\$I64_SET_FPSR	4-50
4.8.4.7	LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_LSDA	4-50
4.8.4.8	LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_OSSD	4-51
4.8.4.9	LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_HANDLER_FV	4-51
4.8.4.10	LIB\$I64_IS_EXC_DISPATCH_FRAME	4-52
4.8.4.11	LIB\$I64_IS_AST_DISPATCH_FRAME	4-52
4.8.5	Invocation Context Callback Routines	4-52
4.8.5.1	The Get Unwind Information Routine	4-53
4.8.5.2	The Get Initial Context Routine	4-53
4.8.5.3	The Read Memory Routine	4-54
4.8.5.4	The Write Memory Routine	4-54
4.8.5.5	The Write Register Routine	4-55
4.8.5.6	The Memory Allocation Routine	4-56
4.8.5.7	The Memory Deallocation Routine	4-56
4.9	Data Allocation	4-57
4.9.1	Alignment	4-58
4.9.2	Global Data	4-59
4.9.3	Local Static Data	4-59
4.9.4	Constants and Literals	4-59
4.9.5	Record Layout Conventions	4-59
4.9.5.1	Aligned Record Layout	4-60
4.9.5.2	OpenVMS VAX Compatible Record Layout	4-61
4.9.6	Sample Code Sequences	4-61
4.9.6.1	Addressing Own Data in the Short Data Area	4-61
4.9.6.2	Addressing External Data or Data in a Long Data Area	4-61
4.9.6.3	Addressing Literals in the Text Segment	4-62
4.9.6.4	Materializing Function Pointers	4-62
4.9.6.5	Jump Tables	4-62
4.9.6.5.1	Preferred Method	4-62
4.9.6.5.2	Alternative Method	4-63

5 Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1	Overview	5-1
5.1.1	Translated VAX Images on Alpha Systems	5-1
5.1.1.1	Direct Calls From Translated to Native Code	5-2
5.1.1.2	Direct Calls From Native to Translated Code	5-2
5.1.1.3	Indirect Calls From Native to Translated Code	5-2
5.1.2	Translated Images on I64 Systems	5-3
5.1.2.1	Calls From Translated to Native I64 Code	5-4
5.1.2.2	Direct Calls From Native I64 Code to Translated Code	5-4
5.1.2.3	Indirect Calls From Native to Translated Code	5-5
5.1.3	Signature Information Fields in Function Descriptors	5-5
5.2	Signature Information Blocks	5-6
5.2.1	Signature Information on Alpha Systems	5-6
5.2.2	Signature Information on I64 Systems	5-6
5.2.3	Signature Information Block Content	5-7
5.2.4	Call Parameter PSIG Conversions	5-10
5.2.4.1	Native-Alpha-to-Translated-VAX PSIG Conversions	5-10
5.2.4.2	Translated-VAX-to-Native-Alpha PSIG Conversions	5-11
5.2.4.3	Native-I64-to-Translated-Alpha PSIG Conversions	5-13
5.2.4.4	Translated-Alpha-to-Native-I64 PSIG Conversions	5-13
5.2.5	Default Signature Information	5-13

6 OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.1	Atomic Data Types	6-1
6.2	String Data Types	6-4
6.3	Miscellaneous Data Types	6-5
6.4	Reserved Data-Type Codes	6-6
6.4.1	Facility-Specific Data-Type Codes	6-7
6.5	Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)	6-8

7 OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.1	Descriptor Prototype	7-2
7.2	Fixed-Length Descriptor (CLASS_S)	7-5
7.3	Dynamic String Descriptor (CLASS_D)	7-6
7.4	Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)	7-7
7.5	Procedure Argument Descriptor (CLASS_P)	7-12
7.6	Decimal String Descriptor (CLASS_SD)	7-14
7.7	Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)	7-16
7.8	Varying String Descriptor (CLASS_VS)	7-21
7.9	Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)	7-23
7.10	Unaligned Bit String Descriptor (CLASS_UBS)	7-26
7.11	Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)	7-27
7.12	String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_SB)	7-31
7.13	Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_UBSB)	7-33
7.14	Reserved Descriptor Class Codes	7-35
7.14.1	Facility-Specific Descriptor Class Codes	7-35

8 OpenVMS Conditions

8.1	Condition Values	8-1
8.1.1	Interpretation of Severity Codes	8-4
8.1.2	Use of Condition Values	8-5
8.2	Condition Handlers	8-5
8.3	Condition Handler Options	8-6
8.4	Operations Involving Condition Handlers	8-6
8.4.1	Establishing a Condition Handler	8-7
8.4.2	Reverting to the Caller's Handling	8-8
8.4.3	Signaling a Condition	8-8
8.4.4	Signaling a Condition Using GENTRAP (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)	8-9
8.4.5	Signaling a Condition Using BREAK (I64 Only)	8-10
8.4.6	Condition Handler Search	8-11
8.5	Properties of Condition Handlers	8-12
8.5.1	Condition Handler Parameters and Invocation	8-12
8.5.1.1	Signal Argument Vector	8-13
8.5.1.2	Mechanism Argument Vector	8-15
8.5.1.2.1	VAX Mechanism Vector Format	8-16
8.5.1.2.2	Alpha Mechanism Vector Format	8-17
8.5.1.2.3	I64 Mechanism Vector Format	8-20
8.5.1.3	Mechanism Depth	8-23
8.5.2	System Default Condition Handlers	8-24
8.5.3	Coordinating the Handler and Establisher	8-24
8.5.3.1	Use of Memory	8-24
8.5.3.2	Exception Synchronization (Alpha Only)	8-24
8.5.3.3	Continuation from Exceptions (Alpha Only)	8-25
8.6	Returning from a Condition Handler	8-25
8.7	Request to Unwind from a Signal	8-26
8.7.1	Signaler's Registers	8-28
8.7.2	Unwind Completion	8-28
8.8	GOTO Unwind Operations (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)	8-29
8.8.1	Handler Invocation During a GOTO Unwind	8-32
8.8.2	Unwind Completion	8-32
8.9	Multiple Active Signals	8-33
8.10	Multiple Active Unwind Operations	8-34

A Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.1	Unwinding the Stack	A-2
A.1.1	Initial Context	A-2
A.1.2	Step to Previous Frame	A-2
A.2	Exception Handling Framework	A-3
A.3	Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding	A-4
A.3.1	Requirements for Unwinding the Stack	A-4
A.3.2	Conventions for Prologue Regions	A-5
A.3.3	Conventions for Body Regions	A-7
A.3.4	Conventions for Epilogues	A-7
A.3.5	Conventions for the Spill Area in the Memory Stack Frame	A-7
A.4	Data Structures	A-8

A.4.1	Unwind Table and Unwind Information Block	A-9
A.4.1.1	Unwind Descriptor Area	A-12
A.4.1.2	Region Header Records	A-12
A.4.1.3	Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions	A-13
A.4.1.4	Descriptor Records for Body Regions	A-19
A.4.1.5	Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions	A-20
A.4.1.6	Rules for Using Unwind Descriptors	A-21
A.4.1.7	Processing Unwind Descriptors	A-22
A.4.2	Condition Handler	A-22
A.4.3	Operating System-Specific Data Area	A-23
A.4.3.1	General Information Segment	A-23
A.4.3.2	Caller Spill Register Information	A-25
A.4.4	Language-Specific Data Area	A-27
A.5	Default Unwind Information	A-27
A.6	System Unwind Routines	A-28
	SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE	A-29
	SYS\$CLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE	A-32
	SYS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO	A-33
	LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO	A-35

B Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.1	Region Header Records	B-2
B.1.1	Format R1	B-2
B.1.2	Format R2	B-3
B.1.3	Format R3	B-3
B.2	Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions	B-4
B.2.1	Format P1	B-4
B.2.2	Format P2	B-4
B.2.3	Format P3	B-5
B.2.4	Format P4	B-5
B.2.5	Format P5	B-6
B.2.6	Format P6	B-6
B.2.7	Format P7	B-7
B.2.8	Format P8	B-8
B.2.9	Format P9	B-9
B.2.10	Format P10	B-9
B.3	Descriptor Records for Body Regions	B-9
B.3.1	Format B1	B-10
B.3.2	Format B2	B-10
B.3.3	Format B3	B-10
B.3.4	Format B4	B-11
B.4	Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions	B-11
B.4.1	Format X1	B-12
B.4.2	Format X2	B-13
B.4.3	Format X3	B-13
B.4.4	Format X4	B-14

C Summary of Differences from the Itanium Software Conventions

C.1	Changes	C-1
C.2	Extensions	C-2

Index

Examples

3-1	Entry Code for a Stack Frame Procedure	3-40
3-2	Entry Code for a Register Frame Procedure	3-41
3-3	Exit Code Sequence for a Stack Frame	3-42
3-4	Exit Code Sequence for a Register Frame	3-42
5-1	Code for Examining the Procedure Value	5-2

Figures

2-1	Stack Frame Generated by CALLG or CALLS Instruction	2-2
2-2	Argument List Format	2-4
3-1	Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-5
3-2	Fixed-Size Stack Frame Format	3-10
3-3	Variable-Size Stack Frame Format	3-11
3-4	Register Save Area (RSA) Layout	3-13
3-5	Register Save Area (RSA) Example	3-14
3-6	Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-16
3-7	Null Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC) Format	3-21
3-8	Procedure Invocation Handle Format	3-24
3-9	Invocation Context Block Format	3-26
3-10	Argument Information Register (R25) Format	3-32
3-11	Linkage Pair Block Format	3-35
3-12	Bound Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-37
4-1	Procedure Frame	4-11
4-2	Operation of the Register Stack	4-16
4-3	Direct Procedure Calls	4-20
4-4	Indirect Procedure Calls	4-22
4-5	Parameter Passing in Registers and Memory	4-24
4-6	Argument Information Register Representation	4-29
4-7	Simple Function Descriptor	4-33
4-8	Bound Function Descriptor	4-34
5-1	Alpha Signature Information Block (PSIG)	5-6
5-2	I64 Signature Information Block (PSIG)	5-7
6-1	Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)—General Format	6-8
6-2	Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT) Format ..	6-9
7-1	Descriptor Prototype Format	7-3
7-2	Fixed-Length Descriptor Format	7-5
7-3	Dynamic String Descriptor Format	7-6
7-4	Array Descriptor Format	7-8

7-5	Procedure Argument Descriptor Format	7-13
7-6	Decimal String Descriptor Format	7-14
7-7	Noncontiguous Array Descriptor Format	7-17
7-8	Varying String Descriptor Format	7-22
7-9	Varying String Descriptor with Character String Data Type	7-23
7-10	Varying String Array Descriptor Format	7-24
7-11	Unaligned Bit String Descriptor Format	7-26
7-12	Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor Format	7-28
7-13	String with Bounds Descriptor Format	7-32
7-14	Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor Format	7-33
8-1	Format of a Condition Value	8-2
8-2	Interaction Between Handlers and Default Handlers	8-12
8-3	Signal Argument Vector — 32-Bit Format	8-14
8-4	Signal Argument Vector — 64-Bit Format	8-15
8-5	VAX Mechanism Vector Format	8-16
8-6	Alpha Mechanism Vector Format	8-18
8-7	I64 Mechanism Vector Format	8-21
A-1	Unwind Table and Unwind Information Block	A-10
A-2	OpenVMS Operating System-Specific Data Area Segment	A-23
A-3	Format of OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA	A-26

Tables

2-1	VAX Register Usage	2-1
2-2	Argument-Passing Mechanisms with User Explicit Control	2-6
3-1	Alpha Integer Register Usage	3-1
3-2	Alpha Floating-Point Register Usage	3-2
3-3	Contents of Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-6
3-4	Contents of Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-17
3-5	Contents of Null Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-21
3-6	Contents of the Invocation Context Block	3-27
3-7	Contents of the Argument Information Register (R25)	3-32
3-8	Contents of the Linkage Pair Block	3-35
3-9	Contents of the Bound Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)	3-37
3-10	Argument Item Locations	3-43
3-11	Data Types and the Unused Bits in Passed Data	3-45
3-12	Natural Alignment Requirements	3-52
4-1	I64 General Register Usage	4-2
4-2	I64 Floating-Point Register Usage	4-4
4-3	I64 Predicate Register Usage	4-4
4-4	I64 Branch Register Usage	4-5
4-5	I64 Application Register Usage	4-6
4-6	Initial Value of the Floating-point Status Register	4-7
4-7	Summary of Function Descriptor Kinds	4-9
4-8	Rules for Allocating Parameter Slots	4-26
4-9	Data Types and the Unused Bits in Passed Data	4-28
4-10	Extension Type Codes	4-29

4-11	Argument Information Register Codes	4-30
4-12	Rules for Return Values	4-32
4-13	Simple Function Descriptor	4-34
4-14	Contents of Bound Function Descriptor	4-35
4-15	Contents of the Invocation Context Block	4-37
4-16	Flags in LIBICBSV_FRAME_FLAGS Field of the invocation context block	4-39
4-17	Natural Alignment Requirements	4-58
5-1	Signature Information Field Tag Values	5-5
5-2	Contents of the Signature Information Block (PSIG)	5-7
5-3	Register Argument Signature Encodings	5-9
5-4	Function Return Signature Encodings	5-9
5-5	Native-to-Translated Conversion of the PSIG Field Values	5-10
5-6	Translated-to-Native Conversion of the PSIG Field Values	5-12
6-1	Atomic Data Types	6-2
6-2	String Data Types	6-4
6-3	Miscellaneous Data Types	6-5
6-4	Reserved Data Types	6-6
7-1	Argument Descriptor Classes for OpenVMS Alpha and OpenVMS VAX	7-2
7-2	Contents of the Prototype Descriptor	7-4
7-3	Contents of the CLASS_S Descriptor	7-5
7-4	Contents of the CLASS_D Descriptor	7-7
7-5	Contents of the CLASS_A Descriptor	7-10
7-6	Contents of the CLASS_P Descriptor	7-13
7-7	Contents of the CLASS_SD Descriptor	7-15
7-8	Internal-to-External BINSCALE Conversion Examples	7-16
7-9	Contents of the CLASS_NCA Descriptor	7-19
7-10	Contents of the CLASS_VS Descriptor	7-22
7-11	Contents of the CLASS_VSA Descriptor	7-26
7-12	Contents of the CLASS_UBS Descriptor	7-27
7-13	Contents of the CLASS_UBA Descriptor	7-30
7-14	Contents of the CLASS_SB Descriptor	7-32
7-15	Contents of the CLASS_UBSB Descriptor	7-34
7-16	Specific OpenVMS VAX Descriptors Reserved to Hewlett-Packard . . .	7-35
8-1	Contents of the Condition Value	8-2
8-2	Value Symbols for the Condition Value Longword	8-3
8-3	Interpretation of Severity Codes	8-4
8-4	Exception Codes and Symbols for the GENTRAP Parameter	8-9
8-5	Contents of the Alpha Argument Mechanism Array (MECH)	8-19
8-6	Contents of the I64 Argument Mechanism Array (MECH)	8-22
A-1	F (Flags) Field of the Information Block	A-11
A-2	Region Header Records	A-12
A-3	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Stack Frame	A-13
A-4	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Return Pointer	A-14
A-5	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Previous Function State	A-15
A-6	Prologue Descriptor Records for Predicate Registers	A-15

A-7	Prologue Descriptor Records for General, Floating-Point, and Branch Registers	A-15
A-8	Prologue Descriptor Records for the User NaT Collection Register ...	A-17
A-9	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Loop Counter Register	A-17
A-10	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Floating-Point Status Register	A-17
A-11	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Primary UNaT Collection	A-18
A-12	Prologue Descriptor Records for the Backing Store	A-18
A-13	Body Region Descriptor Records	A-19
A-14	General Unwind Descriptors	A-20
A-15	Operating System-Specific Data Area	A-24
A-16	OpenVMS OSSD Caller Spill Register Information	A-26
A-17	Description of OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA Segment	A-26
B-1	Record Formats	B-1
B-2	Example ULEB128 Encodings	B-2

Preface

The *HP OpenVMS Calling Standard* defines the requirements, mechanisms, and conventions that support procedure-to-procedure calls for hp OpenVMS VAX, hp OpenVMS Alpha, and hp OpenVMS Industry Standard 64. The standard defines the run-time data structures, constants, algorithms, conventions, methods, and functional interfaces that enable a native user-mode procedure to operate correctly in a multilanguage environment on VAX, Alpha, and Itanium® systems. Properties of the run-time environment that must apply at various points during program execution are also defined.

The 32-bit user mode of OpenVMS Alpha provides a high degree of compatibility with programs written for OpenVMS VAX.

The 64-bit user mode of OpenVMS Alpha is a compatible superset of the OpenVMS Alpha 32-bit user mode.

The 32-bit and 64-bit user modes of OpenVMS I64 are highly compatible with OpenVMS Alpha.

The interfaces, methods, and conventions specified in this manual are primarily intended for use by implementers of compilers, debuggers, and other run-time tools, run-time libraries, and base operating systems. These specifications may or may not be appropriate for use by higher level system software and applications.

This standard is under engineering change order (ECO) control. ECOs are approved by Hewlett-Packard's OpenVMS Calling Standard committee.

Intended Audience

This manual primarily defines requirements for compiler and debugger writers, but the information can apply to procedure calling for all programmers in various levels of programming.

Document Structure

This manual contains seven chapters and three appendixes. Some chapters are restricted to a particular hardware environment. The appendixes all apply specifically to OpenVMS I64.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the standard, defines goals, and defines terms used in the text.

Chapter 2 describes the primary conventions in calling a procedure in an OpenVMS VAX environment. It defines register usage and addressing as well as vector and scalar processor synchronization.

Chapter 3 describes the fundamental concepts and conventions in calling a procedure in an OpenVMS Alpha environment. The chapter defines register usage and addressing, and focuses on aspects of the calling standard that pertain to procedure-to-procedure flow of control.

Chapter 4 describes the fundamental concepts and conventions in calling a procedure in an OpenVMS I64 environment. The chapter defines register usage and addressing, and focuses on aspects of the calling standard that pertain to procedure-to-procedure flow of control.

Chapter 5 describes signature information and its role in interfacing with translated OpenVMS VAX and Alpha images on Alpha and I64 systems. This is a new chapter that includes information that used to be in Chapter 3 as well as new information for I64 systems.

Chapter 6 defines the argument-passing data types used in calling a procedure for all OpenVMS environments.

Chapter 7 defines the argument descriptors used in calling a procedure for all OpenVMS environments.

Chapter 8 describes the OpenVMS condition- and exception-handling requirements for all OpenVMS environments.

Appendix A describes stack unwinding and exception handling for OpenVMS I64 environments.

Appendix B contains the formats of the OpenVMS I64 unwind descriptor records.

Appendix C contains a brief summary of the differences between the *Itanium® Software Conventions and Runtime Architecture Guide* and this calling standard.

Related Documents

The following manuals contain related information:

- *VAX Architecture Reference Manual*
- *Alpha Architecture Reference Manual*
- *OpenVMS Programming Interfaces: Calling a System Routine*
- *Guide to the POSIX Threads Library*
- *VAX/VMS Internals and Data Structures*
- *OpenVMS AXP Internals and Data Structures*
- *Intel IA-64 Architecture Software Developer's Manual*
- *Itanium® Software Conventions and Runtime Architecture Guide*

For additional information about HP OpenVMS products and services, visit the following World Wide Web address:

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Conventions

The following conventions are used in this manual:

Ctrl/ <i>x</i>	A sequence such as Ctrl/ <i>x</i> indicates that you must hold down the key labeled Ctrl while you press another key or a pointing device button.
PF1 <i>x</i>	A sequence such as PF1 <i>x</i> indicates that you must first press and release the key labeled PF1 and then press and release another key or a pointing device button.
Return	In examples, a key name enclosed in a box indicates that you press a key on the keyboard. (In text, a key name is not enclosed in a box.) In the HTML version of this document, this convention appears as brackets, rather than a box.
...	A horizontal ellipsis in examples indicates one of the following possibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional optional arguments in a statement have been omitted.• The preceding item or items can be repeated one or more times.• Additional parameters, values, or other information can be entered.
.	A vertical ellipsis indicates the omission of items from a code example or command format; the items are omitted because they are not important to the topic being discussed.
()	In command format descriptions, parentheses indicate that you must enclose choices in parentheses if you specify more than one.
[]	In command format descriptions, brackets indicate optional choices. You can choose one or more items or no items. Do not type the brackets on the command line. However, you must include the brackets in the syntax for OpenVMS directory specifications and for a substring specification in an assignment statement.
	In command format descriptions, vertical bars separate choices within brackets or braces. Within brackets, the choices are optional; within braces, at least one choice is required. Do not type the vertical bars on the command line.
{ }	In command format descriptions, braces indicate required choices; you must choose at least one of the items listed. Do not type the braces on the command line.
bold type	Bold type represents the introduction of a new term. It also represents the name of an argument, an attribute, or a reason.

<i>italic type</i>	Italic type indicates important information, complete titles of manuals, or variables. Variables include information that varies in system output (Internal error <i>number</i>), in command lines (<i>/PRODUCER=name</i>), and in command parameters in text (where <i>dd</i> represents the predefined code for the device type).
UPPERCASE TYPE	Uppercase type indicates a command, the name of a routine, the name of a file, or the abbreviation for a system privilege.
Example	This typeface indicates code examples, command examples, and interactive screen displays. In text, this type also identifies URLs, UNIX commands and pathnames, PC-based commands and folders, and certain elements of the C programming language.
-	A hyphen at the end of a command format description, command line, or code line indicates that the command or statement continues on the following line.
numbers	All numbers in text are assumed to be decimal unless otherwise noted. Nondecimal radices—binary, octal, or hexadecimal—are explicitly indicated.

Introduction

This standard defines properties such as the run-time data structures, constants, algorithms, conventions, methods, and functional interfaces that enable a native user-mode procedure to operate correctly in a multilanguage and multithreaded environment on OpenVMS VAX, OpenVMS Alpha, and OpenVMS I64 systems. These properties include the contents of key registers, format and contents of certain data structures, and actions that procedures must perform under certain circumstances.

This standard also defines properties of the run-time environment that must apply at various points during program execution. These properties vary in scope and applicability. Some properties apply at all points throughout the execution of standard-conforming user-mode code and must, therefore, be held constant at all times. Examples of such properties include those defined for the stack pointer and various properties of the call stack navigation mechanism. Other properties apply only at certain points, such as call conventions that apply only at the point of transfer of control to another procedure.

Furthermore, some properties are optional depending on circumstances. For example, compilers are not obligated to follow the argument list conventions when a procedure and all of its callers are in the same module, have been analyzed by an interprocedural analyzer, or have private interfaces (such as language-support routines).

Note

In many cases, significant performance gains can be realized by selective use of nonstandard calls when the safety of such calls is known. Compiler or tools writers are encouraged to make full use of such optimizations.

The procedure call mechanism depends on agreement between the calling and called procedures to interpret the argument list. The argument list does not fully describe itself. This standard requires language extensions to permit a calling program to generate some of the argument-passing mechanisms expected by called procedures.

This standard specifies the following attributes of the interfaces between modules:

- Calling sequence—instructions at the call site, entry point, and returns
- Argument list—structure of the list describing the arguments to the called procedure
- Function value return—form and conventions for the return of the function value as a value or as a condition value to indicate success or failure
- Register usage—which registers are preserved and who is responsible for preserving them

Introduction

- Stack usage—rules governing the use of the stack
- Argument data types—data types of arguments that can be passed
- Argument descriptor formats—how descriptors are passed for the more complex arguments
- Condition handling—how exception conditions are signaled and how they are handled in a modular fashion
- Stack unwinding—how the current thread of execution is aborted efficiently

1.1 Applicability

This standard defines the rules and conventions that govern the **native user-mode run-time environment** on OpenVMS VAX, Alpha, and I64 systems. It is applicable to all software that executes in OpenVMS native user mode.

Uses of this standard include:

- All externally callable interfaces in Hewlett-Packard supported, standard system software
- All intermodule calls to major software components
- All external procedure calls generated by OpenVMS language processors without interprocedural analysis or permanent private conventions (such as those used for language-support run-time library [RTL] routines)

1.2 Architectural Level

This standard defines an **implementation-level run-time software architecture** for OpenVMS operating systems.

The interfaces, methods, and conventions specified in this document are primarily intended for use by implementers of compilers, debuggers, and other run-time tools, run-time libraries, and base operating systems. These specifications may or may not be appropriate for use by higher-level system software and applications.

Compilers and run-time libraries may provide additional support of these capabilities via interfaces that are more suited for compiler and application use. This specification neither prohibits nor requires such additional interfaces.

1.3 Goals

Generally, this calling standard promotes the highest degree of performance, portability, efficiency, and consistency in the interface between called procedures of a common OpenVMS environment. Specifically, the calling standard:

- Applies to all intermodule callable interfaces in the native software system. Specifically, the standard considers the requirements of important compiled languages including Ada, BASIC, Bliss, C, C++, COBOL, FORTRAN, Pascal, LISP, PL/I, and calls to the operating system and library procedures. The needs of other languages that the OpenVMS operating system may support in the future must be met by the standard or by compatible revisions to it.
- Excludes capabilities for lower-level components (such as assembler routines) that cannot be invoked from the high-level languages.

- Allows the calling program and called procedure to be written in different languages. The standard reduces the need for using language extensions in mixed-language programs.
- Contributes to the writing of error-free, modular, and maintainable software, and promotes effective sharing and reuse of software modules.
- Provides the programmer with control over fixing, reporting, and flow of control when various types of exception conditions occur.
- Provides subsystem and application writers with the ability to override system messages toward a more suitable application-oriented interface.
- Adds no space or time overhead to procedure calls and returns that do not establish exception handlers, and minimizes time overhead for establishing handlers at the cost of increased time overhead when exceptions occur.

The OpenVMS Alpha portion of this standard:

- Supports a 32-bit user-mode environment that provides a high degree of compatibility with the OpenVMS VAX environment.
- Supports a 64-bit user-mode environment that is a compatible superset of the OpenVMS Alpha 32-bit environment.
- Simplifies coexistence with OpenVMS VAX procedures that execute under the translated image environment.
- Simplifies the compilation of OpenVMS VAX assembler source to native OpenVMS Alpha object code.
- Supports a multilanguage, multithreaded execution environment, including efficient, effective support for the implementation of the multithreaded architecture.
- Provides an efficient mechanism for calling lightweight procedures that do not need or cannot expend the overhead of setting up a stack call frame.
- Provides for the use of a common calling sequence to invoke lightweight procedures that maintain only a register call frame and heavyweight procedures that maintain a stack call frame. This calling sequence allows a compiler to determine whether to use a stack frame based on the complexity of the procedure being compiled. A recompilation of a called routine that causes a change in stack frame usage does not require a recompilation of its callers.
- Provides condition handling, traceback, and debugging for lightweight procedures that do not have a stack frame.
- Makes efficient use of the Alpha architecture, including effectively using a larger number of registers than is contained in a conventional VAX processor.
- Minimizes the cost of procedure calls.

The portion of this standard specific to OpenVMS I64:

- Extends all of the goals listed above for the OpenVMS Alpha environment to the OpenVMS I64 environment.
- Supports a 64-bit user mode environment that is highly compatible with the OpenVMS Alpha 64-bit user mode environment.

Introduction

1.3 Goals

- Makes efficient use of the Itanium architecture, including using a larger number of registers than is contained in a conventional Alpha processor, as well as additional I64 architecture features.
- Follows conventions established for Intel Itanium processor software generally except where required to preserve compatibility with OpenVMS VAX and Alpha environments.

The OpenVMS procedure calling mechanisms of this standard do not provide:

- Checking of argument data types, data structures, and parameter access. The OpenVMS protection and memory management systems do not depend on correct interactions between user-level calling and called procedures. Such extended checking might be desirable in some circumstances, but system integrity does not depend on it.
- Information for an interpretive OpenVMS Debugger. The definition of the debugger includes a debug symbol table (DST) that contains the required descriptive information.

1.4 Definitions

The following terms are used in this standard:

- **Address:** On OpenVMS VAX systems, a 32-bit value used to denote a position in memory. On OpenVMS Alpha and I64 systems, a 64-bit value used to denote a position in memory. However, many Alpha and I64 applications and user-mode facilities operate in such a manner that addresses are restricted only to values that are representable in 32 bits. This allows addresses on Alpha and I64 systems often to be stored and manipulated as 32-bit longword values. In such cases, the 32-bit address value is always implicitly or explicitly sign-extended to form a 64-bit address for use by the hardware.
- **Argument list:** A vector of entries (longwords on OpenVMS VAX, quadwords on OpenVMS Alpha and I64) that represents a procedure parameter list and possibly a function value.
- **Asynchronous software interrupt:** An asynchronous interruption of normal code flow caused by some software event. This interruption shares many of the properties of hardware exceptions, including forcing some out-of-line code to execute.
- **Bound procedure:** A type of procedure that requires knowledge (at run time) of a dynamically determined larger enclosing scope to function correctly.
- **Call frame:** The body of information that a procedure must save to allow it to properly return to its caller. A call frame may exist on the stack or in registers. A call frame may optionally contain additional information required by the called procedure.
- **Condition handler:** A procedure designed to handle conditions (exceptions) when they occur during the execution of a thread.
- **Condition value:** A 32-bit value (sign extended to a 64-bit value on OpenVMS Alpha and I64) used to uniquely identify an exception condition. A condition value can be returned to a calling program as a function value or it can be signaled using the OpenVMS signaling mechanism.

- **Descriptor:** A mechanism for passing parameters where the address of a descriptor is an entry in the argument list. The descriptor contains the address of the parameter, data type, size, and additional information needed to describe fully the data passed.
- **Exception condition (or condition):** An exceptional condition in the current hardware or software state that should be noted or fixed. Its existence causes an interruption in program flow and forces execution of out-of-line code. Such an event might be caused by an exceptional hardware state, such as arithmetic overflows, memory access control violations, and so on, or by actions performed by software, such as subscript range checking, assertion checking, or asynchronous notification of one thread by another. During the time the normal control flow is interrupted by an exception, that condition is termed **active**.
- **Function:** A procedure that returns a single value in accordance with the standard conventions for value returning. Additional values may be returned by means of the argument list.
- **Function pointer:** See procedure value.
- **Hardware exception:** A category of exceptions that reflect an exceptional condition in the current hardware state that should be noted or fixed by the software. Hardware exceptions can occur synchronously or asynchronously with respect to the normal program flow.
- **IP:** (I64 platforms only) A value that identifies a bundle of instructions in memory; the address of the first (lowest addressed) byte of an aligned 16-byte sequence that encodes three Itanium architecture instructions. See also PC.
- **Immediate value:** A mechanism for passing input parameters where the actual value is provided in the argument list entry by the calling program.
- **Language-support procedure:** A procedure called implicitly to implement high-level language constructs. Such procedures are not intended to be explicitly called from user programs.
- **Leaf procedure:** A procedure that makes no outbound calls. Conversely, a non-leaf procedure is one that does make outbound calls.
- **Library procedure:** A procedure explicitly called using the equivalent of a call statement or function reference. Such procedures are usually language independent.
- **Natural alignment:** An attribute of certain data types that refers to the placement of the data so that the lowest addressed byte of the data has an address that is a multiple of the size of the data in bytes. Natural alignment of an aggregate data type generally refers to an alignment in which all members of the aggregate are naturally aligned.

This standard defines five natural alignments:

- Byte—Any byte address
- Word—Any byte address that is a multiple of 2
- Longword—Any byte address that is a multiple of 4
- Quadword—Any byte address that is a multiple of 8
- Octaword—Any byte address that is a multiple of 16

Introduction

1.4 Definitions

- **PC:** A value that identifies an instruction in memory. On OpenVMS VAX and Alpha systems, the address of the first (lowest addressed) byte of the sequence (unaligned on VAX, longword aligned in Alpha) that holds the instruction. On OpenVMS I64, the IP (see above) of the bundle that contains the instruction added to the number of the slot (0, 1, or 2) for that instruction within the bundle.
- **Procedure:** A closed sequence of instructions that is entered from and returns control to the calling program.
- **Procedure value:** An address value that represents a procedure. On OpenVMS VAX systems, a procedure value is the address of the entry mask that is interpreted by the CALLx instruction invoking the procedure. On OpenVMS Alpha systems, a procedure value is the address of the procedure descriptor for the procedure. On OpenVMS I64 systems, a procedure value is the address of a function descriptor for the procedure; it is also known as a function pointer.

- **Process:** An address space and at least one thread of execution. Selected security and quota checks are done on a per-process basis.

This standard anticipates the possibility of the execution of multiple threads within a process. An operating system that provides only a single thread of execution per process is considered a special case of a multithreaded system where the maximum number of threads per process is one.

- **Reference:** A mechanism for passing parameters where the address of the parameter is provided in the argument list by the calling program.
- **Signal:** A POSIX defined concept used to cause out-of-line execution of code. (This term should not be confused with the OpenVMS usage of the word that more closely equates to *exception* as used in this document.)
- **Standard call:** Any transfer of control to a procedure by any means that presents the called procedure with the environment defined by this document and does not place additional restrictions, not defined by this document, on the called procedure.
- **Standard-conforming procedure:** A procedure that adheres to all the relevant rules set forth in this document.
- **Thread of execution (or thread):** An entity scheduled for execution on a processor. In language terms, a thread is a computational entity used by a program unit. Such a program unit might be a task, procedure, loop, or some other unit of computation.

All threads executing within the same process share the same address space and other process contexts, but they have a unique per-thread hardware context that includes program counter, processor status, stack pointer, and other machine registers.

This standard applies only to threads that execute within the context of a user-mode process and are scheduled on one or more processors according to software priority. All subsequent uses of the term **thread** in this standard refer only to such user-mode process threads.

- **Thread-safe code:** Code that is compiled in such a way to ensure it will execute properly when run in a threaded environment. Thread-safe code usually adds extra instructions to do certain run-time checks and requires that thread local storage be accessed in a particular fashion.

- **Undefined:** Referring to operations or behavior for which there is no directing algorithm used across all implementations that support this standard. Such operations may be well defined for a particular implementation, but they still remain undefined with reference to this standard. The actions of undefined operations may not be required by standard-conforming procedures.
- **Unpredictable:** Referring to the results of an operation that cannot be guaranteed across all implementations of this standard. These results may be well defined for a particular implementation, but they remain unpredictable with reference to this standard. All results that are not specified in this standard, but are caused by operations defined in this standard, are considered unpredictable. A standard-conforming procedure cannot depend on unpredictable results.

OpenVMS VAX Conventions

This chapter describes the primary conventions in calling a procedure in an OpenVMS VAX environment.

2.1 Register Usage

In the VAX architecture, there are fifteen 32-bit-wide, general-purpose hardware registers for use with scalar and vector program operations. This section defines the rules of scalar and vector register usage.

2.1.1 Scalar Register Usage

This standard defines several general-purpose VAX registers and their scalar use, as listed in Table 2–1.

Table 2–1 VAX Register Usage

Register	Use
PC	Program counter.
SP	Stack pointer.
FP	Current stack frame pointer. This register must always point at the current frame. No modification is permitted within a procedure body.
AP	Argument pointer. When a call occurs, AP must point to a valid argument list. A procedure without parameters points to an argument list consisting of a single longword containing the value 0.
R1	Environment value. When a procedure that needs an environment value is called, the calling program must set R1 to the environment value. See bound procedure value in Section 6.3.
R0, R1	Function value return registers. These registers are not to be preserved by any called procedure. They are available as temporary registers to any called procedure.

Registers R2 through R11 are to be preserved across procedure calls. The called procedure can use these registers, provided it saves and restores them using the procedure entry mask mechanism. The entry mask mechanism must be used so that any stack unwinding done by the condition-handling mechanism restores all registers correctly. In addition, PC, FP, and AP are always preserved in the stack frame (see Section 2.2) by the CALLS or CALLG instruction and restored by the RET instruction. However, a called procedure can use AP as a temporary register.

If JSB routines are used, they must not save or modify any preserved registers (R2 through R11) not already saved by the entry mask mechanism of the calling program.

OpenVMS VAX Conventions

2.1 Register Usage

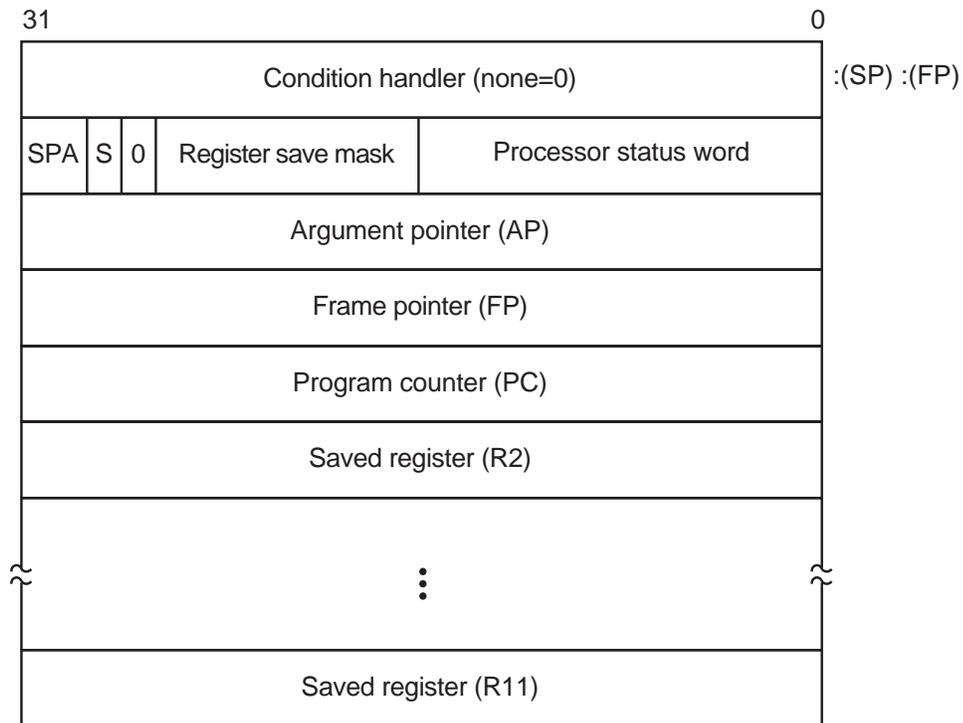
2.1.2 Vector Register Usage

This calling standard does not specify conventions for preserved vector registers, vector argument registers, or vector function value return registers. All such conventions are by agreement between the calling and called procedures. In the absence of such an agreement, all vector registers, including V0 through V15, VLR, VCR, and VMR are scratch registers. Among cooperating procedures, a procedure that preserves or otherwise manipulates the vector registers by agreement with its callers must provide an exception handler to restore them during an unwind.

2.2 Stack Usage

Figure 2-1 shows the contents of the stack frame created for the called procedure by the CALLG or CALLS instruction.

Figure 2-1 Stack Frame Generated by CALLG or CALLS Instruction



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FP always points to the call frame (the condition-handler longword) of the calling procedure. Other uses of FP within a procedure are prohibited. The bottom of stack frame (end of call stack) is indicated when the stack frame's preserved FP is 0. Unless the procedure has a condition handler, the condition-handler longword contains all zeros. See Chapter 8 for more information on condition handlers.

The contents of the stack located at addresses higher than the mask/PSW longword belong to the calling program; they should not be read or written by the called procedure, except as specified in the argument list. The contents of the stack located at addresses lower than SP belong to interrupt and exception routines; they are modified continually and unpredictably.

The called procedure allocates local storage by subtracting the required number of bytes from the SP provided on entry. This local storage is freed automatically by the return instruction (RET).

Bit <28> of the mask/PSW longword is reserved to Hewlett-Packard for future extensions to the stack frame.

2.3 Calling Sequence

At the option of the calling procedure, the called procedure is invoked using the CALLG or CALLS instruction, as follows:

```
CALLG   arglst, proc
CALLS   argcnt, proc
```

CALLS pushes the argument count **argcnt** onto the stack as a longword and sets the argument pointer, AP, to the top of the stack. The complete sequence using CALLS follows:

```
push    argn
.
.
.
push    arg1
CALLS   #n, proc
```

If the called procedure returns control to the calling procedure, control must return to the instruction immediately following the CALLG or CALLS instruction. Skip returns and GOTO returns are allowed only during stack unwind operations.

The called procedure returns control to the calling procedure by executing the RET instruction.

2.4 Argument List

The argument list is the primary means of passing information to and receiving results from a procedure.

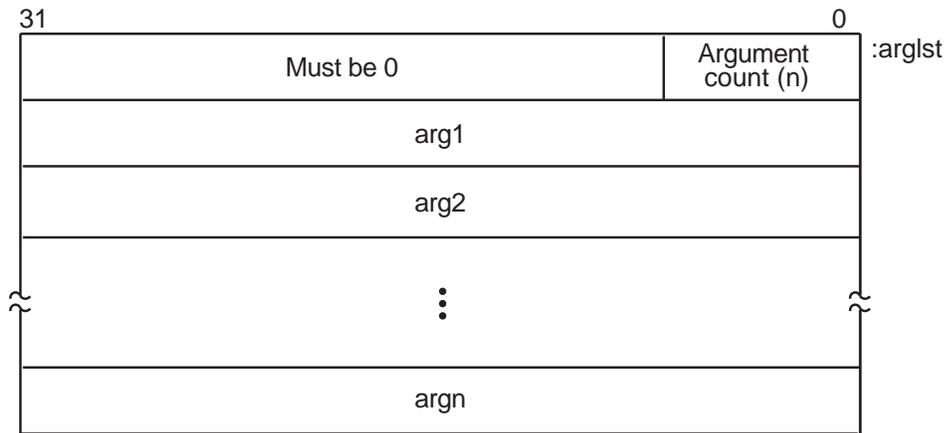
OpenVMS VAX Conventions

2.4 Argument List

2.4.1 Format

Figure 2-2 shows the argument list format.

Figure 2-2 Argument List Format



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The first longword is always present and contains the argument count as an unsigned integer in the low byte. The 24 high-order bits are reserved to Hewlett-Packard and must be zero. To access the argument count, the called procedure must ignore the reserved bits and access the count as an unsigned byte (for example, MOVZBL, TSTB, or CMPB).

The remaining longwords can be one of the following:

- An uninterpreted 32-bit value (by immediate value mechanism). If the called procedure expects fewer than 32 bits, it accesses the low-order bits and ignores the high-order bits.
- An address (by reference mechanism). It is typically a pointer to a scalar data item, array, structure, record, or a procedure.
- An address of a descriptor (by descriptor mechanism). See Chapter 7 for descriptor formats.

The standard permits programs to call by immediate value, by reference, by descriptor, or by combinations of these mechanisms. Interpretation of each argument list entry depends on agreement between the calling and called procedures. High-level languages use the reference or descriptor mechanisms for passing input parameters. OpenVMS system services and VAX BLISS, VAX C, Compaq C, Compaq C++, or VAX MACRO programs use all three mechanisms.

A procedure with no arguments is called with a list consisting of a 0 argument count longword, as follows:

```
CALLS #0, proc
```

A missing or null argument—for example, CALL SUB(A,,B)—is represented by an argument list entry consisting of a longword 0. Some procedures allow trailing null arguments to be omitted and others require all arguments. See each procedure's specification for details.

The argument list must be treated as read-only data by the called procedure and might be allocated in read-only memory at the option of the calling program.

2.4.2 Argument Lists and High-Level Languages

Functional notations for procedure calls in high-level languages are mapped into VAX argument lists according to the following rules:

- Arguments are mapped from left to right to increasing argument list offsets. The leftmost (first) argument has an address of **arglst+4**, the next has an address of **arglst+8**, and so on. The only exception to this is when **arglst+4** specifies where a function value is to be returned, in which case the first argument has an address of **arglst+8**, the second argument has an address of **arglst+12**, and so on. See Section 2.5 for more information.
- Each argument position corresponds to a single VAX argument list entry. For the C and C++ languages, a floating-point argument or a record `struct` that is larger than 32 bits may be passed by value using more than one VAX argument list entry. In this case, the argument count in the argument list reflects the actual number of argument list entries rather than the number of C or C++ language arguments.

2.4.2.1 Order of Argument Evaluation

Because most high-level languages do not specify the order of evaluation of arguments (with respect to side effects), those language processors can evaluate arguments in any convenient order.

In constructing an argument list on the stack, a language processor can evaluate arguments from right to left and push their values on the stack. If call-by-reference semantics are used, argument expressions can be evaluated from left to right, with pointers to the expression values or descriptors being pushed from right to left.

Note

The choice of argument evaluation order and code generation strategy is constrained only by the definition of the particular language. Do not write programs that depend on the order of evaluation of arguments.

2.4.2.2 Language Extensions for Argument Transmission

This calling standard permits arguments to be passed by immediate value, by reference, or by descriptor. By default, all language processors except VAX BLISS, VAX C, and VAX MACRO pass arguments by reference or by descriptor.

Language extensions are needed to reconcile the different argument-passing mechanisms. In addition to the default passing mechanism used, each language processor is required to give you explicit control, in the calling program, of the argument-passing mechanism for the data types supported by the language.

Table 2-2 lists various argument data-type groups. In the table, the value Yes means the language processor is responsible for providing the user with explicit control of that argument-passing mechanism group.

OpenVMS VAX Conventions

2.4 Argument List

Table 2–2 Argument-Passing Mechanisms with User Explicit Control

Data Type Group	Section	Value	Reference	Descriptor
Atomic <= 32 bits	6.1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Atomic > 32 bits	6.1	No	Yes	Yes
String	6.2	No	Yes	Yes
Miscellaneous	6.3	No ¹	No	No
Array	7	No	Yes	Yes

¹For languages that support the **bound procedure value** data type, a language extension is required to pass it by immediate value in order to be able to interface with OpenVMS system services and other software. See Section 6.3.

For example, Compaq Fortran provides the following intrinsic compile-time functions:

<code>%VAL(arg)</code>	By immediate value mechanism. Corresponding argument list entry is the value of the argument arg as defined in the language.
<code>%REF(arg)</code>	By reference mechanism. Corresponding argument list entry contains the address of the value of the argument arg as defined in the language.
<code>%DESCR(arg)</code>	By descriptor mechanism. Corresponding argument list entry contains the address of a descriptor of the argument arg as defined in Chapter 7 and in the language.

Use these intrinsic functions in the syntax of a procedure call to control generation of the argument list. For example:

```
CALL SUB1(%VAL(123), %REF(X), %DESCR(A))
```

For more information, see the Compaq Fortran language documentation.

In other languages, you can achieve the same effect by making appropriate attributes of the declaration of SUB1 in the calling program. Thus, you might write the following after making the external declaration for SUB1:

```
CALL SUB1 (123, X, A)
```

2.5 Function Value Returns

A function value is returned in register R0 if its data type can be represented in 32 bits, or in registers R0 and R1 if its data type can be represented in 64 bits, provided the data type is not a string data type (see Section 6.2).

If the data type requires fewer than 32 bits, then R1 and the high-order bits of R0 are undefined. If the data type requires 32 or more bits but fewer than 64 bits, then the high-order bits of R1 are undefined. Two separate 32-bit entities cannot be returned in R0 and R1 because high-level languages cannot process them.

In all other cases (the function value needs more than 64 bits, the data type is a string, the size of the value can vary from call to call, and so on), the actual argument list and the formal argument list are shifted one entry. The new first entry is reserved for the function value. In this case, one of the following mechanisms is used to return the function value:

- If the maximum length of the function value is known (for example, octaword integer, H_floating, or fixed-length string), the calling program can allocate

the required storage and pass the address of the storage or a descriptor for the storage as the first argument.

- If the maximum length of a string function value is not known to the calling program, the calling program can allocate a dynamic string descriptor. The called procedure then allocates storage for the function value and updates the contents of the dynamic string descriptor using OpenVMS Run-Time Library procedures. For information about dynamic strings, see Section 7.3.
- If the maximum length of a fixed-length string (see Section 7.2) or a varying string (see Section 7.8) function value is not known to the calling program, the calling program can indicate that it expects the string to be returned on top of the stack. For more information about the function value return, see Section 2.5.1.

Some procedures, such as operating system calls and many library procedures, return a success or failure value as a longword function value in R0. Bit <0> of the value is set (Boolean true) for a success and clear (Boolean false) for a failure. The particular success or failure status is encoded in the remaining 31 bits, as described in Section 8.1.

2.5.1 Returning a Function Value on Top of the Stack

If the maximum length of the function value is not known, the calling program can optionally allocate certain descriptors with the POINTER field set to 0, indicating that no space has been allocated for the value. If the called procedure finds POINTER 0, it fills in the POINTER, LENGTH, and other extent fields to describe the actual size and placement of the function value. This function value is copied to the top of the stack as control returns to the calling program.

This is an exception to the usual practice because the calling program regains control at the instruction following the CALLG or CALLS sequence with the contents of SP restored to a value different from the one it had at the beginning of its CALLG or CALLS calling sequence.

This technique applies only to the first argument in the argument list. Also, the called procedure cannot assume that the calling program expects the function value to be returned on the stack. Instead, the called procedure must check the CLASS field. If the descriptor is one that can be used to return a value on the stack, the called procedure checks the POINTER field. If POINTER is not 0, the called procedure returns the value using the semantics of the descriptor. If POINTER is 0, the called procedure fills in the POINTER and LENGTH fields and returns the value to the top of the stack.

Also, when POINTER is 0, the contents of R0 and R1 are unspecified by the called procedure. Once the called procedure fills in the POINTER field and other extent fields, the calling program may pass the descriptor as an argument to other procedures.

OpenVMS VAX Conventions

2.5 Function Value Returns

2.5.1.1 Returning a Fixed-Length or Varying String Function Value

If a called procedure can return its function value on the stack as a fixed-length (see Section 7.2) or varying string (see Section 7.8), the called procedure must also take the following actions (determined by the CLASS and POINTER fields of the first descriptor in the argument list):

CLASS	POINTER	Called Procedure's Action
S=1	Not 0	Copy the function value to the fixed-length area specified by the descriptor and space fill (hex 20 if ASCII) or truncate on the right. The entire area is always written according to Section 7.2.
S=1	0	Return the function value on top of the stack after filling in POINTER with the first address of the string and LENGTH with the length of the string to complete the descriptor according to Section 7.2.
VS=11	Not 0	Copy the function value to the varying area specified by the descriptor and fill in CURLEN and BODY according to Section 7.8.
VS=11	0	Return the function value on top of the stack after filling in POINTER with the address of CURLEN and MAXSTRLEN with the length of the string in bytes (same value as contents of CURLEN) according to Section 7.8.
Other	-	Error. A condition is signaled.

In both the fixed-length and varying string cases, the string is unaligned. Specifically, the function value is allocated on top of the stack with no unused bytes between the stack pointer value contained at the beginning of the CALLS or CALLG sequence and the last byte of the string.

2.6 Vector and Scalar Processor Synchronization

There are two kinds of synchronization between a scalar and vector processor pair: memory synchronization and exception synchronization.

Memory synchronization with the caller of a procedure that uses the vector processor is required because scalar machine writes (to main memory) might still be pending at the time of entry to the called procedure. The various forms of write-cache strategies allowed by the VAX architecture combined with the possibly independent scalar and vector memory access paths imply that a scalar store followed by a CALLx followed by a vector load is not safe without an intervening MSYNC.

Within a procedure that uses the vector processor, proper memory and exception synchronization might require use of an MSYNC instruction, a SYNC instruction, or both, prior to calling or upon being called by another procedure. Further, for calls to other procedures, the requirements can vary from call to call, depending on details of actual vector usage.

An MSYNC instruction (without a SYNC) at procedure entry, at procedure exit, and prior to a call provides proper synchronization in most cases. A SYNC instruction without an MSYNC prior to a CALLx (or RET) is sometimes appropriate. The remaining two cases, where both or neither MSYNC and SYNC are needed, are rare.

Refer to the VAX vector architecture section in the *VAX MACRO and Instruction Set Reference Manual* for the specific rules on what exceptions are ensured to be reported by MSYNC and other MFVP instructions.

2.6.1 Memory Synchronization

Every procedure is responsible for synchronization of memory operations with the calling procedure and with procedures it calls. If a procedure executes vector loads or stores, one of the following must occur:

- An MSYNC instruction (a form of the MFVP instruction) must be executed before the first vector load and store to synchronize with memory operations issued by the caller. While an MSYNC instruction might typically occur in the entry code sequence of a procedure, exact placement might also depend on a variety of optimization considerations.
- An MSYNC instruction must be executed after the last vector load or store to synchronize with memory operations issued after return. While an MSYNC instruction might typically occur in the return code sequence of a procedure, exact placement might also depend on a variety of optimization considerations.
- An MSYNC instruction must be executed between each vector load and store and each standard call to other procedures to synchronize with memory operations issued by those procedures.

Any procedure that executes vector loads or stores is responsible for synchronizing with potentially conflicting memory operations in any other procedure. However, execution of an MSYNC instruction to ensure scalar and vector memory synchronization can be omitted when it can be determined for the current procedure that all possibly incomplete vector load and stores operate only on memory not accessed by other procedures.

2.6.2 Exception Synchronization

Every procedure must ensure that no exception can be raised after the current frame is changed (as a result of a CALL x or RET). If a procedure executes any vector instruction that might raise an exception, then a SYNC instruction (a form of the MFVP instruction) must be executed prior to any subsequent CALL x or RET.

However, if the only exceptions that can occur are certain to be reported by an MSYNC instruction that is otherwise needed for memory synchronization, then the SYNC is redundant and can be omitted as an optimization.

Moreover, if the only exceptions that can occur are certain to be reported by one or more MFVP instructions that read the vector control registers, then the SYNC is redundant and can be omitted as an optimization.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

This chapter describes the fundamental concepts and conventions for calling a procedure in an Alpha environment. The following sections identify register usage and addressing, and focus on aspects of the calling standard that pertain to procedure-to-procedure flow control.

3.1 Register Usage

The 64-bit-wide, general-purpose Alpha hardware registers divide into two groups:

- Integer
- Floating point

The first 32 general-purpose registers support integer processing and the second 32 support floating-point operations.

3.1.1 Integer Registers

This standard defines the usage of the Alpha general-purpose integer registers as listed in Table 3–1.

Table 3–1 Alpha Integer Register Usage

Register	Usage
R0	Function value register. In a standard call that returns a nonfloating-point function result in a register, the result must be returned in this register. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored. This register is not to be preserved by any called procedure.
R1	Conventional scratch register. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored. This register is not to be preserved by any called procedure.
R2–15	Conventional saved registers. If a standard-conforming procedure modifies one of these registers, it must save and restore it.
R16–21	Argument registers. In a standard call, up to six nonfloating-point items of the argument list are passed in these registers. In a standard call, these registers may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
R22–24	Conventional scratch registers. In a standard call, these registers may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.1 Register Usage

Table 3–1 (Cont.) Alpha Integer Register Usage

Register	Usage
R25	Argument information (AI) register. In a standard call, this register describes the argument list. (See Section 3.6.1 for a detailed description.) In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
R26	Return address (RA) register. In a standard call, the return address must be passed in this register. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
R27	Procedure value (PV) register. In a standard call, the procedure value of the procedure being called is passed in this register. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
R28	Volatile scratch register. The contents of this register are always unpredictable after any external transfer of control either to or from a procedure. <i>This applies to both standard and nonstandard calls.</i> This register may be used by the operating system for external call fixup, autoloading, and exit sequences.
R29	Frame pointer (FP). The contents of this register define, among other things, which procedure is considered current. Details of usage and alignment are defined in Section 3.5.
R30	Stack pointer (SP). This register contains a pointer to the top of the current operating stack. Aspects of its usage and alignment are defined by the hardware architecture. Various software aspects of its usage and alignment are defined in Section 3.6.1.
R31	ReadAsZero/Sink (RZ). Hardware defines binary 0 as a source operand and sink (no effect) as a result operand.

3.1.2 Floating-Point Registers

This standard defines the usage of the Alpha general-purpose floating-point registers as listed in Table 3–2.

Table 3–2 Alpha Floating-Point Register Usage

Register	Usage
F0	Floating-point function value register. In a standard call that returns a floating-point result in a register, this register is used to return the real part of the result. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
F1	Floating-point function value register. In a standard call that returns a complex floating-point result in registers, this register is used to return the imaginary part of the result. In a standard call, this register may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
F2–9	Conventional saved registers. If a standard-conforming procedure modifies one of these registers, it must save and restore it.
F10–15	Conventional scratch registers. In a standard call, these registers may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
F16–21	Argument registers. In a standard call, up to six floating-point arguments may be passed by value in these registers. In a standard call, these registers may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.

(continued on next page)

Table 3–2 (Cont.) Alpha Floating-Point Register Usage

Register	Usage
F22–30	Conventional scratch registers. In a standard call, these registers may be modified by the called procedure without being saved and restored.
F31	ReadAsZero/Sink. Hardware defines binary 0 as a source operand and sink (no effect) as a result operand.

3.2 Address Representation

An address is a 64-bit value used to denote a position in memory. However, for compatibility with OpenVMS VAX, many Alpha applications and user-mode facilities operate in such a manner that addresses are restricted only to values that are representable in 32 bits. This allows Alpha addresses often to be stored and manipulated as 32-bit longword values. In such cases, the 32-bit address value is always implicitly or explicitly sign extended to form a 64-bit address for use by the Alpha hardware.

3.3 Procedure Representation

One distinguishing characteristic of any calling standard is how procedures are represented. The term used to denote the value that uniquely identifies a procedure is a **procedure value**. If the value identifies a bound procedure, it is called a **bound procedure value**.

In the Alpha portion of this calling standard, *all* procedure values are defined to be the address of the data structure (a procedure descriptor) that describes that procedure. So, any procedure can be invoked by calling the address stored at offset 8 from the address represented by the procedure value.

Note that a simple (unbound) procedure value is defined as the address of that procedure's descriptor (see Section 3.4). This provides slightly different conventions than would be used if the address of the procedure's code were used as it is in many calling standards.

A bound procedure value is defined as the address of a bound procedure descriptor that provides the necessary information for the bound procedure to be called (see Section 3.6.4).

3.4 Procedure Types

This standard defines the following basic types of procedures:

- **Stack frame procedure**—Maintains its caller's context on the stack
- **Register frame procedure**—Maintains its caller's context in registers
- **Null frame procedure**—Does not establish a context and, therefore, executes in the context of its caller

A compiler can choose which type of procedure to generate based on the requirements of the procedure in question. A calling procedure does not need to know what type of procedure it is calling.

Every procedure *must* have an associated structure that describes which type of procedure it is and other procedure characteristics. This structure, called a **procedure descriptor**, is a quadword-aligned data structure that provides basic information about a procedure. This data structure is used to interpret the call

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

stack at any point in a thread's execution. It is typically built at compile time and usually is not accessed at run time except to support exception processing or other rarely executed code.

Read access to procedure descriptors is done through a procedure interface described in Section 3.5.2. This allows for future compatible extensions to these structures.

The purpose of defining a procedure descriptor for a procedure and making that procedure descriptor accessible to the run-time system is twofold:

- To make invocations of that procedure visible to and interpretable by facilities such as the debugger, exception-handling system, and the unwinder.
- To ensure that the context of the caller saved by the called procedure can be restored if an unwind occurs. (For a description of unwinding, see Section 8.7.)

3.4.1 Stack Frame Procedures

The stack frame of a procedure consists of a fixed part (the size of which is known at compile time) and an optional variable part. Certain optimizations can be done if the optional variable part is not present. Compilers must also recognize unusual situations, such as the following, that can effectively cause a variable part of the stack to exist:

- A called routine may use the stack as a means to return certain types of function values (see Section 3.7.7 for more information).
- A called routine that allocates stack space may take an exception in its routine prologue before it becomes current. This situation must be considered because the stack expansion happens in the context of the caller (see Sections 3.5 and 3.6.5 for more information).

For this reason, a fixed-stack usage version of this procedure type cannot make standard calls.

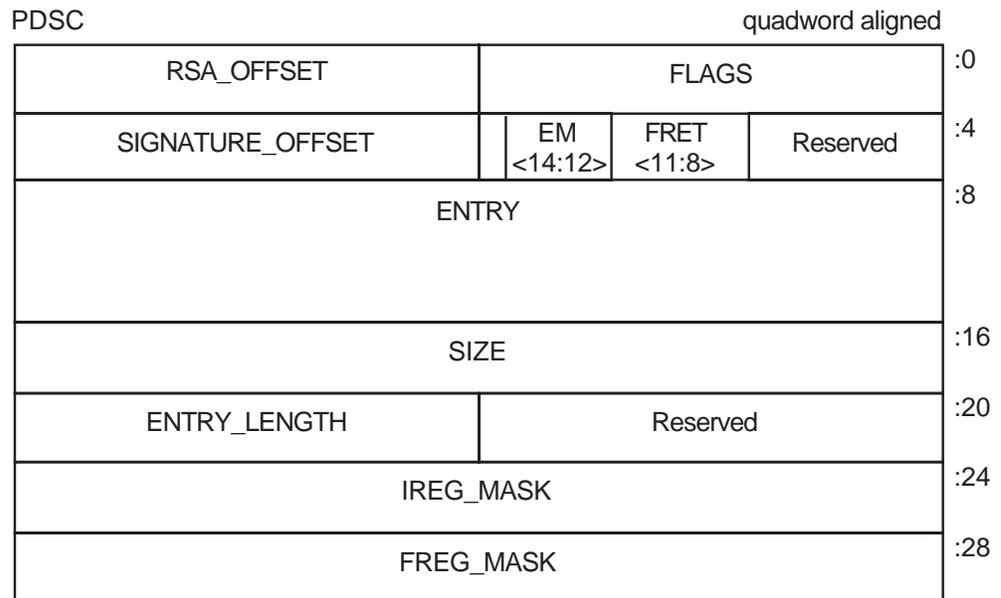
The variable-stack usage version of this type of procedure is referred to as **full function** and can make standard calls to other procedures.

3.4.2 Procedure Descriptor for Procedures with a Stack Frame

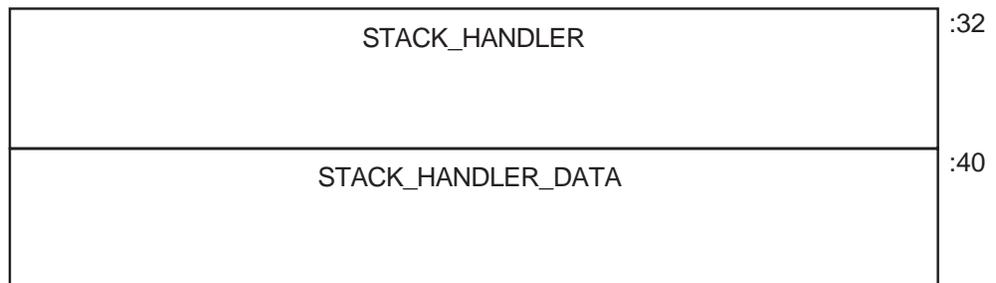
A stack frame procedure descriptor (PDSC) built by a compiler provides information about a procedure with a stack frame. The minimum size of the descriptor is 32 bytes defined by constant PDSC\$K_MIN_STACK_SIZE. An optional PDSC extension in 8-byte increments supports exception-handling requirements.

The fields defined in the stack frame descriptor are illustrated in Figure 3–1 and described in Table 3–3.

Figure 3–1 Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)



PDSC\$K_MIN_STACK_SIZE = 32
End of required part of procedure descriptor



PDSC\$K_MAX_STACK_SIZE = 48
FRET = PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN
EM = PDSC\$V_EXCEPTION_MODE

ZK-4649A-GE

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Table 3–3 Contents of Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_FLAGS	The PDSC descriptor flag bits <15:0> are defined as follows:
PDSC\$V_KIND	A 4-bit field <3:0> that identifies the type of procedure descriptor. For a procedure with a stack frame, this field must specify a value 9 (defined by constant PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_STACK).
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID	If set to 1, this descriptor has an extension for the stack handler (PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER) information.
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_REINVOKABLE	If set to 1, the handler can be reinvoked, allowing an occurrence of another exception while the handler is already active. If this bit is set to 0, the exception handler cannot be reinvoked. Note that this bit must be 0 when PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 0.
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID	If set to 1, the HANDLER_VALID bit must be 1, the PDSC extension STACK_HANDLER_DATA field contains valid data for the exception handler, and the address of PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER_DATA will be passed to the exception handler as defined in Section 8.2.
PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP	If this bit is set to 0, the SP is the base register to which PDSC\$SL_SIZE is added during an unwind. A fixed amount of storage is allocated in the procedure entry sequence, and SP is modified by this procedure only in the entry and exit code sequence. In this case, FP typically contains the address of the procedure descriptor for the procedure. A procedure for which this bit is 0 cannot make standard calls. If this bit is set to 1, FP is the base address and the procedure has a minimum amount of stack storage specified by PDSC\$SL_SIZE. A variable amount of stack storage can be allocated by modifying SP in the entry and exit code of this procedure.
PDSC\$V_REI_RETURN	If set to 1, the procedure expects the stack at entry to be set, so an REI instruction correctly returns from the procedure. Also, if set, the contents of the RSA\$Q_SAVED_RETURN field in the register save area are unpredictable and the return address is found on the stack (see Figure 3–4).
Bit 9	Must be 0 (reserved).
PDSC\$V_BASE_FRAME	For compiled code, this bit must be set to 0. If set to 1, this bit indicates the logical base frame of a stack that precedes all frames corresponding to user code. The interpretation and use of this frame and whether there are any predecessor frames is system software defined (and subject to change).

(continued on next page)

Table 3–3 (Cont.) Contents of Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents																		
	<p>PDSCSV_TARGET_INVO If set to 1, the exception handler for this procedure is invoked when this procedure is the target invocation of an unwind. Note that a procedure is the target invocation of an unwind if it is the procedure in which execution resumes following completion of the unwind. For more information, see Chapter 8.</p> <p> If set to 0, the exception handler for this procedure is not invoked. Note that when PDSCSV_HANDLER_VALID is 0, this bit must be 0.</p>																		
	<p>PDSCSV_NATIVE For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.</p> <p>PDSCSV_NO_JACKET For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.</p> <p>PDSCSV_TIE_FRAME For compiled code, this bit must be 0. Reserved for use by system software.</p> <p>Bit 15 Must be 0 (reserved).</p>																		
PDSCSW_RSA_OFFSET	Signed offset in bytes between the stack frame base (SP or FP as indicated by PDSCSV_BASE_REG_IS_FP) and the register save area. This field must be a multiple of 8, so that PDSCSW_RSA_OFFSET added to the contents of SP or FP (PDSCSV_BASE_REG_IS_FP) yields a quadword-aligned address.																		
PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN	<p>A 4-bit field <11:8> that describes which registers are used for the function value return (if there is one) and what format is used for those registers.</p> <p>Table 5–4 lists and describes the possible encoded values of PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN.</p>																		
PDSCSV_EXCEPTION_MODE	<p>A 3-bit field <14:12> that encodes the caller’s desired exception-reporting behavior when calling certain mathematically oriented library routines. The possible values for this field are defined as follows:</p>																		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Value</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Name</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflow).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT</td> <td>Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE</td> <td>Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_CALLER</td> <td>Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure’s caller.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Name	Meaning	0	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.	1	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflow).	2	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT	Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.	3	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE	Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.	4	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure’s caller.
Value	Name	Meaning																	
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4	PDSCSK_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure’s caller.																	

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Table 3–3 (Cont.) Contents of Stack Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_SIGNATURE_OFFSET	A 16-bit signed byte offset from the start of the procedure descriptor. This offset designates the start of the procedure signature block (if any). A 0 in this field indicates that no signature information is present. Note that in a bound procedure descriptor (as described in Section 3.6.4), signature information might be present in the related procedure descriptor. A 1 in this field indicates a standard default signature. An offset value of 1 is not otherwise a valid offset because both procedure descriptors and signature blocks must be quadword aligned.
PDSC\$Q_ENTRY	Absolute address of the first instruction of the entry code sequence for the procedure.
PDSC\$SL_SIZE	Unsigned size, in bytes, of the fixed portion of the stack frame for this procedure. The size must be a multiple of 16 bytes to maintain the minimum stack alignment required by the Alpha hardware architecture and stack alignment during a call (defined in Section 3.6.1). PDSC\$SL_SIZE cannot be 0 for a stack-frame type procedure, because the stack frame must include space for the register save area. The value of SP at entry to this procedure can be calculated by adding PDSC\$SL_SIZE to the value SP or FP, as indicated by PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP.
PDSC\$W_ENTRY_LENGTH	Unsigned offset, in bytes, from the entry point to the first instruction in the procedure code segment following the procedure prologue (that is, following the instruction that updates FP to establish this procedure as the current procedure).
PDSC\$SL_IREG_MASK	Bit vector (0–31) specifying the integer registers that are saved in the register save area on entry to the procedure. The least significant bit corresponds to register R0. Never set bits 31, 30, 28, 1, and 0 of this mask, because R31 is the integer read-as-zero register, R30 is the stack pointer, R28 is always assumed to be destroyed during a procedure call or return, and R1 and R0 are never preserved registers. In this calling standard, bit 29 (corresponding to the FP) must always be set.
PDSC\$SL_FREG_MASK	Bit vector (0–31) specifying the floating-point registers saved in the register save area on entry to the procedure. The least significant bit corresponds to register F0. Never set bit 31 of this mask, because it corresponds to the floating-point read-as-zero register.
PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER	Absolute address to the procedure descriptor for a run-time static exception-handling procedure. This part of the procedure descriptor is optional. It <i>must</i> be supplied if either PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 1 or PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 1 (which requires that PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID be 1). If PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 0, then the contents or existence of PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER is unpredictable.
PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER_DATA	Data (quadword) for the exception handler. This is an optional quadword and needs to be supplied only if PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 1. If PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 0, then the contents or existence of PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER_DATA is unpredictable.

3.4.3 Stack Frame Format

The stack of a stack frame procedure consists of a fixed part (the size of which is known at compile time) and an optional variable part. There are two basic types of stack frames:

- Fixed size
- Variable size

Even though the exact contents of a stack frame are determined by the compiler, all stack frames have common characteristics.

Various combinations of PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP and PDSC\$L_SIZE can be used as follows:

- When PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 0 and PDSC\$L_SIZE is 0, then the procedure utilizes no stack storage and SP contains the value of SP at entry to the procedure. (Such a procedure must be a register frame procedure.)
- When PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 0 and PDSC\$L_SIZE is a nonzero value, then the procedure has a fixed amount of stack storage specified by PDSC\$L_SIZE, all of which is allocated in the procedure entry sequence, and SP is modified by this procedure only in the entry and exit code sequences. (Such a procedure may not make standard calls.)
- When PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 1 and PDSC\$L_SIZE is a nonzero value, then the procedure has a fixed amount of stack storage specified by PDSC\$L_SIZE, and may have a variable amount of stack storage allocated by modifying SP in the body of the procedure. (Such a procedure must be a stack frame procedure.)
- The combination when PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 1 and PDSC\$L_SIZE is 0 is illegal because it violates the rules for R29 (FP) usage that requires R29 to be saved (on the stack) and restored.

3.4.3.1 Fixed-Size Stack Frame

Figure 3-2 illustrates the format of the stack frame for a procedure with a fixed amount of stack that uses the SP register as the stack base pointer (when PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 0). In this case, R29 (FP) typically contains the address of the procedure descriptor for the current procedure (see Section 3.5.1).

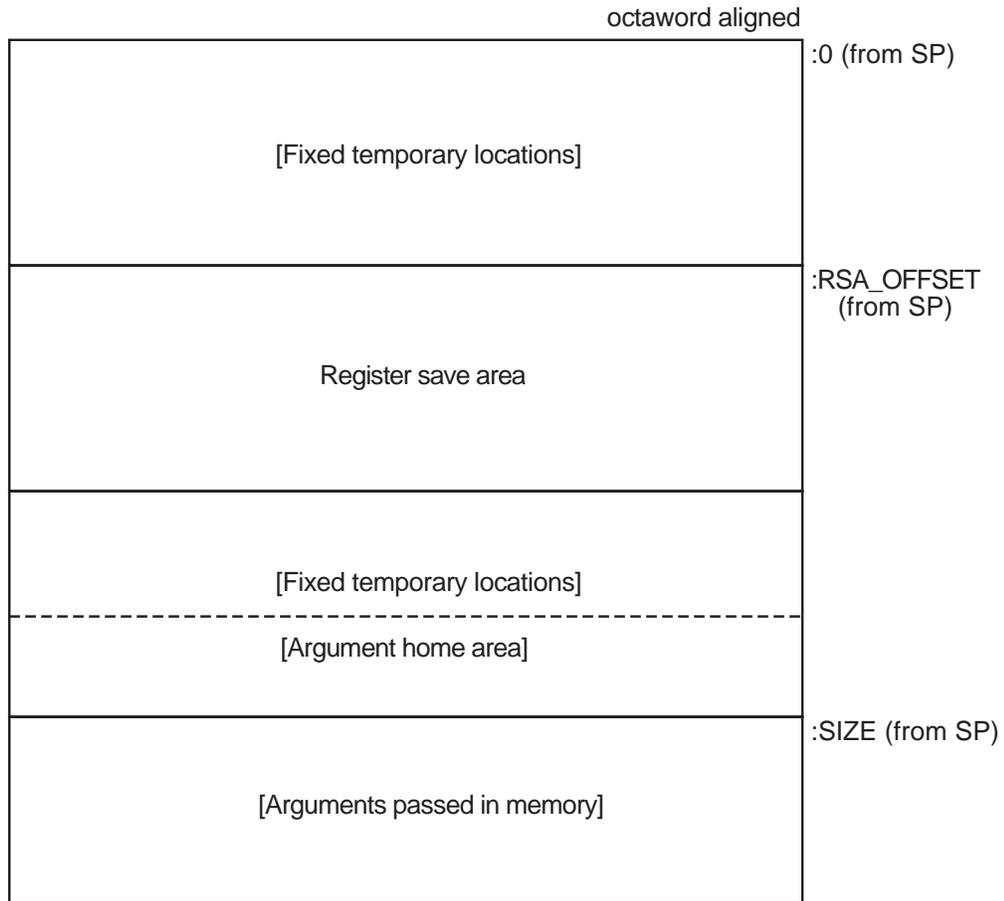
Some parts of the stack frame are optional and occur only as required by the particular procedure. As shown in the figure, the field names within brackets are optional fields. Use of the **arguments passed in memory** field appending the end of the descriptor is described in Sections 3.4.3.3 and 3.7.2.

For information describing the fixed temporary locations and register save area, see Sections 3.4.3.3 and 3.4.3.4.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Figure 3–2 Fixed-Size Stack Frame Format

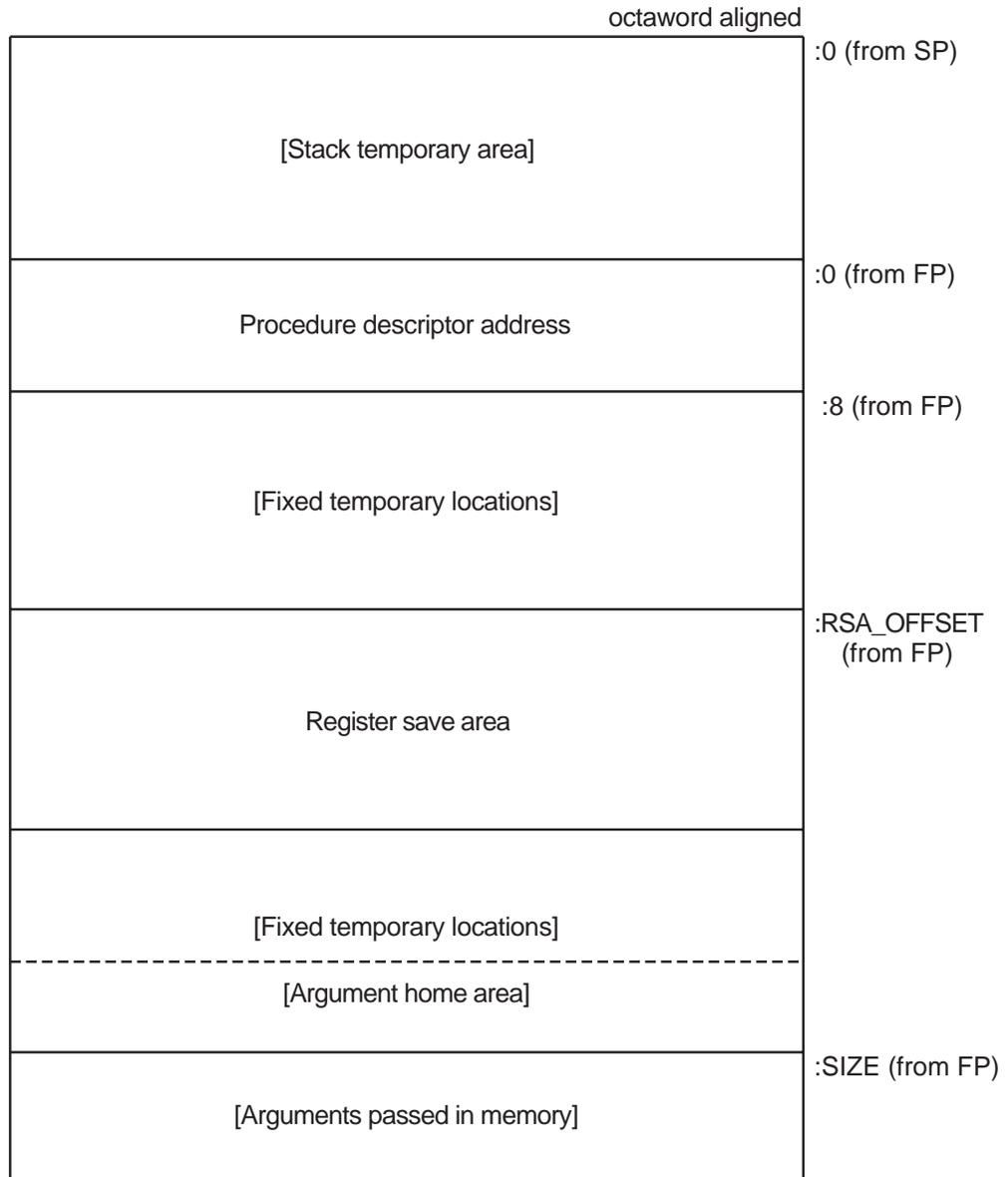


ZK-4650A-GE

3.4.3.2 Variable-Size Stack Frame

Figure 3–3 illustrates the format of the stack frame for procedures with a varying amount of stack when PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 1. In this case, R29 (FP) contains the address that points to the base of the stack frame on the stack. This frame-base quadword location contains the address of the current procedure's descriptor.

Figure 3–3 Variable-Size Stack Frame Format



ZK-4651A-GE

Some parts of the stack frame are optional and occur only as required by the particular procedure. In Figure 3–3, field names within brackets are optional fields. Use of the **arguments passed in memory** field appending the end of the descriptor is described in Sections 3.4.3.3 and 3.7.2.

For more information describing the **fixed temporary locations** and **register save area**, see Sections 3.4.3.3 and 3.4.3.4.

A compiler can use the **stack temporary area** pointed to by the SP base register for fixed local variables, such as constant-sized data items and program state, as well as for dynamically sized local variables. The stack temporary area may also be used for dynamically sized items with a limited lifetime, for example, a dynamically sized function result or string concatenation that cannot be stored directly in a target variable. When a procedure uses this area, the compiler

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

must keep track of its base and reset SP to the base to reclaim storage used by temporaries.

3.4.3.3 Fixed Temporary Locations for All Stack Frames

The **fixed temporary locations** are optional sections of any stack frame that contain language-specific locations required by the procedure context of some high-level languages. This may include, for example, register spill area, language-specific exception-handling context (such as language-dynamic exception-handling information), fixed temporaries, and so on.

The **argument home area** (if allocated by the compiler) can be found with the PDSC\$*L_SIZE* offset in the last fixed temporary locations at the end of the stack frame. It is adjacent to the **arguments passed in memory** area to expedite the use of arguments passed (without copying). The argument home area is a region of memory used by the called procedure for the purpose of assembling in contiguous memory the arguments passed in registers, adjacent to the arguments passed in memory, so all arguments can be addressed as a contiguous array. This area can also be used to store arguments passed in registers if an address for such an argument must be generated. Generally, 6 * 8 bytes of stack storage is allocated for this purpose by the called procedure.

If a procedure needs to reference its arguments as a longword array or construct a structure that looks like an in-memory longword argument list, then it might allocate enough longwords in this area to hold all of the argument list and, optionally, an argument count. In that case, argument items passed in memory must be copied to this longword array.

The high-address end of the stack frame is defined by the value stored in PDSC\$*L_SIZE* plus the contents of SP or FP, as indicated by PDSC\$*V_BASE_REG_IS_FP*. The high-address end is used to determine the value of SP for the predecessor procedure in the calling chain.

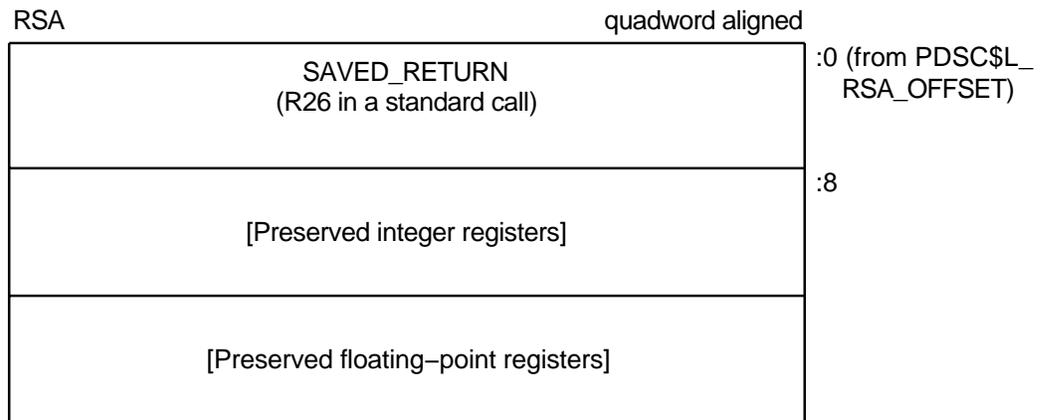
3.4.3.4 Register Save Area for All Stack Frames

The **register save area** is a set of consecutive quadwords in which registers saved and restored by the current procedure are stored (see Figure 3–4). The register save area begins at the location pointed to by the offset PDSC\$*W_RSA_OFFSET* from the frame base register (SP or FP as indicated by PDSC\$*V_BASE_REG_IS_FP*), which must yield a quadword-aligned address. The set of registers saved in this area contain the return address followed by the registers specified in the procedure descriptor by PDSC\$*L_IREG_MASK* and PDSC\$*L_FREG_MASK*.

All registers saved in the register save area (other than the saved return address) *must* have the corresponding bit set in the appropriate procedure descriptor register save mask even if the register is not a member of the set of registers required to be saved across a standard call. Failure to do so will prevent the correct calculation of offsets within the save area.

Figure 3–4 illustrates the fields in the register save area (field names within brackets are optional fields). Quadword *RSASQ_SAVED_RETURN* is the first field in the save area and it contains the contents of the return address register. The optional fields vary in size (8-byte increments) to preserve, as required, the contents of the integer and floating-point hardware registers used in the procedure.

Figure 3–4 Register Save Area (RSA) Layout



ZK-4652A-GE

The algorithm for packing saved registers in the quadword-aligned register save area is:

1. The return address is saved at the lowest address of the register save area (offset 0).
2. All saved integer registers (as indicated by the corresponding bit in PDSC\$_IREG_MASK being set to 1) are stored, in register-number order, in consecutive quadwords, beginning at offset 8 of the register save area.
3. All saved floating-point registers (as indicated by the corresponding bit in PDSC\$_FREG_MASK being set to 1) are stored, in register-number order, in consecutive quadwords, following the saved integer registers.

Note

Floating-point registers saved in the register save area are stored as a 64-bit exact image of the register (for example, no reordering of bits is done on the way to or from memory). Compilers must use an STT instruction to store the register regardless of floating-point type.

The preserved register set must *always* include R29 (FP), because it will always be used.

If the return address register is not to be preserved (as is the case for a standard call), then it must be stored at offset 0 in the register save area and the corresponding bit in the register save mask must *not* be set.

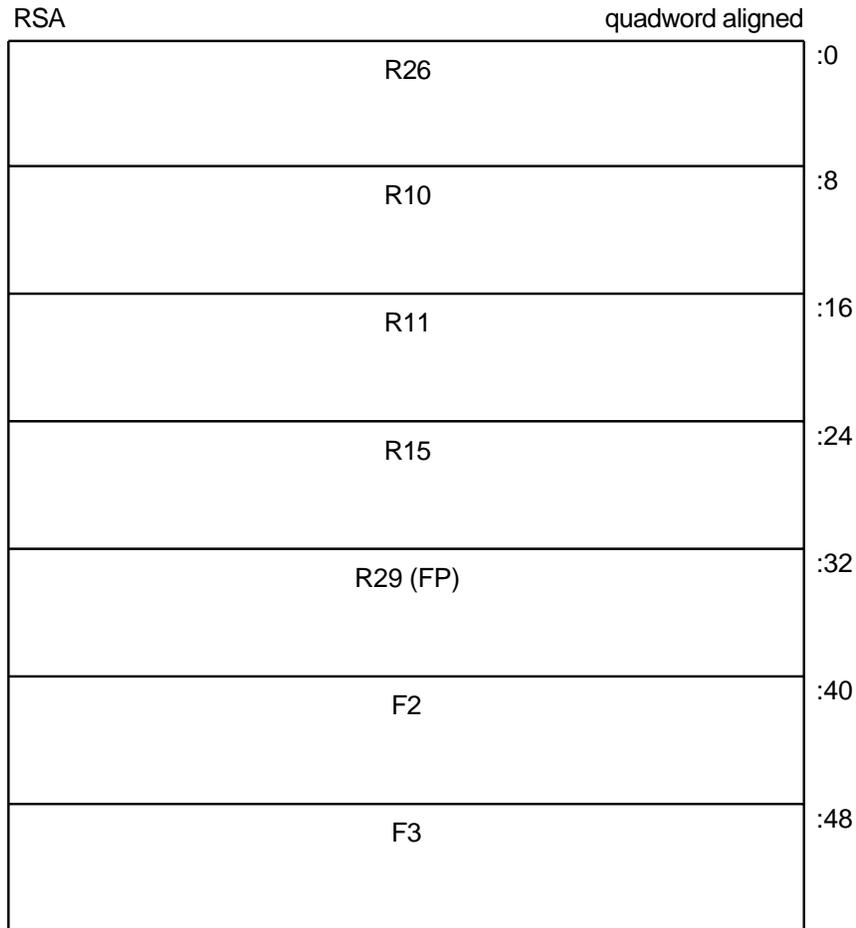
However, if a nonstandard call is made that requires the return address register to be saved and restored, then it must be stored in *both* the location at offset 0 in the register save area and at the appropriate location within the variable part of the save area. In addition, the appropriate bit of PDSC\$_IREG_MASK must be set to 1.

The example register save area shown in Figure 3–5 illustrates the register packing when registers R10, R11, R15, FP, F2, and F3 are being saved for a procedure called with a standard call.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Figure 3–5 Register Save Area (RSA) Example



ZK-4653A-GE

3.4.4 Register Frame Procedure

A **register frame procedure** does not maintain a call frame on the stack and must, therefore, save its caller's context in registers. This type of procedure is sometimes referred to as a **lightweight procedure**, referring to the expedient way of saving the call context.

Such a procedure cannot save and restore nonscratch registers. Because a procedure without a stack frame must use scratch registers to maintain the caller's context, such a procedure cannot make a standard call to any other procedure.

A procedure with a register frame can have an exception handler and can handle exceptions in the normal way. Such a procedure can also allocate local stack storage in the normal way, although it might not necessarily do so.

Note

Lightweight procedures have more freedom than might be apparent. By using appropriate agreements with callers of the lightweight procedure, with procedures that the lightweight procedure calls, and by the use of unwind handlers, a lightweight procedure can modify nonscratch registers and can call other procedures.

Such agreements may be by convention (as in the case of language-support routines in the RTL) or by interprocedural analysis. However, calls employing such agreements are *not* standard calls and might not be fully supported by a debugger; for example, the debugger might not be able to find the contents of the preserved registers.

Because such agreements must be permanent (for upwards compatibility of object code), lightweight procedures should, in general, follow the normal restrictions.

3.4.5 Procedure Descriptor for Procedures with a Register Frame

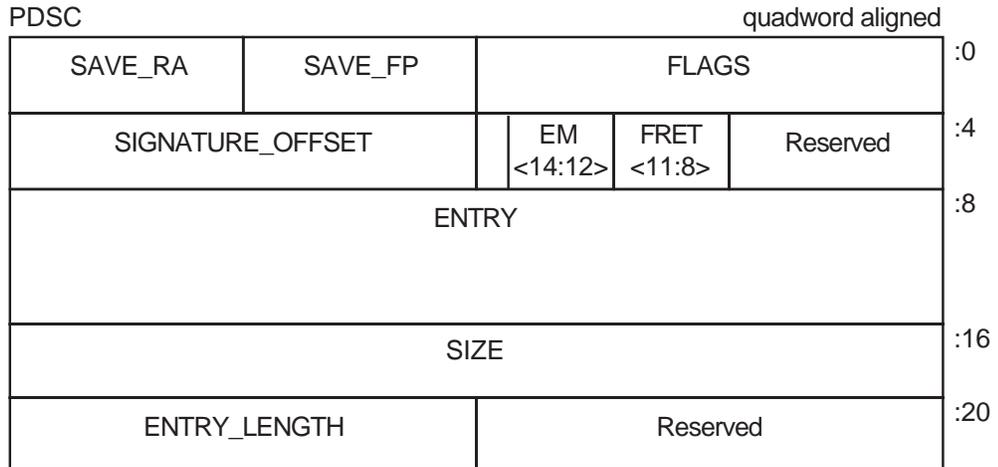
A **register frame procedure descriptor** built by a compiler provides information about a procedure with a register frame. The minimum size of the descriptor is 24 bytes (defined by PDSC\$K_MIN_REGISTER_SIZE). An optional PDSC extension in 8-byte increments supports exception-handling requirements.

The fields defined in the register frame procedure descriptor are illustrated in Figure 3-6 and described in Table 3-4.

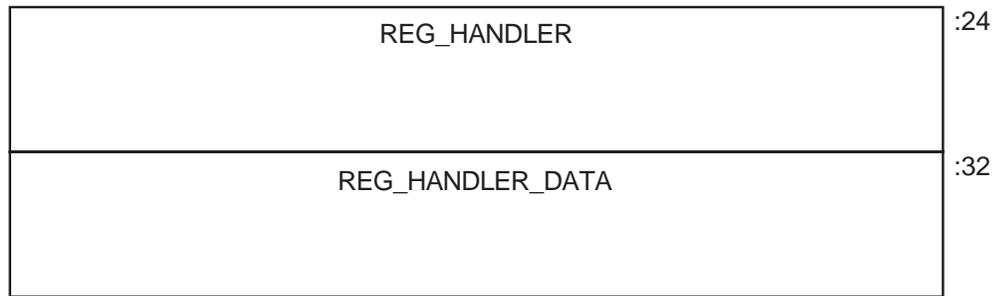
OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Figure 3-6 Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)



PDSC\$K_MIN_REGISTER_SIZE = 24
 End of required part of procedure descriptor



PDSC\$K_MAX_REGISTER_SIZE = 40
 FRET = PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN
 EM = PDSC\$V_EXCEPTION_MODE

ZK-4654A-GE

Table 3–4 Contents of Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_FLAGS	The PDSC descriptor flag bits <15:0> are defined as follows:
PDSC\$V_KIND	A 4-bit field <3:0> that identifies the type of procedure descriptor. For a procedure with a register frame, this field must specify a value 10 (defined by constant PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_REGISTER).
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID	If set to 1, this descriptor has an extension for the stack handler (PDSC\$Q_REG_HANDLER) information.
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_REINVOKABLE	If set to 1, the handler can be reinvoked, allowing an occurrence of another exception while the handler is already active. If this bit is set to 0, the exception handler cannot be reinvoked. This bit must be 0 when PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 0.
PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID	If set to 1, the HANDLER_VALID bit must be 1 and the PDSC extension STACK_HANDLER_DATA field contains valid data for the exception handler, and the address of PDSC\$Q_STACK_HANDLER_DATA will be passed to the exception handler as defined in Section 8.2.
PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP	If this bit is set to 0, the SP is the base register to which PDSC\$SL_SIZE is added during an unwind. A fixed amount of storage is allocated in the procedure entry sequence, and SP is modified by this procedure only in the entry and exit code sequence. In this case, FP typically contains the address of the procedure descriptor for the procedure. Note that a procedure that sets this bit to 0 cannot make standard calls. If this bit is set to 1, FP is the base address and the procedure has a fixed amount of stack storage specified by PDSC\$SL_SIZE. A variable amount of stack storage can be allocated by modifying SP in the entry and exit code of this procedure.
PDSC\$V_REI_RETURN	If set to 1, the procedure expects the stack at entry to be set, so an REI instruction correctly returns from the procedure. Also, if set, the contents of the PDSC\$B_SAVE_RA field are unpredictable and the return address is found on the stack.
Bit 9	Must be 0 (reserved).
PDSC\$V_BASE_FRAME	For compiled code, this bit must be 0. If set to 1, this bit indicates the logical base frame of a stack that precedes all frames corresponding to user code. The interpretation and use of this frame and whether there are any predecessor frames is system software defined (and subject to change).

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Table 3–4 (Cont.) Contents of Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
	<p>PDSCSV_TARGET_INVO If set to 1, the exception handler for this procedure is invoked when this procedure is the target invocation of an unwind. Note that a procedure is the target invocation of an unwind if it is the procedure in which execution resumes following completion of the unwind. For more information, see Chapter 8.</p> <p> If set to 0, the exception handler for this procedure is not invoked. Note that when PDSCSV_HANDLER_VALID is 0, this bit must be 0.</p>
	<p>PDSCSV_NATIVE For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.</p> <p>PDSCSV_NO_JACKET For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.</p> <p>PDSCSV_TIE_FRAME For compiled code, this bit must be 0. Reserved for use by system software.</p> <p>Bit 15 Must be 0 (reserved).</p>
PDSCSB_SAVE_FP	<p>Specifies the number of the register that contains the saved value of the frame pointer (FP) register.</p> <p>In a standard procedure, this field must specify a scratch register so as not to violate the rules for procedure entry code as specified in Section 3.6.5.</p>
PDSCSB_SAVE_RA	<p>Specifies the number of the register that contains the return address. If this procedure uses standard call conventions and does not modify R26, then this field can specify R26.</p> <p>In a standard procedure, this field must specify a scratch register so as not to violate the rules for procedure entry code as specified in Section 3.6.5.</p>
PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN	<p>A 4-bit field <11:8> that describes which registers are used for the function value return (if there is one) and what format is used for those registers.</p> <p>Table 5–4 lists and describes the possible encoded values of PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN.</p>

(continued on next page)

Table 3–4 (Cont.) Contents of Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents																		
PDSC\$V_EXCEPTION_MODE	<p>A 3-bit field <14:12> that encodes the caller's desired exception-reporting behavior when calling certain mathematically oriented library routines. The possible values for this field are defined as follows:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Value</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Name</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td>PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td>PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT</td> <td>Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td>PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE</td> <td>Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td>PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER</td> <td>Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Name	Meaning	0	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.	1	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).	2	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT	Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.	3	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE	Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.	4	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.
Value	Name	Meaning																	
0	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.																	
1	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).																	
2	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT	Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.																	
3	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE	Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.																	
4	PDSC\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.																	
PDSC\$W_SIGNATURE_OFFSET	<p>A 16-bit signed byte offset from the start of the procedure descriptor. This offset designates the start of the procedure signature block (if any). A 0 in this field indicates no signature information is present. Note that in a bound procedure descriptor (as described in Section 3.6.4), signature information might be present in the related procedure descriptor. A 1 in this field indicates a standard default signature. An offset value of 1 is not otherwise a valid offset because both procedure descriptors and signature blocks must be quadword aligned.</p>																		
PDSC\$Q_ENTRY	<p>Absolute address of the first instruction of the entry code sequence for the procedure.</p>																		
PDSC\$L_SIZE	<p>Unsigned size in bytes of the fixed portion of the stack frame for this procedure. The size must be a multiple of 16 bytes to maintain the minimum stack alignment required by the Alpha hardware architecture and stack alignment during a call (defined in Section 3.6.1).</p>																		
PDSC\$W_ENTRY_LENGTH	<p>Unsigned offset in bytes from the entry point to the first instruction in the procedure code segment following the procedure prologue (that is, following the instruction that updates FP to establish this procedure as the current procedure).</p>																		
PDSC\$Q_REG_HANDLER	<p>Absolute address to the procedure descriptor for a run-time static exception-handling procedure. This part of the procedure descriptor is optional. It <i>must</i> be supplied if either PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 1 or PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 1 (which requires that PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID be 1).</p> <p>If PDSC\$V_HANDLER_VALID is 0, then the contents or existence of PDSC\$Q_REG_HANDLER is unpredictable.</p>																		

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OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Table 3–4 (Cont.) Contents of Register Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$Q_REG_HANDLER_DATA	Data (quadword) for the exception handler. This is an optional quadword and needs to be supplied only if PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 1. If PDSC\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID is 0, then the contents or existence of PDSC\$Q_REG_HANDLER_DATA is unpredictable.

3.4.6 Null Frame Procedures

A procedure may conform to this standard even if it does not establish its own context if, in *all* circumstances, invocations of that procedure do not need to be visible or debuggable. This is termed **executing in the context of the caller** and is similar in concept to a conventional VAX JSB procedure. For the purposes of stack tracing or unwinding, such a procedure is never considered to be current.

For example, if a procedure does not establish an exception handler or does not save and restore registers, and does not extend the stack, then that procedure might not need to establish a context. Likewise, if that procedure does extend the stack, it still might not need to establish a context if the immediate caller either cannot be the target of an unwind or is prepared to reset the stack if it is the target of an unwind.

The circumstances under which procedures can run in the context of the caller are complex and are not fully specified by this standard.

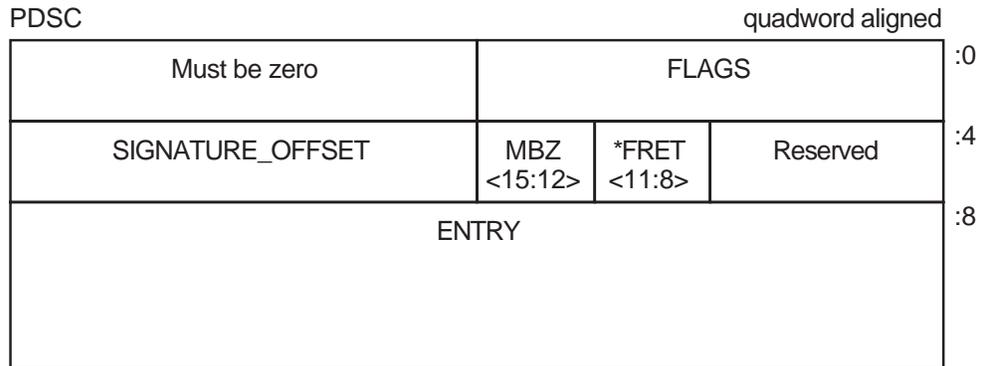
As with the other procedure types previously described, the choice of whether to establish a context belongs to the called procedure. By defining a null procedure descriptor format, the same invocation code sequence can be used by the caller for all procedure types.

3.4.7 Procedure Descriptor for Null Frame Procedures

The **null frame procedure descriptor** built by a compiler provides information about a procedure with no frame. The size of the descriptor is 16 bytes (defined by PDSC\$K_NULL_SIZE).

The fields defined in the null frame descriptor are illustrated in Figure 3–7 and described in Table 3–5.

Figure 3–7 Null Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC) Format



PDSC\$K_NULL_SIZE = 16
*FRET = PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN

ZK-4655A-GE

Table 3–5 Contents of Null Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_FLAGS	The PDSC descriptor flag bits <15:0> are defined as follows:
PDSC\$V_KIND	A 4-bit field <3:0> that identifies the type of procedure descriptor. For a null frame procedure, this field must specify a value 8 (defined by constant PDSC\$K_KIND_NULL).
Bits 4–7	Must be 0.
PDSC\$V_REI_RETURN	Bit 8. If set to 1, the procedure expects the stack at entry to be set, so an REI instruction correctly returns from the procedure. Also, if set, the contents of the PDSC\$B_SAVE_RA field are unpredictable and the return address is found on the stack.
Bit 9	Must be 0 (reserved).
PDSC\$V_BASE_FRAME	For compiled code, this bit must be 0. If set to 1, indicates the logical base frame of a stack that precedes all frames corresponding to user code. The interpretation and use of this frame and whether there are any predecessor frames is system software defined (and subject to change).
Bit 11	Must be 0 (reserved).
PDSC\$V_NATIVE	For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.
PDSC\$V_NO_JACKET	For compiled code, this bit must be set to 1.
PDSC\$V_TIE_FRAME	For compiled code, this bit must be 0. Reserved for use by system software.
Bit 15	Must be 0 (reserved).
PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN	A 4-bit field <11:8> that describes which registers are used for the function value return (if there is one) and what format is used for those registers. Table 5–4 lists and describes the possible encoded values of PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN.

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OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.4 Procedure Types

Table 3–5 (Cont.) Contents of Null Frame Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_SIGNATURE_OFFSET	A 16-bit signed byte offset from the start of the procedure descriptor. This offset designates the start of the procedure signature block (if any). A 0 in this field indicates that no signature information is present. Note that in a bound procedure descriptor (as described in Section 3.6.4), signature information might be present in the related procedure descriptor. A 1 in this field indicates a standard default signature. An offset value of 1 is not otherwise a valid offset because both procedure descriptors and signature blocks must be quadword aligned.
PDSC\$Q_ENTRY	The absolute address of the first instruction of the entry code sequence for the procedure.

3.5 Procedure Call Stack

Except for null-frame procedures, a procedure is an **active procedure** while its body is executing, including while any procedure it calls is executing. When a procedure is active, it may handle an exception that is signaled during its execution.

Associated with each active procedure is an **invocation context**, which consists of the set of registers and space in memory that is allocated and that may be accessed during execution for a particular call of that procedure.

When a procedure begins to execute, it has no invocation context. The initial instructions that allocate and initialize its context, which may include saving information from the invocation context of its caller, are termed the **procedure prologue**. Once execution of the prologue is complete, the procedure is said to be **active**.

When a procedure is ready to return to its caller, the instructions that deallocate and discard the procedure's invocation context (which may include restoring state of the caller's invocation context that was saved during the prologue), are termed a **procedure epilogue**. A procedure ceases to be **active** when execution of its epilogue begins.

A procedure may have more than one prologue if there are multiple entry points. A procedure may also have more than one epilogue if there are multiple return points. One of each will be executed during any given invocation of the procedure.

Some procedures, notably **null frame procedures** (see Section 3.4.6), never have an invocation context of their own and are said to execute in the body of their caller. A null frame procedure has no prologue or epilogue, and consists solely of body instructions. Such a procedure never becomes **current** or **active** in the sense that its handler may be invoked.

A call stack (for a thread) consists of the stack of invocation contexts that exists at any point in time. New invocation contexts are pushed on that stack as procedures are called and invocations are popped from the call stack as procedures return.

The invocation context of a procedure that calls another procedure is said to precede or be previous to the invocation context of the called procedure.

3.5.1 Current Procedure

The **current procedure** is the active procedure whose execution began most recently; its invocation context is at the top of the call stack. Note that a procedure executing in its prologue or epilogue is not active, and hence cannot be the current procedure. Similarly, a null frame procedure cannot be the current procedure.

In this calling standard, R29 is the frame pointer (FP) register that defines the current procedure.

Therefore, the current procedure must *always* maintain in FP one of the following pointer values:

- Pointer to the procedure descriptor for that procedure.
- Pointer to a naturally aligned quadword containing the address of the procedure descriptor for that procedure. For purposes of finding a procedure's procedure descriptor, no assumptions must be made about the quadword location. As long as all other requirements of this standard are met, a compiler is free to use FP as a base register for any arbitrary storage, including a stack frame, provided that while the procedure is current, the quadword pointed to by the value in FP contains the address of that procedure's descriptor.

At any point in time, the FP value can be interpreted to find the procedure descriptor for the current procedure by examining the value at 0(FP) as follows:

- If 0(FP)<2:0> = 0, then FP points to a quadword that contains a pointer to the procedure descriptor for the current procedure.
- If 0(FP)<2:0> ≠ 0, then FP points to the procedure descriptor for the current procedure.

By examining the first quadword of the procedure descriptor, the procedure type can be determined from the PDSCSV_KIND field.

The following code is an example of how the current procedure descriptor and procedure type can be found:

```

LDQ    R0,0(FP)           ;Fetch quadword at FP
AND    R0,#7,R28         ;Mask alignment bits
BNEQ   R28,20$           ;Is procedure descriptor pointer
LDQ    R0,0(R0)          ;Was pointer to procedure descriptor
10$:   AND    R0,#7,R28   ;Do sanity check
      BNEQ   R28,20$     ;All is well
      ;Error - Invalid FP
20$:   AND    R0,#15,R0   ;Get kind bits
      ;Procedure KIND is now in R0

```

IF PDSCSV_KIND is equal to PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_STACK, the current procedure has a stack frame.

If PDSCSV_KIND is equal to PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_REGISTER, the current procedure is a register frame procedure.

Either type of procedure can use either type of mechanism to point to the procedure descriptor. Compilers may choose the appropriate mechanism to use based on the needs of the procedure involved.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.5 Procedure Call Stack

3.5.2 Procedure Call Tracing

Mechanisms for each of the following functions are needed to support procedure call tracing:

- To provide the context of a procedure invocation
- To walk (navigate) the procedure call stack
- To refer to a given procedure invocation

This section describes the data structure mechanisms. The routines that support these functions are described in Section 3.5.3.

3.5.2.1 Referring to a Procedure Invocation from a Data Structure

When referring to a specific procedure invocation at run time, a **procedure invocation handle**, shown in Figure 3–8, can be used. Defined by constant `LIBICBSK_INVO_HANDLE_SIZE`, the structure is a single-field longword called `HANDLE`. `HANDLE` describes the invocation handle of the procedure.

Figure 3–8 Procedure Invocation Handle Format



To encode a procedure invocation handle, follow these steps:

1. If `PDSCSV_BASE_REG_IS_FP` is set to 1 in the corresponding procedure descriptor, then set `INVO_HANDLE` to the contents of the FP register in that invocation.

If `PDSCSV_BASE_REG_IS_FP` is set to 0, set `INVO_HANDLE` to the contents of the SP register in that invocation. (That is, start with the base register value for the frame.)

2. Shift the `INVO_HANDLE` contents left one bit. Because this value is initially known to be octaword aligned (see Section 3.6.1), the result is a value whose 5 low-order bits are 0.
3. If `PDSCSV_KIND = PDSCSK_KIND_FP_STACK`, perform a logical OR on the contents of `INVO_HANDLE` with the value $1F_{16}$, and then set `INVO_HANDLE` to the value that results.

If `PDSCSV_KIND = PDSCSK_KIND_FP_REGISTER`, perform a logical OR on the contents of `INVO_HANDLE` with the contents of `PDSCSB_SAVE_RA`, and then set `INVO_HANDLE` to the value that results.

Note that a procedure invocation handle is not defined for a null frame procedure.

Note

So you can distinguish an invocation of a register frame procedure that calls another register frame procedure (where the called procedure uses no stack space and therefore has the same base register value as the caller), the register number that saved the return address is included in the invocation handle of a register frame procedure. Similarly, the number 31_{10} in the invocation handle of a stack frame procedure is included to

distinguish an invocation of a stack frame procedure that calls a register frame procedure where the called procedure uses no stack space.

3.5.2.2 Invocation Context Block

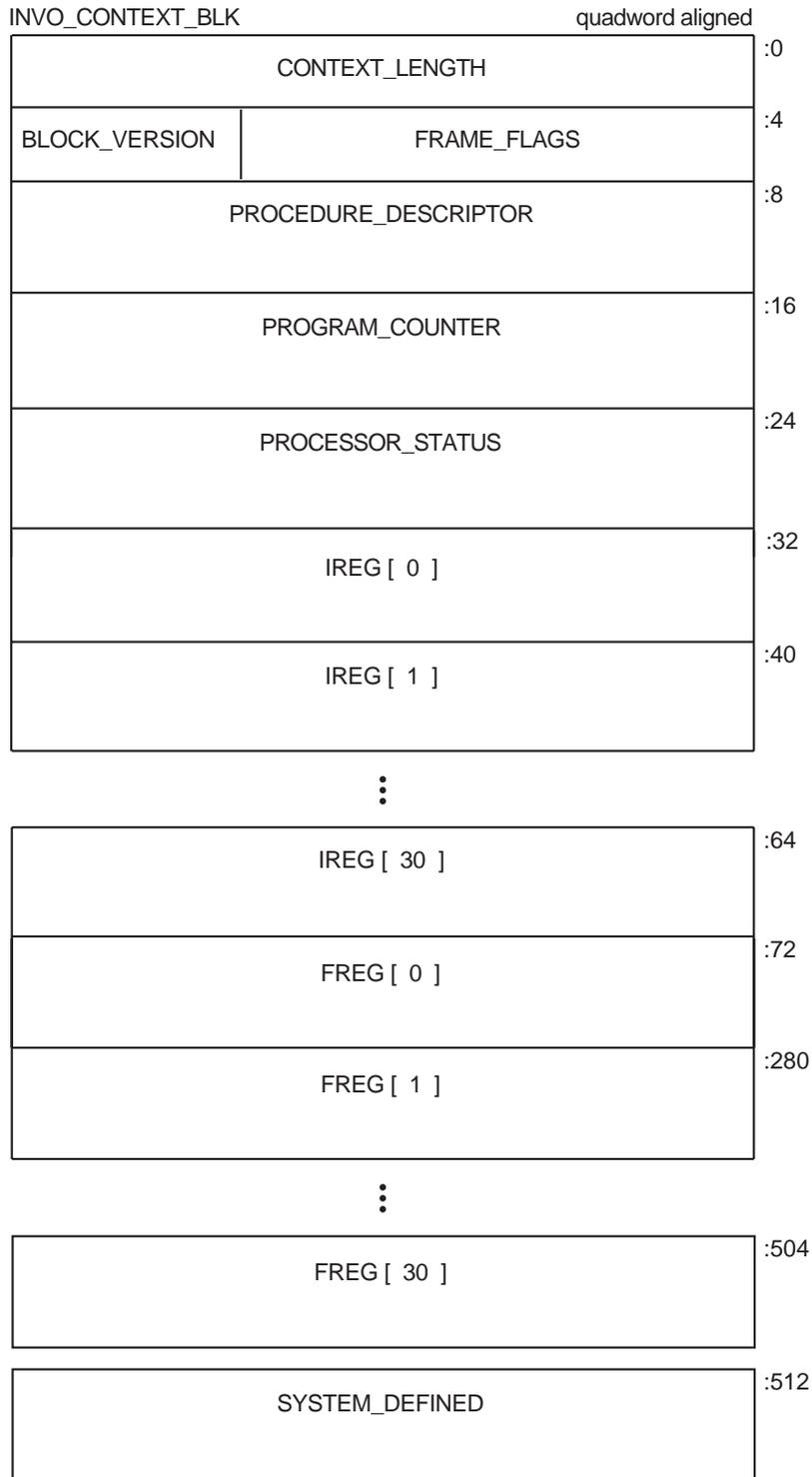
The context of a specific procedure invocation is provided through the use of a data structure called an **invocation context block**. The minimum size of the block is 528 bytes and is system defined using the constant LIBICBSK_INVO_CONTEXT_BLK_SIZE. The size of the last field (LIBICBSQ_SYSTEM_DEFINED[*n*]) defined by the host system determines the total size of the block.

The fields defined in the invocation context block are illustrated in Figure 3-9 and described in Table 3-6.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.5 Procedure Call Stack

Figure 3–9 Invocation Context Block Format



LIBICB\$K_INVO_CONTEXT_BLK_SIZE is defined by the system.

ZK-4657A-GE

Table 3–6 Contents of the Invocation Context Block

Field Name	Contents								
LIBICBSL_CONTEXT_LENGTH	Unsigned count of the total length in bytes of the context block; this represents the sum of the lengths of the standard-defined portion and the system-defined section.								
LIBICBSR_FRAME_FLAGS	The procedure frame flag bits <24:0> are defined as follows: <table border="0" style="margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td>LIBICBSV_EXCEPTION_FRAME</td> <td>Bit 0. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an exception frame.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIBICBSV_AST_FRAME</td> <td>Bit 1. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an asynchronous trap.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK</td> <td>Bit 2. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to a frame that has no predecessor.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LIBICBSV_BASE_FRAME</td> <td>Bit 3. If set to 1, the BASE_FRAME bit is set in the FLAGS field of the associated procedure descriptor.</td> </tr> </table>	LIBICBSV_EXCEPTION_FRAME	Bit 0. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an exception frame.	LIBICBSV_AST_FRAME	Bit 1. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an asynchronous trap.	LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK	Bit 2. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to a frame that has no predecessor.	LIBICBSV_BASE_FRAME	Bit 3. If set to 1, the BASE_FRAME bit is set in the FLAGS field of the associated procedure descriptor.
LIBICBSV_EXCEPTION_FRAME	Bit 0. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an exception frame.								
LIBICBSV_AST_FRAME	Bit 1. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to an asynchronous trap.								
LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK	Bit 2. If set to 1, the invocation context corresponds to a frame that has no predecessor.								
LIBICBSV_BASE_FRAME	Bit 3. If set to 1, the BASE_FRAME bit is set in the FLAGS field of the associated procedure descriptor.								
LIBICBSB_BLOCK_VERSION	A byte that defines the version of the context block. Because this block is currently the first version, the value is set to 1.								
LIBICBSPH_PROCEDURE_DESCRIPTOR	Address of the procedure descriptor for this context.								
LIBICBSQ_PROGRAM_COUNTER	Quadword that contains the current value of the procedure's program counter. For interrupted procedures, this is the same as the continuation program counter; for active procedures, this is the return address back into that procedure.								
LIBICBSQ_PROCESSOR_STATUS	Contains the current value of the processor status.								
LIBICBSQ_IREG[<i>n</i>]	Quadword that contains the current value of the integer register in the procedure (where <i>n</i> is the number of the register).								
LIBICBSQ_FREG[<i>n</i>]	Quadword that contains the current value of the floating-point register in the procedure (where <i>n</i> is the number of the register).								
LIBICBSQ_SYSTEM_DEFINED[<i>n</i>]	A variable-sized area with locations defined in quadword increments by the host environment that contains procedure context information. These locations are <i>not</i> defined by this standard.								

3.5.2.3 Getting a Procedure Invocation Context with a Routine

A thread can obtain its own context or the current context of any procedure invocation in the current stack call (given an invocation handle) by calling the run-time library functions defined in Section 3.5.3.

3.5.2.4 Walking the Call Stack

During the course of program execution, it is sometimes necessary to walk the call stack. Frame-based exception handling is one case where this is done. Call stack navigation is possible only in the reverse direction (in a latest-to-earliest or top-to-bottom sequence).

To walk the call stack, perform the following steps:

1. Given a program state (which contains a register set), build an invocation context block.

For the current routine, an initial invocation context block can be obtained by calling the LIB\$GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT routine (see Section 3.5.3.2).

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.5 Procedure Call Stack

2. Repeatedly call the LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT routine (see Section 3.5.3.3) until the end of the chain has been reached (as signified by 0 being returned).

The bottom of stack frame (end of the call chain) is indicated (LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK) when the target frame's saved FP value is 0.

Compilers are allowed to optimize high-level language procedure calls in such a way that they do not appear in the invocation chain. For example, inline procedures never appear in the invocation chain.

Make no assumptions about the relative positions of any memory used for procedure frame information. There is no guarantee that successive stack frames will always appear at higher addresses.

3.5.3 Invocation Context Access Routines

A thread can manipulate the invocation context of any procedure in the thread's virtual address space by calling the following run-time library functions.

3.5.3.1 LIB\$GET_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of any active procedure by using the following function format:

```
LIB$GET_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_handle, invo_context)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	longword (unsigned)	read	by value
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	write	by reference

Arguments:

invo_handle

Handle for the desired invocation.

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block into which the procedure context of the frame specified by **invo_handle** will be written.

Function Value Returned:

status

Status value. A value of 1 indicates success; a value of 0 indicates failure.

Note

If the invocation handle that was passed does not represent any procedure context in the active call stack, the value of the new contents of the context block is unpredictable.

3.5.3.2 LIB\$GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of a current procedure by using the following function format:

LIB\$GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_context)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	write	by reference

Argument:

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block into which the procedure context of the caller will be written.

Function Value Returned:

Zero. This is to facilitate use in the implementation of the C language unwind `setjmp` or `longjmp` function (only).

3.5.3.3 LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of the procedure context preceding any other procedure context by using the following function format:

LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_context)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference

Argument:

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block. The given invocation context block is updated to represent the context of the previous (calling) frame. The `LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK` flag of the invocation context block is set if the target frame represents the end of the invocation call chain or if stack corruption is detected.

Function Value Returned:

status

Status value. A value of 1 indicates success. When the initial context represents the bottom of the call stack, a value of 0 is returned. If the current operation completed without error, but a stack corruption was detected at the next level down, a value of 3 is returned.

3.5.3.4 LIB\$GET_INVO_HANDLE

A thread can obtain an invocation handle corresponding to any invocation context block by using the following function format:

LIB\$GET_INVO_HANDLE(invo_context)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference

Argument:

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.5 Procedure Call Stack

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block. Here, only the frame pointer and stack pointer fields of an invocation context block must be defined.

Function Value Returned:

invo_handle

Invocation handle of the invocation context that was passed. If the returned value is LIB\$K_INVO_HANDLE_NULL, the invocation context that was passed was invalid.

3.5.3.5 LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE

A thread can obtain an invocation handle of the procedure context preceding that of a specified procedure context by using the following function format:

LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE(invo_handle)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	longword (unsigned)	read	by value

Argument:

invo_handle

An invocation handle that represents a target invocation context.

Function Value Returned:

invo_handle

An invocation handle for the invocation context that is previous to that which was specified as the target.

3.5.3.6 LIB\$PUT_INVO_REGISTERS

A given procedure invocation context's fields can be updated with new register contents by calling a system library function in following format:

LIB\$PUT_INVO_REGISTERS(invo_handle, invo_context, invo_mask)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	longword (unsigned)	read	by value
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference
invo_mask	mask_quadword	quadword (unsigned)	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_handle

Handle for the invocation to be updated.

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block that contains new register contents.

Each register that is set in the **invo_mask** parameter, except SP, is updated using the value found in the corresponding IREG or FREG field. The program counter and processor status can also be updated in this way. (The SP register cannot be updated using this routine.) No other fields of the invocation context block are used.

invo_mask

Address of a 64-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the passed **invo_context**. Bits 0 through 30 correspond to IREG[0] through IREG[30], bit 31 corresponds to PROGRAM_COUNTER, bits 32 through 62 correspond to FREG[0] through FREG[30], and bit 63 corresponds to PROCESSOR_STATUS. (If bit 30, which corresponds to SP, is set, then no changes are made.)

Function Value Returned:

status

Status value. A value of 1 indicates success. When the initial context represents the bottom of the call stack or when bit 30 of the **invo_mask** argument is set, a value of 0 is returned (and nothing is changed).

Caution

While this routine can be used to update the frame pointer (FP), great care must be taken to assure that a valid stack frame and execution environment result; otherwise, execution may become unpredictable.

3.6 Transfer of Control

This standard states that a standard call (see Section 1.4) may be accomplished in any way that presents the called routine with the required environment. However, typically, most standard-conforming external calls are implemented with a common sequence of instructions and conventions. Because a common set of call conventions is so pervasive, these conventions are included for reference as part of this standard.

One important feature of the calling standard is that the same instruction sequence can be used to call each of the different types of procedure. Specifically, the caller does not have to know which type of procedure is being called.

3.6.1 Call Conventions

The call conventions describe the rules and methods used to communicate certain information between the caller and the called procedure during invocation and return. For a standard call, these conventions include the following:

- **Procedure value**

The calling procedure must pass to the called procedure its procedure value. This value can be a statically or dynamically bound procedure value. This is accomplished by loading R27 with the procedure value before control is transferred to the called procedure.

- **Return address**

The calling procedure must pass to the called procedure the address to which control must be returned during a normal return from the called procedure. In most cases, the return address is the address of the instruction following the one that transferred control to the called procedure. For a standard call, this address is passed in the return address register (R26).

- **Argument list**

The **argument list** is an ordered set of zero or more **argument items** that together constitute a logically contiguous structure known as an **argument item sequence**. This logically contiguous sequence is typically mapped to registers and memory in a way that produces a physically discontinuous

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

argument list. In a standard call, the first six items are passed in registers R16–21 or registers F16–21. (See Section 3.7.2 for details of argument-to-register correspondence.) The remaining items are collected in a memory argument list that is a naturally aligned array of quadwords. In a standard call, this list (if present) must be passed at 0(SP).

- **Argument information**

The calling procedure must pass to the called procedure information about the argument list. This information is passed in the argument information (AI) register (R25). Defined by AISK_AI_SIZE, the structure is a quadword as shown in Figure 3–10 with the fields described in Table 3–7.

Figure 3–10 Argument Information Register (R25) Format

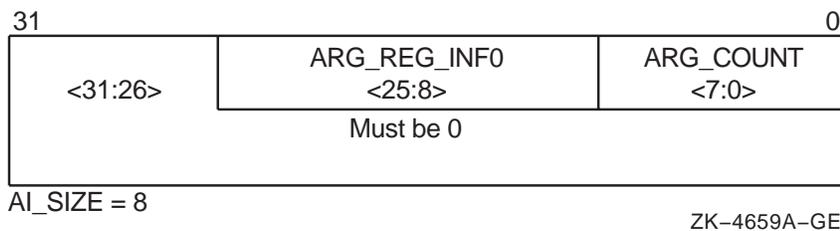


Table 3–7 Contents of the Argument Information Register (R25)

Field Name	Contents																								
AISB_ARG_COUNT	Unsigned byte <7:0> that specifies the number of 64-bit argument items in the argument list (known as the “argument count”).																								
AISV_ARG_REG_INFO	An 18-bit vector field <25:8> divided into six groups of 3 bits that correspond to the six arguments passed in registers. These groups describe how each of the first six arguments are passed in registers with the first group <10:8> describing the first argument. The encoding for each group for the argument register usage follows:																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Value</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>AISK_AR_I64</td> <td>64-bit or 32-bit sign-extended to 64-bit argument passed in an integer register (including addresses) <i>or</i> Argument is not present</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>AISK_AR_FF</td> <td>F_floating argument passed in a floating register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>AISK_AR_FD</td> <td>D_floating argument passed in a floating register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>AISK_AR_FG</td> <td>G_floating argument passed in a floating register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>AISK_AR_FS</td> <td>S_floating argument passed in a floating register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>AISK_AR_FT</td> <td>T_floating argument passed in a floating register</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6, 7</td> <td></td> <td>Reserved</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Name	Meaning	0	AISK_AR_I64	64-bit or 32-bit sign-extended to 64-bit argument passed in an integer register (including addresses) <i>or</i> Argument is not present	1	AISK_AR_FF	F_floating argument passed in a floating register	2	AISK_AR_FD	D_floating argument passed in a floating register	3	AISK_AR_FG	G_floating argument passed in a floating register	4	AISK_AR_FS	S_floating argument passed in a floating register	5	AISK_AR_FT	T_floating argument passed in a floating register	6, 7		Reserved
Value	Name	Meaning																							
0	AISK_AR_I64	64-bit or 32-bit sign-extended to 64-bit argument passed in an integer register (including addresses) <i>or</i> Argument is not present																							
1	AISK_AR_FF	F_floating argument passed in a floating register																							
2	AISK_AR_FD	D_floating argument passed in a floating register																							
3	AISK_AR_FG	G_floating argument passed in a floating register																							
4	AISK_AR_FS	S_floating argument passed in a floating register																							
5	AISK_AR_FT	T_floating argument passed in a floating register																							
6, 7		Reserved																							
Bits 26–63	Reserved and must be 0.																								

- **Function result**

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

If a standard-conforming procedure is a function and the function result is returned in a register, then the result is returned in R0, F0, or F0 and F1. Otherwise, the function result is returned via the first argument item or dynamically as defined in Section 3.7.7.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

- **Stack usage**

Whenever control is transferred to another procedure, the stack pointer (SP) must be octaword aligned; at other times there is no stack alignment requirement. (A side effect of this is that the in-memory portion of the argument list will start on an octaword boundary.) During a procedure invocation, the SP (R30) can never be set to a value higher than the SP at entry to that procedure invocation.

The contents of the stack located above the portion of the argument list that is passed in memory (if any) belongs to the calling procedure and is, therefore, not to be read or written by the called procedure, except as specified by indirect arguments or language-controlled up-level references.

Because SP is used by the hardware in raising exceptions and asynchronous interrupts, the contents of the next 2048 bytes below the current SP value are continually and unpredictably modified. Software that conforms to this standard must not depend on the contents of the 2048 stack locations below 0(SP).

Note

One implication of the stack alignment requirement is that low-level interrupt and exception-fielding software must be prepared to handle and correct the alignment before calling handler routines, in case the stack pointer is not octaword aligned at the time of an interrupt or exception.

3.6.2 Linkage Section

Because the Alpha hardware architecture has the property of instructions that cannot contain full virtual addresses, it is sometimes referred to as a **base register architecture**. In a base register architecture, normal memory references within a limited range from a given address are expressed by using displacements relative to the contents of a register containing that address (base register). Base registers for external program segments, either data or code, are usually loaded indirectly through a program segment of address constants.

The fundamental program section containing address constants that a procedure uses to access other static storage, external procedures, and variables is termed a **linkage section**. Any register used to access the contents of the linkage section is termed a **linkage pointer**.

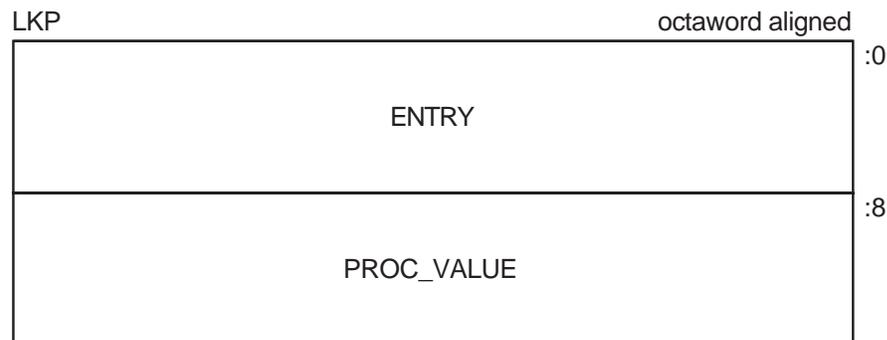
A procedure's linkage section includes the procedure descriptor for the procedure, addresses of all external variables and procedures referenced by the procedure, and other constants a compiler may choose to reference using a linkage pointer.

When a standard procedure is called, the caller must provide the procedure value for that procedure in R27. Static procedure values are defined to be the address of the procedure's descriptor. Because the procedure descriptor is part of the linkage section, calling this type of procedure value provides a pointer into the linkage section for that procedure in R27. This linkage pointer can then be used by the called procedure as a base register to address locations in its linkage section. For this reason, most compilers generate references to items in the linkage section as offsets from a pointer to the procedure's descriptor.

Compilers usually arrange (as part of the environment setup) to have the environment setup code (for bound procedures) load R27 with the address of the procedure's descriptor so it can be used as a linkage pointer as previously described. For an example, see Section 3.6.4.

Although not required, linkages to external procedures are typically represented in the calling procedure's linkage section as a **linkage pair**. As shown in Figure 3-11 and described in Table 3-8, a linkage pair (LKP) block with two fields should be octaword aligned and defined by LKP\$K_SIZE as 16 bytes.

Figure 3-11 Linkage Pair Block Format



LKP\$K_SIZE = 16

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Table 3-8 Contents of the Linkage Pair Block

Field Name	Contents
LKPSQ_ENTRY	Absolute address of the first instruction of the called procedure's entry code sequence.
LKPSQ_PROC_VALUE	Contains the procedure value of the procedure to be called. Normally, this field is the absolute address of a procedure descriptor for the procedure to be called, but in certain cases, it could be a bound procedure value (such as for procedures that are called through certain types of transfer vectors).

In general, an object module contains a procedure descriptor for each entry point in the module. The descriptors are allocated in a linkage section. For each external procedure Q that is referenced in a module, the module's linkage section also contains a linkage pair denoting Q (which is a pointer to Q's procedure descriptor and entry code address).

The following code example calls an external procedure Q as represented by a linkage pair. In this example, R4 is the register that currently contains the address of the current procedure's descriptor.

```
LDQ   R26,Q_DESC-MY_DESC(R4)   ;Q's entry address into R26
LDQ   R27,Q_DESC-MY_DESC+8(R4) ;Q's procedure value into R27
MOVQ  #AI_LITERAL,R25         ;Load Argument Information register
JSR   R26,(R26)               ;Call to Q. Return address in R26
```

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

Because Q's procedure descriptor (statically defined procedure value) is in Q's linkage section, Q can use the value in R27 as a base address for accessing data in its linkage section. Q accesses external procedures and data in other program sections through pointers in its linkage section. Therefore, R27 serves as the root pointer through which all data can be referenced.

3.6.3 Calling Computed Addresses

Most calls are made to a fixed address whose value is determined by the time the program starts execution. However, certain cases are possible that cause the exact address to be unknown until the code is finally executed. In this case, the procedure value representing the procedure to be called is computed in a register.

The following code example illustrates a call to a computed procedure value (simple or bound) that is contained in R4:

```
LDQ    R26,8(R4)           ;Entry address to scratch register
MOV    R4,R27              ;Procedure value to R27
MOV    #AI_LITERAL,R25    ;Load Argument Information register
JSR    R26,(R26)          ;Call entry address.
```

For interoperation with translated images, see Chapter 5

3.6.4 Simple and Bound Procedures

There are two distinct classes of procedures:

- Simple procedure
- Bound procedure

A **simple procedure** is a procedure that does not need direct access to the stack of its execution environment. A **bound procedure** is a procedure that does need direct access to the stack of its execution environment, typically to reference an up-level variable or to perform a nonlocal GOTO operation. Both a simple procedure and a bound procedure have an associated procedure descriptor, as described in previous sections.

When a bound procedure is called, the caller must pass some kind of pointer to the called code that allows it to reference its up-level environment. Typically, this pointer is the frame pointer for that environment, but many variations are possible. When the caller is executing its program within that outer environment, it can usually make such a call directly to the code for the nested procedure without recourse to any additional procedure descriptors. However, when a procedure value for the nested procedure must be passed outside of that environment to a call site that has no knowledge of the target procedure, a bound procedure descriptor is created so that the nested procedure can be called just like a simple procedure.

Bound procedure values, as defined by this standard, are designed for multilanguage use and utilize the properties of procedure descriptors to allow callers of procedures to use common code to call both bound and simple procedures.

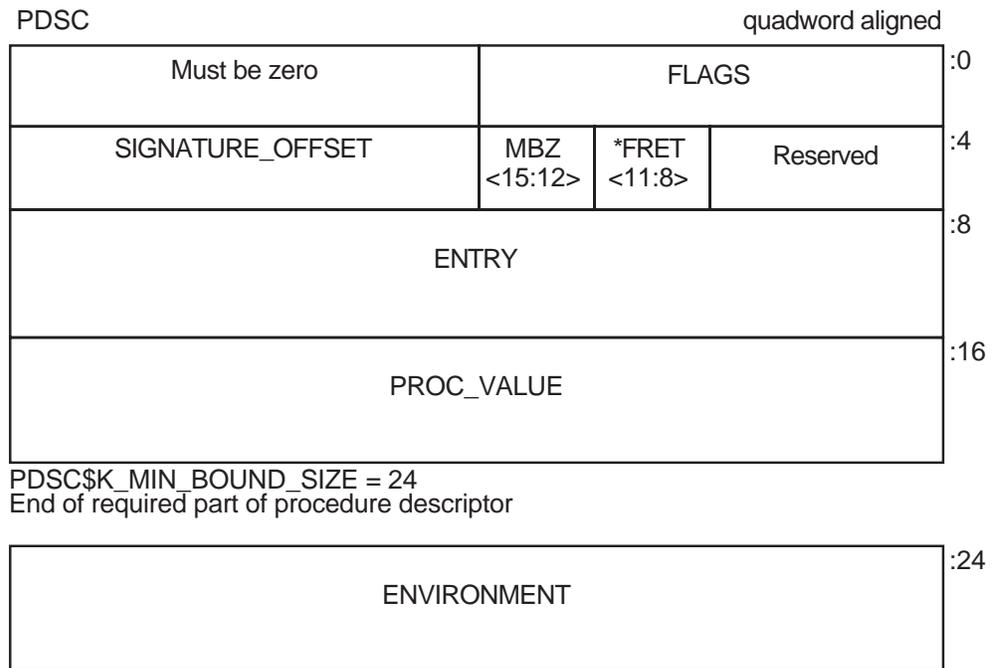
3.6.4.1 Bound Procedure Descriptors

Bound procedure descriptors provide a mechanism to interpose special processing between a call and the called routine without modifying either. The descriptor may contain (or reference) data used as part of that processing. Between native and translated images, the OpenVMS Alpha operating system uses linker and image-activator created bound procedure descriptors to mediate the handling of parameter and result passing (see Section 5.2). Language processors on OpenVMS Alpha systems use bound procedure descriptors to implement bound procedure values (see Section 3.6.4.2). Other uses are possible.

The minimum size of the descriptor is 24 bytes (defined by PDSC\$K_MIN_BOUND_SIZE). An optional PDSC extension in 8-byte increments provides the specific environment values as defined by the implementation.

The fields defined in the bound procedure descriptor are illustrated in Figure 3–12 and described in Table 3–9.

Figure 3–12 Bound Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)



PDSC\$K_MIN_BOUND_SIZE = 24
End of required part of procedure descriptor

*FRET = PDSC\$V_FUNC_RETURN

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Table 3–9 Contents of the Bound Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSC\$W_FLAGS	Vector of flag bits <15:0> that must be a copy of the flag bits (except for KIND bits) contained in the quadword pointed to by PDSC\$Q_PROC_VALUE.
PDSC\$V_KIND	A 4-bit field <3:0> that identifies the type of procedure descriptor. For a procedure with bound values, this field must specify a value of 0.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

Table 3–9 (Cont.) Contents of the Bound Procedure Descriptor (PDSC)

Field Name	Contents
PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN	<p>A 4-bit field <11:8> that describes which registers are used for the function value return (if there is one) and what format is used for those registers.</p> <p>PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN in a bound procedure descriptor must be the same as the PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN of the procedure descriptor for the procedure for which the environment is established.</p> <p>Table 5–4 lists and describes the possible encoding values of PDSCSV_FUNC_RETURN.</p>
Bits 12–15	Reserved and must be 0.
PDSCSW_SIGNATURE_OFFSET	<p>A 16-bit signed byte offset from the start of the procedure descriptor. This offset designates the start of the procedure signature block (if any). In a bound procedure, a 0 in this field indicates the actual signature block must be sought in the procedure descriptor indicated by the PDSCSQ_PROC_VALUE field. A 1 in this field indicates a standard default signature. (An offset value of 1 is not a valid offset because both procedure descriptors and signature blocks must be quadword aligned. See Section 5.2 for details of the procedure signature block.)</p> <p>Note that a nonzero signature offset in a bound procedure value normally occurs only in the case of bound procedures used as part of the implementation of calls from native OpenVMS Alpha code to translated OpenVMS VAX images. In any case, if a nonzero offset is present, it takes precedence over signature information that might occur in any related procedure descriptor.</p>
PDSCSQ_ENTRY	Address of the transfer code sequence.
PDSCSQ_PROC_VALUE	Value of the procedure to be called by the transfer code. The value can be either the address of a procedure descriptor for the procedure or possibly another bound procedure value.
PDSCSQ_ENVIRONMENT	An environment value to pass to the procedure. The choice of environment value is system implementation specific. For more information, see Section 3.6.4.2.

3.6.4.2 Bound Procedure Value

The procedure value for a bound procedure is a pointer to a bound procedure descriptor that, like all other procedure descriptors, contains the address to which the calling procedure must transfer control at offset 8 (see Figure 3–12). This **transfer code** is responsible for setting up the dynamic environment needed by the target nested procedure and then completing the transfer of control to the code for that procedure. The transfer code receives in R27 a pointer to its corresponding bound procedure descriptor and thus can fetch any required environment information from that descriptor. A bound procedure descriptor also contains a procedure value for the target procedure that is used to complete the transfer of control.

When the transfer code sequence addressed by PDSCSQ_ENTRY of a bound procedure descriptor is called (by a call sequence such as the one given in Section 3.6.3), the procedure value will be in R27, and the transfer code must finish setting up the environment for the target procedure. The preferred location for this transfer code is directly preceding the code for the target procedure. This saves a memory fetch and a branching instruction and optimizes instruction caches and paging.

The following is an example of such a transfer code sequence. It is an example of a target procedure Q that expects the environment value to be passed in R1 and a linkage pointer in R27.

```

Q_TRANSFER:
        LDQ    R1,24(R27)    ;Environment value to R1
        LDQ    R27,16(R27)  ;Procedure descriptor address to R27
Q_ENTRY::
        ;Normal procedure entry code starts here

```

After the transfer code has been executed and control is transferred to Q's entry address, R27 contains the address of Q's procedure descriptor, R26 (unmodified by transfer code) contains the return address, and R1 contains the environment value.

When a bound procedure value such as this is needed, the bound procedure descriptor is usually allocated on the parent procedure's stack.

3.6.5 Entry and Exit Code Sequences

To ensure that the stack can be interpreted at any point during thread execution, all procedures must adhere to certain conventions for entry and exit as defined in this section.

3.6.5.1 Entry Code Sequence

Because the value of FP defines the current procedure, all properties of the environment specified by a procedure's descriptor must be valid before the FP is modified to make that procedure current. In addition, none of the properties specified in the calling procedure's descriptor may be invalidated before the called procedure becomes current. So, until the FP has been modified to make the procedure current, all entry code must adhere to the following rules:

- All registers specified by this standard as saved across a standard call must contain their original (at entry) contents.
- No standard calls may be made.

Note

If an exception is raised or if an exception occurs in the entry code of a procedure, that procedure's exception handler (if any) will *not* be invoked because the procedure is not current yet. Therefore, if a procedure has an exception handler, compilers may not move code into the procedure prologue that might cause an exception that would be handled by that handler.

When a procedure is called, the code at the entry address must synchronize (as needed) any pending exceptions caused by instructions issued by the caller, must save the caller's context, and must make the called procedure current by modifying the value of FP as described in the following steps:

1. If PDSC\$*L_SIZE* is not 0, set register SP = SP – PDSC\$*L_SIZE*.
2. If PDSC\$*V_BASE_REG_IS_FP* is 1, store the address of the procedure descriptor at 0(SP).

If PDSC\$*V_KIND* = PDSC\$*K_KIND_FP_REGISTER*, copy the return address to the register specified by PDSC\$*B_SAVE_RA*, if it is not already there, and copy the FP register to the register specified by PDSC\$*B_SAVE_FP*.

If PDSC\$*V_KIND* = PDSC\$*K_KIND_FP_STACK*, copy the return address to the quadword at the RSA\$*Q_SAVED_RETURN* offset in the register save area denoted by PDSC\$*W_RSA_OFFSET*, and store the registers specified by PDSC\$*L_IREG_MASK* and PDSC\$*L_FREG_MASK* in the register save area

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

denoted by PDSC\$W_RSA_OFFSET. (This step includes saving the value in FP.)

Execute TRAPB if required (see Section 8.5.3.2 for details).

3. If PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 0, load register FP with the address of the procedure descriptor or the address of a quadword that contains the address of the procedure descriptor.

If PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 1, copy register SP to register FP.

The ENTRY_LENGTH value in the procedure descriptor provides information that is redundant with the setting of a new frame pointer register value. That is, the value could be derived by starting at the entry address and scanning the instruction stream to find the one that updates FP. The ENTRY_LENGTH value included in the procedure descriptor supports the debugger or PCA facility so that such a scan is not required.

Entry Code Example for a Stack Frame Procedure

Example 3–1 is an entry code example for a stack frame. The example assumes that:

- This is a stack frame procedure
- Registers R2–4 and F2–3 are saved and restored
- PDSC\$W_RSA_OFFSET = 16
- The procedure has a static exception handler that does not reraise arithmetic traps
- The procedure uses a variable amount of stack

If the code sequence in Example 3–1 is interrupted by an asynchronous software interrupt, SP will have a different value than it did at entry, but the calling procedure will still be current.

After an interrupt, it would not be possible to determine the original value of SP by the register frame conventions. If actions by an exception handler result in a nonlocal GOTO call to a location in the immediate caller, then it will not be possible to restore SP to the correct value in that caller. Therefore, any procedure that contains a label that can be the target of a nonlocal GOTO by immediately called procedures must be prepared to reset or otherwise manage the SP at that label.

Example 3–1 Entry Code for a Stack Frame Procedure

```
LDA    SP, -SIZE(SP)    ;Allocate space for new stack frame
STQ    R27, (SP)        ;Set up address of procedure descriptor
STQ    R26, 16(SP)      ;Save return address
STQ    R2, 24(SP)       ;Save first integer register
STQ    R3, 32(SP)       ;Save next integer register
STQ    R4, 40(SP)       ;Save next integer register
STQ    FP, 48(SP)       ;Save caller's frame pointer
STT    F2, 56(SP)       ;Save first floating-point register
STT    F3, 64(SP)       ;Save last floating-point register
TRAPB                                     ;Force any pending hardware exceptions to
                                         ; be raised
MOV    SP, FP           ;Called procedure is now the current procedure
```

Entry Code Example for a Register Frame

Example 3–2 assumes that the called procedure has no static exception handler and utilizes no stack storage, PDSC\$B_SAVE_RA specifies R26, PDSC\$B_SAVE_FP specifies R22, and PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 0:

Example 3–2 Entry Code for a Register Frame Procedure

```
MOV    FP,R22          ;Save caller's FP.
MOV    R27,FP          ;Set FP to address of called procedure's
                        ; descriptor. Called procedure is now the
                        ; current procedure.
```

3.6.5.2 Exit Code Sequence

When a procedure returns, the exit code must restore the caller's context, synchronize any pending exceptions, and make the caller current by modifying the value of FP. The exit code sequence must perform the following steps:

1. If PDSC\$V_BASE_REG_IS_FP is 1, then copy FP to SP.
If PDSC\$V_KIND = PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_STACK, and this procedure saves or restores any registers other than FP and SP, reload those registers from the register save area as specified by PDSC\$W_RSA_OFFSET.
If PDSC\$V_KIND = PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_STACK, load a scratch register with the return address from the register save area as specified by PDSC\$W_RSA_OFFSET. (If PDSC\$V_KIND = PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_REGISTER, the return address is already in scratch register PDSC\$B_SAVE_RA.)
Execute TRAPB if required (see Section 8.5.3.2 for details).
2. If PDSC\$V_KIND = PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_REGISTER, copy the register specified by PDSC\$B_SAVE_FP to register FP.
3. If PDSC\$V_KIND = PDSC\$K_KIND_FP_STACK, reload FP from the saved FP in the register save area.
4. If a function value is not being returned using the stack (PDSC\$V_STACK_RETURN_VALUE is 0), then restore SP to the value it had at procedure entry by adding the value that was stored in PDSC\$L_SIZE to SP. (In some cases, the returning procedure will leave SP pointing to a lower stack address than it had on entry to the procedure, as specified in Section 3.7.7.)
5. Jump to the return address (which is in a scratch register).

The called routine does not adjust the stack to remove any arguments passed in memory. This responsibility falls to the calling routine that may choose to defer their removal because of optimizations or other considerations.

Exit Code Example for a Stack Frame

Example 3–3 shows the return code sequence for the stack frame.

Interruption of the code sequence in Example 3–3 by an asynchronous software interrupt can result in the calling procedure being the current procedure, but with SP not yet restored to its value in that procedure. The discussion of that situation in entry code sequences applies here as well.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.6 Transfer of Control

Example 3–3 Exit Code Sequence for a Stack Frame

```
MOV    FP,SP           ;Chop the stack back
LDQ    R28,16(FP)      ;Get return address
LDQ    R2,24(FP)       ;Restore first integer register
LDQ    R3,32(FP)       ;Restore next integer register
LDQ    R4,40(FP)       ;Restore next integer register
LDT    F2,56(FP)       ;Restore first floating-point register
LDT    F3,64(FP)       ;Restore last floating-point register
TRAPB                                     ;Force any pending hardware exceptions to
                                     ; be raised
LDQ    FP,48(FP)       ;Restore caller's frame pointer
LDA    SP,SIZE(SP)    ;Restore SP (SIZE is compiled into PDSC$L_SIZE)
RET    R31,(R28)      ;Return to caller's code
```

Example 3–4 Exit Code Sequence for a Register Frame

```
MOV    R22,FP         ;Restore caller's FP value
                                     ; Caller is once again the current procedure.
RET    R31,(R26)      ;Return to caller's code
```

Exit Code Example for a Register Frame

Example 3–4 contains the return code sequence for the register frame.

3.7 Data Passing

This section defines the OpenVMS Alpha calling standard conventions of passing data between procedures in a call stack. An argument item represents one unit of data being passed between procedures.

3.7.1 Argument-Passing Mechanisms

This OpenVMS Alpha calling standard defines three classes of argument items according to the mechanism used to pass the argument:

- Immediate value
- Reference
- Descriptor

Argument items are not self-defining; interpretation of each argument item depends on agreement between the calling and called procedures.

This standard does not dictate which passing mechanism must be used by a given language compiler. Language semantics and interoperability considerations might require different mechanisms in different situations.

Immediate value

An **immediate value** argument item contains the value of the data item. The argument item, or the value contained in it, is directly associated with the parameter.

Reference

A **reference** argument item contains the address of a data item such as a scalar, string, array, record, or procedure. This data item is associated with the parameter.

Descriptor

A **descriptor** argument item contains the address of a descriptor, which contains structural information about the argument's type (such as array bounds) and the address of a data item. This data item is associated with the parameter.

3.7.2 Argument List Structure

The argument list in an OpenVMS Alpha call is an ordered set of zero or more argument items, which together comprise a logically contiguous structure known as the argument item sequence. An argument item is specified using up to 64 bits.

A 64-bit argument item can be used to pass arguments by immediate value, by reference, and by descriptor. Any combination of these mechanisms in an argument list is permitted.

Although the argument items form a logically contiguous sequence, they are in practice mapped to integer and floating-point registers and to memory in a method that can produce a physically discontinuous argument list. Registers R16–21 and F16–21 are used to pass the first six items of the argument item sequence. Additional argument items must be passed in a memory argument list that must be located at 0(SP) at the time of the call.

Table 3–10 specifies the standard locations in which argument items can be passed.

Table 3–10 Argument Item Locations

Item	Integer Register	Floating-Point Register	Stack
1	R16	F16	
2	R17	F17	
3	R18	F18	
4	R19	F19	
5	R20	F20	
6	R21	F21	
7– <i>n</i>			0(SP) – (<i>n</i> – 7) * 8(SP)

The following list summarizes the general requirements that determine the location of any specific argument:

- All argument items are passed in the integer registers or on the stack, *except* for argument items that are floating-point data passed by immediate value.
- Floating-point data passed by immediate value is passed in the floating-point registers or on the stack.
- Only *one* location (across an item row in Table 3–10) can be used by any given argument item in a list. For example, if argument item 3 is an integer passed by value, and argument item 4 is a single-precision floating-point number passed by value, then argument item 3 is assigned to R18 and argument item 4 is assigned to F19.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.7 Data Passing

- A single- or double-precision complex value is treated as two arguments for the purpose of argument-item sequence rules. In particular, the real part of a complex value might be passed as the sixth argument item in register F21, in which case the imaginary part is then passed as the seventh argument item in memory.

An extended precision complex value is passed by reference using a single integer or stack argument item. (An extended precision complex value is not passed by immediate value because the component extended precision floating values are not passed by value. See also Section 3.7.5.1, Sending Mechanism.)

The argument list that includes both the in-memory portion and the portion passed in registers can be read from and written to by the called procedure. Therefore, the calling procedure must not make any assumptions about the validity of any part of the argument list after the completion of a call.

3.7.3 Argument Lists and High-Level Languages

High-level language functional notations for procedure call arguments are mapped into argument item sequences according to the following requirements:

- Arguments are mapped from left to right to increasing offsets in the argument item sequence. R16 or F16 is allocated to the first argument, and the last quadword of the memory argument list (if any) is allocated to the last argument.
- Each source language argument corresponds to one or more contiguous Alpha calling standard argument items.
- Each argument item consists of 64 bits.
- A null or omitted argument—for example, CALL SUB(A,,B)—is represented by an argument item containing the value 0.

Arguments passed by immediate value cannot be omitted unless a default value is supplied by the language. (This is to enable called procedures to distinguish an omitted immediate argument from an immediate value argument with the value 0.)

Trailing null or omitted arguments—for example, CALL SUB(A,,)—are passed by the same rules as for embedded null or omitted arguments.

3.7.4 Unused Bits in Passed Data

Whenever data is passed by value between two procedures in registers (for the first six input arguments and return values), or in memory (for arguments after the first six), the bits not used by the data are sign extended or zero extended as appropriate.

Table 3–11 lists and defines the various data-type requirements for size and their extensions to set or clear unused bits.

Table 3–11 Data Types and the Unused Bits in Passed Data

Data Type	Type Designator	Data Size (bytes)	Register Extension Type	Memory Extension Type
Byte logical	BU	1	Zero64	Zero64
Word logical	WU	2	Zero64	Zero64
Longword logical	LU	4	Sign64	Sign64
Quadword logical	QU	8	Data64	Data64
Byte integer	B	1	Sign64	Sign64
Word integer	W	2	Sign64	Sign64
Longword integer	L	4	Sign64	Sign64
Quadword integer	Q	8	Data64	Data64
F_floating	F	4	Hard	Data32
D_floating	D	8	Hard	Data64
G_floating	G	8	Hard	Data64
F_floating complex	FC	2 * 4	2*Hard	2*Data32
D_floating complex	DC	2 * 8	2*Hard	2*Data64
G_floating complex	GC	2 * 8	2*Hard	2*Data64
S_floating	FS	4	Hard	Data32
T_floating	FT	8	Hard	Data64
X_floating	FX	16	N/A	N/A
S_floating complex	FSC	2 * 4	2*Hard	2*Data32
T_floating complex	FTC	2 * 8	2*Hard	2*Data64
X_floating complex	FXC	2 * 16	N/A	N/A
Small structures of 8 bytes or less	N/A	≤8	Nostd	Nostd
Small arrays of 8 bytes or less	N/A	≤8	Nostd	Nostd
32-bit address	N/A	4	Sign64	Sign64
64-bit address	N/A	8	Data64	Data64

The following are the defined meanings for the extension type symbols used in Table 3–11:

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.7 Data Passing

Sign Extension Type	Defined Function
Sign64	Sign-extended to 64 bits.
Zero64	Zero-extended to 64 bits.
Data32	Data is 32 bits. The state of bits <63:32> is unpredictable.
2*Data32	Two single-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as Data32).
Data64	Data is 64 bits.
2*Data64	Two double-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as Data64).
Hard	Passed in the layout defined by the hardware SRM.
2*Hard	Two floating-point parts of the complex value are stored in a pair of registers as independent floating-point values (each handled as Hard).
Nostd	State of all high-order bits not occupied by the data is unpredictable across a call or return.

Because of the varied rules for sign extension of data when passed as arguments, both calling and called routines must agree on the data type of each argument. No implicit data-type conversions can be assumed between the calling procedure and the called procedure.

3.7.5 Sending Data

This section defines the OpenVMS Alpha calling standard requirements for mechanisms to send data and the order of argument evaluation.

3.7.5.1 Sending Mechanism

As previously defined, the argument-passing mechanisms allowed are immediate value, reference, and descriptor. Requirements for using these mechanisms follow:

- **By immediate value.** An argument may be passed by immediate value only if the argument is one of the following:
 - One of the noncomplex scalar data types with a size known (at compile time) to be ≤ 64 bits
 - Either single or double precision complex
 - A record with a known size (at compile time)
 - A set, implemented as a bit vector, with a size known (at compile time) to be ≤ 64 bits

No form of string or array data type may be passed by immediate value in a standard call.

Unused high-order bits must be zero or sign extended, as appropriate depending on the data type, to fill all bits of each argument list item (as specified in Table 3–11).

A single- or double- precision complex value is passed as two single or double precision floating-point values, respectively. Note that the argument count reflects that two argument positions are used rather than just one actual argument.

A record value, which may be larger than 64 bits, is passed by immediate value as follows:

- Allocate as many fully occupied argument item positions to the argument value as are needed to represent the argument.
- The value of the unoccupied bits is undefined in a final, partially occupied argument item position, if any.
- If an argument position is passed in one of the registers, it can only be passed in an integer register (never in a floating-point register).

Other argument values that are larger than 64 bits can be passed by immediate value using nonstandard conventions, typically using a method similar to those for passing records. Thus, for example, a 26-byte string can be passed by value in four integer registers.

- **By reference.** Nonparametric arguments (arguments for which associated information such as string size and array bounds are not required) can be passed by reference in a standard call. This includes extended precision floating and extended precision complex values.
- **By descriptor.** Parametric arguments (arguments for which associated information such as string size and array bounds must be passed to the caller) are passed by a single descriptor in a standard call.

Note that extended floating values are not passed using the immediate value mechanism; rather, they are passed using the by reference mechanism. (However, when by value semantics is required, it may be necessary to make a copy of the actual parameter and pass a reference to that copy in order to avoid improper alias effects.)

Also note that when a record is passed by immediate value, the component types are not material to how the argument is aligned; the record will always be quadword aligned.

3.7.5.2 Order of Argument Evaluation

Because most high-level languages do not specify the order of evaluation (with respect to side effects) of arguments, those language processors can evaluate arguments in any convenient order. The choice of argument evaluation order and code generation strategy is constrained only by the definition of the particular language. Programs should not depend on the order of evaluation of arguments.

3.7.6 Receiving Data

When it cannot be determined at compile time whether a given in-register argument item is passed in a floating-point register or an integer register, the argument information register can be interpreted at run time to establish where the argument was passed. (See Section 3.6.1 for details.)

3.7.7 Returning Data

A standard function must return its function value by one of the following mechanisms:

- Immediate value
- Reference
- Descriptor

These mechanisms are the only standard means available for returning function values, and they support the important language-independent data types. Functions that return values by any mechanism other than those specified here are nonstandard, language-specific functions.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.7 Data Passing

3.7.7.1 Function Value Return by Immediate Value

This standard defines the following two types of function returns by immediate value:

- Nonfloating function value return
- Floating function value return

Nonfloating Function Value Return by Immediate Value

A function value is returned by immediate value in register R0 *only* if the type of function value is one of the following:

- Nonfloating-point scalar data type with size known to be ≤ 64 bits
- Record with size known to be ≤ 64 bits
- Set, implemented as a bit vector, with size known to be ≤ 64 bits

No form of string or array can be returned by immediate value, and two separate 32-bit entities cannot be combined and returned in R0.

A function value of less than 64 bits returned in R0 must be zero extended or sign extended as appropriate, depending on the data type (see Table 3-11), to a full quadword.

Floating Function Value Return by Immediate Value

A function value is returned by immediate value in register F0 *only* if it is a noncomplex single- or double-precision floating-point value (F, D, G, S, or T).

A function value is returned by immediate value in registers F0 and F1 *only* if it is a complex single or double-precision floating-point value (complex F, D, G, S, or T).

Note that extended floating point and extended complex values are returned by reference as described next.

3.7.7.2 Function Value Return by Reference

A function value is returned by reference *only* if the function value satisfies both of the following criteria:

- Its size is known to both the calling procedure and the called procedure, but the value cannot be returned by immediate value. (Because the function value requires more than 64 bits, the data type is a string or an array type.)
- It can be returned in a contiguous region of storage.

The actual-argument list and the formal-argument list are shifted to the right by one argument item. The new, first argument item is reserved for the function value. This hidden first argument is included in the count and register usage information that is passed in the argument information register (see Section 3.6.1 for details).

The calling procedure must provide the required contiguous storage and pass the address of the storage as the first argument. This address *must* specify storage naturally aligned according to the data type of the function value.

The called function must write the function value to the storage described by the first argument.

The `this` Pointer

For C++, when the `this` pointer is passed as an implicit first parameter and a pointer to a return value buffer is also required, then the `this` pointer becomes the first parameter, the buffer pointer becomes the second parameter, and the remaining normal parameters are shifted two slots to make this possible.

3.7.7.3 Function Value Return by Descriptor

A function value is returned by descriptor *only* if the function value satisfies all of the following criteria:

- It cannot be returned by immediate value. (Because the function value requires more than 64 bits, the data type is a string or an array type, and so on.)
- Its size is not known to either the calling procedure or the called procedure.
- It can be returned in a contiguous region of storage.

Noncontiguous function values are language specific and cannot be returned as a standard-conforming return value.

Records, noncontiguous arrays, and arrays with more than one dimension cannot be returned by descriptor in a standard call.

Both 32-bit and 64-bit descriptor forms can be used for function values returned by descriptor. See Chapter 7 for details of the descriptor forms.

The use of descriptors for function value return divides into three major cases with return values involving:

- Dynamic text—Heap-managed strings of arbitrary and dynamically changeable length
- Return objects created by the calling routine—Function values that are to be returned in an object allocated by and having attributes (bounds, lengths, and so on) specified by the calling routine
- Return objects created by the called routine—Function values that are returned in an object allocated by and having attributes (bounds, lengths, and so on) specified by the called routine

For correct results to be obtained from this type of function return, the calling and called routines must agree by prior arrangement which of these three major cases applies, and whether 64-bit descriptor forms may be used.

The following paragraphs describe the specialized requirements for each major case:

Dynamic Text

For dynamic text return by descriptor, the calling routine passes a valid (completely initialized) dynamic string descriptor (`DSC$B_CLASS = DSC$K_CLASS_D`). The called routine must assign a value to the variable represented by this descriptor using the same rules that apply to a dynamic text descriptor used as an ordinary parameter.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.7 Data Passing

Return Object Created by Calling Routine

For a return object created by the calling routine, the calling routine passes a descriptor in which all fields are completely loaded.

The called routine must supply a return value that satisfies that description. In particular, the called routine must truncate or pad the returned value to satisfy the requirements of the descriptor according to the semantics of the language in which the called routine is written.

The calling and called routines must agree by prior arrangement on the `DSC$B_CLASS` and `DSC$B_DTYPE` of descriptor to be used.

Return Object Created by Called Routine

For a return object created by the called routine, the calling and called routines must agree by prior arrangement on the `DSC$B_CLASS` and `DSC$B_DTYPE` of descriptor to be used. The calling routine passes a descriptor in which:

- `DSC$A_POINTER` field is set to 0.
- `DSC$B_CLASS` field is loaded.
- `DSC$B_DTYPE` field is loaded.
- `DSC$B_DIMCT` field is loaded and the `DSC$B_AFLAGS` field is set to 0 if the descriptor is an array descriptor.
- All other fields are unpredictable.

If the passed descriptor is an array descriptor, it must contain space for bounds information to be returned even though the `DSC$B_AFLAGS` field is set to 0.

The called routine must return the function value using stack return conventions and load the `DSC$A_POINTER` field to point to the returned data. Other descriptor information, such as origin, bounds (if supplied), and `DSC$B_AFLAGS` fields must be filled in appropriately to correspond to the returned data.

An important implication of a call that uses this kind of value return is that the stack pointer normally is not restored to its value prior to the call as part of the return from the called procedure. The returned value typically (but not necessarily) is left by the called routine somewhere on the stack. For that reason, this mechanism is sometimes known as the **stack return** mechanism.

However, this type of return does not imply that the actual storage used by the called routine to hold the returned value must be at the address pointed to by the stack pointer; it need not even be on the stack. It could be in some read-only, static memory. (This latter case might arise when the returned value is constant or is obtained from some constant structure.) For this reason, the calling routine must not assume that the data described by the return descriptor is writable.

3.8 Data Allocation

This section describes the standard static data requirements that define the Alpha alignment of data structures, record formats, and record layout. These conventions help to ensure proper data compatibility with all OpenVMS Alpha and VAX languages.

3.8.1 Alignment

In the Alpha environment, memory references to data that is not naturally aligned can result in alignment faults, which can severely degrade the performance of all procedures that reference the unaligned data.

To avoid such performance degradation, all data values on Alpha systems should be naturally aligned. Table 3-12 contains information on data alignment.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.8 Data Allocation

Table 3–12 Natural Alignment Requirements

Data Type	Alignment Starting Position
8-bit character string	Byte boundary
16-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 2 (word alignment)
32-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword alignment)
64-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword alignment)
F_floating F_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword)
D_floating D_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
G_floating G_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
S_floating S_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword alignment)
T_floating T_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
X_floating X_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 16 (octaword)

For aggregates such as strings, arrays, and records, the data type to be considered for purposes of alignment is *not* the aggregate itself, but rather the elements of which the aggregate is composed. The alignment requirement of an aggregate is that all elements of the aggregate be naturally aligned. For example, varying 8-bit character strings must start at addresses that are a multiple of at least 2 (word alignment) because of the 16-bit count at the beginning of the string; 32-bit integer arrays start at a longword boundary, irrespective of the extent of the array.

The rules for passing a record in an argument that is passed by immediate value (see Section 3.7.5.1) always provide quadword alignment of the record value independent of the normal alignment requirement of the record. If deemed appropriate by an implementation, normal alignment can be established within the called procedure by making a copy of the record argument at a suitably aligned location.

3.8.2 Record Layout Conventions

The OpenVMS Alpha calling standard rules for record layout are designed to provide good run-time performance on all implementations of the Alpha architecture and to provide the required level of compatibility with conventional VAX operating environments.

Therefore, this standard defines two record layout conventions:

- Those optimized for optimal access characteristics (referred to as **aligned** record layouts)
- Those compatible with conventions that are traditionally used by VAX languages (referred to as **VAX compatible** record layouts)

Note

Although compiler implementers must make appropriate business decisions, Hewlett-Packard strongly recommends that all Alpha high-level language compilers should support both record layouts.

Only these two record layouts may be used across standard interfaces or between languages. Languages can support other language-specific record layout conventions, but such layouts are nonstandard.

The aligned record layout conventions should be used unless interchange is required with conventional VAX applications that use the OpenVMS VAX compatible record layouts.

3.8.2.1 Aligned Record Layout

The aligned record layout conventions ensure that:

- All components of a record or subrecord are naturally aligned.
- Layout and alignment of record elements and subrecords are independent of any record or subrecord in which they are embedded.
- Layout and alignment of a subrecord is the same as if it were a top-level record.
- Declaration in high-level languages of standard records for interlanguage use is straightforward and obvious, and meets the requirements for source-level compatibility between Alpha and VAX languages.

The aligned record layout is defined by the following conventions:

- The components of a record must be laid out in memory corresponding to the lexical order of their appearance in the high-level language declaration of the record.
- The first bit of a record or subrecord must be directly addressable (byte aligned).
- Records and subrecords must be aligned according to the largest natural alignment requirements of the contained elements and subrecords.
- Bit fields (packed subranges of integers) are characterized by an underlying integer type that is a byte, word, longword, or quadword in size together with an allocation size in bits. A bit field is allocated at the next available bit boundary, provided that the resulting allocation does not cross an alignment boundary of the underlying type. Otherwise, the field is allocated at the next byte boundary that is aligned as required for the underlying type. (In the later case, the space skipped over is left permanently not allocated.) In addition, if necessary, the alignment of the record as a whole is increased to that of the underlying integer type.
- Unaligned bit strings, unaligned bit arrays, and elements of unaligned bit arrays must start at the next available bit in the record. No fill is ever supplied preceding an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or unaligned bit array element.
- All other components of a record must start at the next available naturally aligned address for the data type.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.8 Data Allocation

- The length of a record must be a multiple of its alignment. (This includes the case when a record is a component of another record.)
- Strings and arrays must be aligned according to the natural alignment requirements of the data type of which the string or array is composed.
- The length of an array element is a multiple of its alignment, even if this leaves unused space at its end. The length of the whole array is the sum of the lengths of its elements.

3.8.2.2 OpenVMS VAX Compatible Record Layout

The OpenVMS VAX compatible record layout is defined by the following conventions:

- The components of a record must be laid out in memory corresponding to the lexical order of their appearance in the high-level language declaration of the record.
- Unaligned bit strings, unaligned bit arrays, and elements of unaligned bit arrays must start at the next available bit in the record. No fill is ever supplied preceding an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or unaligned bit array element.
- All other components of a record must start at the next available byte in the record. Any unused bits following the last-used bit in the last-used byte of each component must be filled out to the next byte boundary so that any following data starts on a byte boundary.
- Subrecords must be aligned according to the largest alignment of the contained elements and subrecords. A subrecord always starts at the next available byte unless it consists entirely of unaligned bit data and it immediately follows an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or a subrecord consisting entirely of unaligned bit data.
- Records must be aligned on byte boundaries.

3.9 Multithreaded Execution Environments

This section defines the conventions to support the execution of multiple threads in a multilanguage Alpha environment. Specifically defined is how compiled code must perform stack limit checking. While this standard is compatible with a multithreaded execution environment, the detailed mechanisms, data structures, and procedures that support this capability are not specified in this manual.

For a multithread environment, the following characteristics are assumed:

- There can be one or more threads executing within a single process.
- The state of a thread is represented in a **thread environment block (TEB)**.
- The TEB of a thread contains information that determines a stack limit below which the stack pointer must not be decremented by the executing code (except for code that implements the multithread mechanism itself).
- Exception handling is fully reentrant and multithreaded.

3.9.1 Stack Limit Checking

A program that is otherwise correct can fail because of stack overflow. Stack overflow occurs when extension of the stack (by decrementing the stack pointer, SP) allocates addresses not currently reserved for the current thread's stack.

Detection of a stack overflow situation is necessary because a thread, attempting to write into stack storage, could modify data allocated in that memory for some other purpose. This would most likely produce unpredictable and undesirable results or irreproducible application failures.

The requirements for procedures that can execute in a multithread environment include checking for stack overflow. This section defines the conventions for stack limit checking in a multithreaded program environment.

In the following sections, the term **new stack region** refers to the region of the stack from one less than the old value of SP to the new value of the SP.

3.9.1.1 Stack Guard Region

In a multithread environment, the memory beyond the limit of each thread's stack is protected by contiguous **guard pages**, which form the stack's **guard region**.

3.9.1.2 Stack Reserve Region

In some cases, it is desirable to maintain a stack **reserve region**, which is a minimum-sized region that is immediately above a thread's guard region. A reserve region may be desirable to ensure that exceptions or asynchronous system faults (ASTs) have stack space to execute on a thread's stack, or to ensure that the exception dispatcher and any exception handler that it might call have stack space to execute after detection of an invalid attempt to extend the stack.

This standard does not require a reserve region.

3.9.1.3 Methods for Stack Limit Checking

Because accessible memory may be available at addresses lower than those occupied by the guard region, compilers must generate code that never extends the stack past the guard pages into accessible memory that is not allocated to the thread's stack.

A general strategy is to access each page of memory down to and possibly including the page corresponding to the intended new value for the SP. If the stack is to be extended by an amount larger than the size of a memory page, then a series of accesses is required that works from higher to lower addressed pages. If any access results in a memory access violation, then the code has made an invalid attempt to extend the stack of the current thread.

Note

An access can be performed by using either a load or a store operation; however, be sure to use an instruction that is guaranteed to make an access to memory. For example, do not use an LDQ R31, * instruction, because the Alpha architecture does not allow any memory access, even a read access, whose result is discarded because of the R31 destination.

This standard defines two methods for stack limit checking: implicit and explicit.

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.9 Multithreaded Execution Environments

Implicit Stack Limit Checking

The following are two mutually exclusive strategies for implicit stack limit checking:

- If the lowest addressed byte of the new stack region is guaranteed to be accessed prior to any further stack extension, then the stack can be extended by an increment that is equal in size to the guard region (without any further accesses).
- If some byte (not necessarily the lowest) of the new stack region is guaranteed to be accessed prior to any further stack extension, then the stack can be extended by an increment that is equal in size to one-half the guard region (without any further accesses).

The stack frame format (see Section 3.4.3) and entry code rules (see Section 3.6.5) generally do not ensure access to the lowest address of a new stack region without introducing an extra access solely for that purpose. Consequently, this standard uses the second strategy. While the amount of implicit stack extension that can be achieved is smaller, the check is achieved at no additional cost.

This standard requires that the minimum guard region size is 8192 bytes, the size of the smallest memory protection granularity allowed by the Alpha architecture.

If the stack is being extended by an amount less than or equal to 4096 and a reserve region is not required, then explicit stack limit checking is not required. However, because asynchronous interrupts and calls to other procedures may also cause stack extension without explicit stack limit checking, stack extension with implicit limit checking must adhere to a strict set of conventions as follows:

- Explicit stack limit checking must be performed unless the amount by which the SP is decremented is known to be less than or equal to 4096 and a reserve region is not required.
- Some byte in the new stack region must be accessed before the SP can be decremented for a subsequent stack extension.

This access can be performed either before or after the SP is decremented for this stack extension, but it must be done before the SP can be decremented again.

- No standard procedure call can be made before some byte in the new stack region is accessed.
- The system exception dispatcher ensures that the lowest addressed byte in the new stack region is accessed if any kind of asynchronous interrupt occurs after the SP is decremented, but before the access in the new stack region occurs.

These conventions ensure that the stack pointer is not decremented so that it points to accessible storage beyond the stack limit without this error being detected (either by the guard region being accessed by the thread or by an explicit stack limit check failure).

As a matter of practice, the system can provide multiple guard pages in the guard region. When a stack overflow is detected as a result of access to the guard region, one or more guard pages can be unprotected for use by the exception-handling facility, and one or more guard pages can remain protected to provide implicit stack limit checking during exception processing. However, the size of the guard region and the number of guard pages is system defined and is not defined by this standard.

Explicit Stack Limit Checking

If the stack is being extended by an amount of unknown size or by a known size greater than the maximum implicit check size (4096), then a code sequence that follows the rules for implicit stack limit checking can be executed in a loop to access the new stack region incrementally in segments lesser than or equal to the minimum page size (8192 bytes). At least one access must occur in each such segment.

The first access must occur between SP and SP – 4096 because, in the absence of more specific information, the previous guaranteed access relative to the current stack pointer may be as much as 4096 bytes greater than the current stack pointer address.

The last access must be within 4096 bytes of the intended new value of the stack pointer. These accesses must occur in order, starting with the highest addressed segment and working toward the lowest addressed segment.

A more optimal strategy is:

1. Perform a read access using the intended new value of the stack pointer. This is nondestructive, even if the read is beyond the stack guard region, and may facilitate OS mapping of new stack pages, if appropriate, in a single operation.
2. Proceed with sequential accesses as just described.

Note

A simple algorithm that is consistent with this requirement (but achieves up to twice the minimum number of accesses) is to perform a sequence of accesses in a loop starting with the previous value of SP, decrementing by the minimum no-check extension size (4096) to, but not including, the first value that is less than the new value for the stack pointer.

The stack must *not* be extended incrementally in procedure prologues. A procedure prologue that needs to extend the stack by an amount of unknown size or known size greater than the minimum implicit check size must test new stack segments as just described in a loop that does not modify SP, and then update the stack with one instruction that copies the new stack pointer value into the SP.

Note

An explicit stack limit check can be performed either by inline code that is part of a prologue or by a run-time support routine that is tailored to be called from a procedure prologue.

Stack Reserve Region Checking

The size of the reserve region must be included in the increment size used for stack limit checks, after which it is not included in the amount by which the stack is actually extended. (Depending on the size of the reserve region, this may partially or even completely eliminate the ability to use implicit stack limit checking.)

OpenVMS Alpha Conventions

3.9 Multithreaded Execution Environments

3.9.1.4 Stack Overflow Handling

If a stack overflow is detected, one of the following results:

- Exception SSS_ACCVIO may be raised.
- The system may transparently extend the thread's stack, reset the TEB stack limit value appropriately, and continue execution of the thread.

Note that if a transparent stack extension is performed, a stack overflow that occurs in a called procedure might cause the stack to be extended. Therefore, the TEB stack limit value must be considered volatile and potentially modified by external procedure calls and by handling of exceptions.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

This chapter describes the fundamental concepts and conventions for calling a procedure in an OpenVMS I64 environment.

4.1 Register Usage

This section describes the register conventions for OpenVMS I64. OpenVMS uses the following register types:

- General
- Floating-point
- Predicate
- Branch
- Application

4.1.1 Partitioning

Registers are partitioned into the following classes that define the way a register can be used within a procedure:

- Scratch registers – may be modified by a procedure call; the caller must save these registers before a call if needed (**caller save**).
- Preserved registers – must not be modified by a procedure call; the callee must save and restore these registers if used (**callee save**). A procedure using one of the preserved general registers must save and restore the caller's original contents, including the NaT bits associated with the registers, without generating a NaT consumption fault.

One way to preserve a register is not to use it at all.

- Automatic registers – saved and restored automatically by the hardware call/return mechanism.
- Constant or Read-only registers – contain a fixed value that cannot be changed by the program.
- Special registers – used in the calling standard call/return mechanism.
- Global registers – shared across a set of cooperating routines as global static storage that happens to be allocated in a register. (Details regarding the dynamic lifetime of such storage are not addressed here.)

OpenVMS further defines the way that static registers can be used between routines:

- Special registers – used in the calling standard call/return mechanism. (These are the same as the set of special registers in the preceding list of registers used within a procedure.)

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.1 Register Usage

- Input registers – may be used to pass information into a procedure (in addition to the normal stacked input registers).
- Output registers – may be used to pass information back from a called procedure to its caller (in addition to the normal return value registers).
- Volatile registers – may not be used to pass information between procedures, either as input or output.

4.1.2 I64 General Register Usage

This standard defines the usage of the OpenVMS general registers as listed in Table 4–1.

Table 4–1 I64 General Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
R0	Constant	Always 0.
R1	Special	Global data pointer (GP). Designated to hold the address of the currently addressable global data segment. Its use is subject to the following conventions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. On entry to a procedure, GP is guaranteed valid for that procedure.2. At any direct procedure call, GP must be valid (for the caller). This guarantees that an import stub (see Section 4.7.3) can access the caller's linkage table.3. Any procedure call (indirect or direct) may modify GP unless the call is known to be local to the image.4. At procedure return, GP must be valid (for the returning procedure). This allows the compiler to optimize calls known to be local (an exception to convention 3). The effect of these rules is that GP must be treated as a scratch register at a point of call (that is, it must be saved by the caller), and it must be preserved from entry to exit.
R2	Volatile	May not be used to pass information between procedures, either as inputs or outputs. See also Section 4.1.8.
R3	Scratch	May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control. See also Section 4.1.8.
R4-R7	Preserved	General-purpose preserved registers. Used for any value that needs to be preserved across a procedure call. May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control. See also Section 4.1.8.
R8-R9	Scratch	Return Value. Can also be used as input (whether or not the procedure has a return value), but not in any additional ways.
R10-R11	Scratch	May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control. See also Section 4.1.8.

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Table 4–1 (Cont.) I64 General Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
R12	Special	Memory stack pointer (SP). Holds the lowest address of the current stack frame. At a call, the stack pointer must point to a 0 mod 16 aligned area. The stack pointer is also used to access any memory arguments upon entry to a function. Except in the case of dynamic stack allocation, code can use the stack pointer to reference stack items without having to set up a frame pointer for this purpose.
R13	Special	Reserved as a thread pointer (TP).
R14-R18	Volatile	May not be used to pass information between procedures, either as inputs or outputs. See also Section 4.1.8.
R19-R24	Scratch	May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control. See also Section 4.1.8.
R25	Special	Argument information (see Section 4.7.5.3).
R26-R31	Scratch	May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control. See also Section 4.1.8.
IN0-IN7	Automatic	Stacked input registers. Code may allocate a register stack frame of up to 96 registers with the ALLOC instruction, and partition this frame into three regions: input registers (IN0, IN1, ...), local registers (LOC0, LOC1, ...), and output registers (OUT0, OUT1, ...). R32–R39 (IN0–IN7) are used as incoming argument registers. Arguments beyond these registers appear in memory, as explained in Section 4.7.4.
LOC0-LOC95	Automatic	Stacked local registers. Code may allocate a register stack frame of up to 96 registers with the ALLOC instruction, and partition this frame into three regions: input registers (IN0, IN1, ...), local registers (LOC0, LOC1, ...), and output registers (OUT0, OUT1, ...). LOC0-LOC95 are used for local storage. See Section 4.7.4 for more information.
OUT0-OUT7	Scratch	Stacked output registers. Code may allocate a register stack frame of up to 8 registers with the ALLOC instruction, and partition this frame into three regions: input registers (IN0, IN1, ...), local registers (LOC0, LOC1, ...), and output registers (OUT0, OUT1, ...). OUT0-OUT7 are used to pass the first eight arguments in calls. See Section 4.7.4 for more information.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.1 Register Usage

4.1.3 I64 Floating-Point Register Usage

This standard defines the usage of the OpenVMS floating-point registers as listed in Table 4–2.

Table 4–2 I64 Floating-Point Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
F0	Constant	Always 0.0.
F1	Constant	Always 1.0.
F2-F5	Preserved	Can be used for any value that needs to be preserved across a procedure call. A procedure using one of the preserved floating-point registers must save and restore the caller's original contents without generating a NaT consumption fault.
F6-F7	Scratch	May be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways under explicit user control.
F8-F9	Scratch	Argument/Return values. See Sections 4.7.4 and 4.7.6 for the OpenVMS specifications for use of these registers.
F10-F15	Scratch	Argument values. See Section 4.7.4 for the OpenVMS specifications for use of these registers.
F16-F31	Preserved	Can be used for any value that needs to be preserved across a procedure call. A procedure using one of the preserved floating-point registers must save and restore the caller's original contents without generating a NaT consumption fault.
F32-F127	Scratch	Rotating registers or scratch registers.

Note

VAX floating-point data are never loaded or manipulated in the Itanium floating-point registers. However, VAX floating-point values may be converted to IEEE floating-point values, which are then manipulated in the I64 floating-point registers.

4.1.4 I64 Predicate Register Usage

Predicate registers are single-bit-wide registers used for controlling the execution of predicated instructions. This standard defines the usage of the OpenVMS predicate registers as listed in Table 4–3.

Table 4–3 I64 Predicate Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
P0	Constant	Always 1.
P1-P5	Preserved	Can be used for any predicate value that needs to be preserved across a procedure call. A procedure using one of the preserved predicate registers must save and restore the caller's original contents.
P6-P13	Scratch	Can be used within a procedure as a scratch register.

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Table 4–3 (Cont.) I64 Predicate Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
P14-P15	Volatile	May not be used to pass information between procedures, either as input or output. See also Section 4.1.8.
P16-P63	Preserved	Rotating registers.

4.1.5 I64 Branch Register Usage

Branch registers are used for making indirect branches. This standard defines the usage of the OpenVMS branch registers as listed in Table 4–4.

Table 4–4 I64 Branch Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
B0	Scratch	Contains the return address on entry to a procedure; otherwise a scratch register.
B1-B5	Preserved	Can be used for branch target addresses that need to be preserved across a procedure call.
B6-B7	Volatile	May not be used to pass information between procedures, either as input or output. See also Section 4.1.8.

4.1.6 I64 Application Register Usage

Application registers are special-purpose registers designated for application use. This standard defines the usage of the OpenVMS application registers as listed in Table 4–5.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.1 Register Usage

Table 4–5 I64 Application Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
AR.FPSR	See Usage	<p>Floating-point status register. This register is divided into the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trap Disable Bits (bits 5–0) – Must be preserved by the callee, except for procedures whose documented purpose is to change these bits. • Status Field 0 – Must be preserved by the callee, except for procedures whose documented purpose is to change these bits. The flag bits are the IEEE floating point standard sticky bits and are part of the static state of the machine. • Status Field 1 – Dedicated for use by divide and square root code, and must always be set to standard values at any procedure call boundary (including entry to exception handlers). These standard values are: trap disable set, round-to-nearest mode, 80-bit (extended) precision, widest range for exponent on, and flush-to-zero mode off. The flag bits are scratch. • Status Fields 2 and 3 – At procedure calls and returns, the control bits in these status fields must agree with the control bits in status field 0 and the trap disable bits should always be set. The flag bits are always available for scratch use. <p>Refer to Table 4–6 for initial values of the FPSR.</p>
AR.RNAT	Automatic	RSE NaT collection register. Holds the NaT bits for values stored by the register stack engine. These bits are saved automatically in the register stack backing store.
AR.UNAT	Preserved	User NaT collection register. Holds the NaT bits for values stored by the ST8.SPILL instruction. As a preserved register, it must be saved before a procedure can issue any ST8.SPILL instructions. The saved copy of AR.UNAT in a procedure's frame holds the NaT bits from the registers spilled by its caller; these NaT bits are thus associated with values local to the caller's caller.
AR.PFS	Special	Previous function state. Contains information that records the state of the caller's register stack frame and epilogue counter. It is overwritten on a procedure call; therefore, it must be saved before issuing any procedure calls, and restored prior to returning.
AR.BSP	Read-only	Backing store pointer. Contains the address in the backing store corresponding to the base of the current frame. This register may be modified only as a side effect of writing AR.BSPSTORE while the Register Stack Engine (RSE) is in enforced lazy mode.
AR.BSPSTORE	Special	Backing store pointer. Contains the address of the next RSE store operation. It may be read or written only while the RSE is in enforced lazy mode. Under normal operation, this register is managed by the RSE, and application code should not write to it, except when performing a stack switching operation.

(continued on next page)

Table 4–5 (Cont.) I64 Application Register Usage

Register	Class	Usage
AR.RSC	See Usage	RSE control; the register stack configuration register. This register is divided into the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mode – Controls the RSE behavior, and has scratch behavior. On a return, this field may be set to a standard value. • Privilege level – Controls the privilege level at which the RSE operates, and may not be changed by non-privileged software. • Endian mode – Controls the byte ordering used by the RSE, and must never be changed by an application.
AR.LC	Preserved	Loop counter.
AR.EC	Automatic	Epilogue counter (preserved in AR.PFS).
AR.CCV	Scratch	Compare and exchange comparison value.
AR.ITC	Read-only	Interval time counter.
AR.K0-AR.K7	Read-only	Kernel registers.
AR.CSD	Scratch	Reserved for use as implicit operand registers in future extensions to the Itanium architecture. To ensure forward compatibility, OpenVMS considers these registers as part of the thread and process state.
AR.SSD	Scratch	Reserved for use as implicit operand registers in future extensions to the Itanium architecture. To ensure forward compatibility, OpenVMS considers these registers as part of the thread and process state.

The status fields of the floating-point status register are initialized as shown in Table 4–6. The global trap disable bits (`ar.fpsr` bits 0-5) are initialized to ones.

Table 4–6 Initial Value of the Floating-point Status Register

Status Field	Flags	td	rc	pc	wre	ftz
sf0	000000	0	00	11	0	0
sf1	000000	1	00	11	1	0
sf2 and sf3	000000	1	00	11	0	0

4.1.7 User Mask

The User Mask register contains five bits that may be modified by an application program, subject to the following conventions:

- BE (Big Endian Memory Access Enable) – This bit must never be set on OpenVMS.
- UP (User Performance Monitor Enable) – This bit is reserved.
- AC (Alignment Check) – The application may set or clear this bit as desired. If the AC bit is clear, an unaligned memory reference may cause the system to deliver an exception to the application, or the system may emulate the unaligned reference. If the AC bit is set, an unaligned reference will always

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.1 Register Usage

cause the system to deliver an exception to the application. At program start, the value of this bit on OpenVMS is clear.

- MFL/MFH (Lower/Upper floating-point registers written) – The application should not clear either of these bits unless the values in the corresponding registers are no longer needed (for example, it may clear the MFH bit when returning from a procedure, because the upper set of floating-point registers is all scratch). Doing so otherwise may cause unpredictable behavior.

4.1.8 Additional Register Usage Information

As described in earlier sections, some registers are volatile and cannot be used to communicate information between routines (see Tables 4–1, 4–3, and 4–4). For example, B6 is used by OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV (see Section 4.7.7).

Of the volatile registers, the following registers are reserved for use by compiled code to communicate with specialized compiler support routines that require *out of band* information passing:

- Static general registers R17-R18
- Predicate register P15
- Branch register B7

For example, R17 and R18 are used by OTSSCALL_PROC (see Section 5.1.2.3).

The following static general registers may be used within and between procedures in any mutually consistent combination of ways:

- R3-R7
- R10-R11
- R19-R24
- R26-R31

The normal or default use for these registers is shown in the Class column of Table 4–1. However, using suitable programming language features, it is valid for any of these registers to be used as preserved, scratch, input, output, global or not used. Of course, the unwind information (see Section A.4) for each procedure must accurately describe the actual usage.

Registers R8 and R9 may also be used as inputs (whether or not the procedure has a return value), but not in any additional ways.

General registers whose class is described as constant, special, volatile or automatic in Section 4.1.1 cannot be used in any other way.

Floating-point, predicate, branch, and application registers can be used only according to the class described in Sections 4.1.2 through 4.1.6.

4.2 Address Representation

An address is a 64-bit value used to denote a position in memory. However, for compatibility with OpenVMS VAX and Alpha, many OpenVMS applications and user-mode facilities operate in such a manner that addresses are restricted to values that are representable in 32 bits. This means that OpenVMS addresses can often be stored and manipulated as 32-bit longword values. In such cases, the 32-bit address value is always implicitly or explicitly sign extended to form a 64-bit address for use by the Itanium hardware.

4.3 Procedure Representation

A **procedure value**, sometimes called a **function pointer**, is a value that uniquely identifies a procedure and can be used to call it.

For OpenVMS, a procedure value is the address of a **function descriptor**, which consists of at least two quadword fields: the address of the entry point and the GP value required by that procedure.

Every procedure whose address is taken, or might be taken, must have a unique **official function descriptor**. The address of this function descriptor is used for the procedure value that is passed as a parameter or when two procedure values are compared. For other purposes, additional **local function descriptors** may be used for efficiency (notably in images other than the image that contains the procedure).

An official function descriptor for any procedure which might be callable from a VAX or Alpha translated image must include signature information. A local function descriptor used to call a procedure that might be part of a VAX or Alpha translated image must also include additional fields to facilitate the call. Both of these cases are described in Section 5.1.2.

A function descriptor for a bound procedure uses a special pseudo-GP value and includes an uplevel frame pointer. Such function descriptors are described in Section 4.7.7.

The several kinds of function descriptors are summarized in Table 4–7.

Table 4–7 Summary of Function Descriptor Kinds

Kinds and Roles	Size (Quadwords)
Local function descriptor without translated image support	2
Local function descriptor with translated image support (jacket function descriptor)	4
Official function descriptor without translated image support	3
Official function descriptor with translated image support	3
Bound function descriptor	6

Note that the different kinds of function descriptor are not self-identifying (that is, they do not contain any form of tag or kind field).

4.4 Procedure Types

This calling standard defines the following basic types of procedures:

- Memory stack procedure—allocates a memory stack and may maintain part or all of its caller’s context on that stack
- Register stack procedure—allocates only a register stack and maintains its caller’s context in registers
- Null frame procedure—allocates neither a memory stack nor a register stack and therefore preserves no context of its caller; it is said to execute in the context of its caller

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.4 Procedure Types

A compiler may choose which type of procedure to generate based on the requirements of the procedure in question. A calling procedure does not need to know what type of procedure it is calling.

Every memory stack procedure or register stack procedure must have an associated unwind description (see Appendixes A and B) which describes what type of procedure it is and other procedure characteristics. A null frame procedure may also have an associated unwind description (a default description applies if not). This data structure is used to interpret the call stack at any given point in a thread's execution. It is typically built at compile time and usually is not accessed at run time except to support exception processing or other rarely executed code.

Read access to unwind descriptions is provided through the procedural interfaces described in Sections 4.8 and A.5.

An unwind description for a procedure is provided for the following reasons:

- To make invocations of that procedure visible to and interpretable by facilities such as the debugger, exception-handling system, and the unwinder.
- To ensure that the context of the caller saved by the called procedure can be restored if an unwind occurs. (For a description of unwinding, see Section 8.7.)

4.5 Memory Stack

The memory stack is used for local dynamic storage, spilled registers, and parameter passing. It is organized as a stack of procedure frames, beginning with the main program's frame at the base of the stack, and continuing towards the top of the stack with nested procedure calls. At the top of the stack is the frame for the currently active procedure. (There may be some system-dependent frames at the base of the stack, prior to the main program's frame, but an application program may not make any assumptions about them.)

The memory stack begins at an address determined by the operating system, and grows towards lower addresses in memory. The stack pointer register (SP) always points to the lowest address in the current, top-most, frame on the stack.

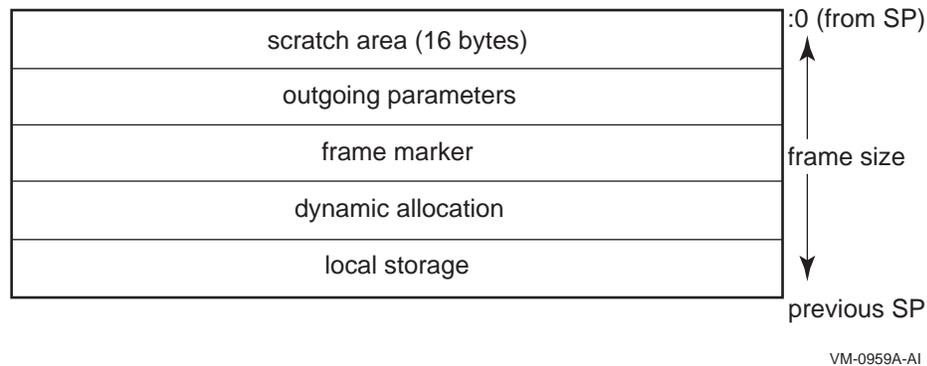
Each procedure creates its frame on entry by subtracting its frame size from the stack pointer, and removes its frame from the stack on exit by restoring the previous value of SP (usually by adding its frame size, but a procedure may save the original value of SP when its frame size may vary).

Because the register stack is also used for the same purposes as the memory stack, not all procedures need a memory stack frame. However, every non-leaf procedure must save at least its return link and the previous frame marker, either on the register stack or on the memory stack. This ensures that there is an invocation context for every non-leaf procedure on one or both of the stacks.

4.5.1 Procedure Frames

A memory stack procedure frame consists of five regions, as illustrated in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4–1 Procedure Frame



These regions are:

- **Scratch area.** This 16-byte region is provided as scratch storage for procedures that are called by the current procedure. Leaf procedures need not allocate this region. A procedure may use the 16 bytes pointed to by the stack pointer (SP) as scratch memory, but the contents of this area are not preserved by a procedure call.
- **Outgoing parameters.** Parameters in excess of those passed in registers are stored in this region of the stack frame. A procedure accesses its incoming parameters in the outgoing parameter region of its caller's stack frame.
- **Frame marker (optional).** This region may contain information required for unwinding through the stack (for example, a copy of the previous stack pointer).
- **Dynamic allocation.** This variable-sized region (initially zero length) can be created as needed.
- **Local storage.** A procedure can store local variables, temporaries, and spilled registers in this region. For conventions affecting the layout of this area for spilled registers, see Section A.3.

Whenever control is transferred to another procedure, the stack pointer must be octaword-aligned; at other times there is no stack alignment requirement. (A side effect of this is that the in-memory portion of the argument list will start on an octaword boundary.) During a procedure invocation, the SP can never be set to a value higher than the SP at entry to that procedure invocation.

Note

A stack pointer that is not octaword aligned is valid only in a variable-sized frame (see below) because the unwind descriptor (MEM_STACK_F, see Section A.4.1.3) for a fixed-size frame specifies the size in 16-byte units.

An application may not write to memory addresses lower than the stack pointer, because this memory area may be written to asynchronously (for example, as a result of exception processing).

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.5 Memory Stack

Most procedures are expected to have a fixed size frame, and the conventions are biased in favor of this. A procedure with a fixed size frame may reference all regions of the frame with a compile-time constant offset relative to the stack pointer. Compilers should determine the total size required for each region, and pad the local storage area to make the total frame size a multiple of 16 bytes. The procedure can then create the frame by subtracting an immediate constant from the stack pointer in the prologue, and remove the frame by adding the same immediate constant to the stack pointer in the epilogue.

If a procedure has a variable-size frame (for example, a C routine that calls the `alloca` built-in), it should make a copy of SP to serve as a frame pointer before subtracting the initial frame size from the stack pointer. The procedure can then restore the previous value of the stack pointer in the epilogue without regard for how much dynamic storage has been allocated within the frame. It can also use the frame pointer to access the local storage region, because offsets from SP will vary.

A frame pointer, as described above, is not required if both of the following conditions are true:

- The procedure uses an equivalent method of addressing the local storage region correctly before and after dynamic allocation.
- The code satisfies the conditions imposed by the stack unwind mechanism.

To expand a stack frame dynamically, the scratch area, outgoing parameters, and frame marker regions (which are always located relative to the current stack pointer), must be relocated to the new top of stack. If the scratch area and outgoing parameter area are both clear of any live values, there is no actual work involved in relocating these areas. For procedures with dynamically-sized frames, it is recommended that the previous stack pointer value be stored in a local stacked general register instead of the frame marker, so that the frame marker is also empty. If the previous stack pointer is stored in the frame marker, the code must take care to ensure that the stack is always unwindable while the stack is being expanded (see Appendix A).

Other issues depend on the compiler and the code being compiled. The standard calling sequence does not define a maximum stack frame size, nor does it restrict how a language system uses any stack frame region beyond those purposes described here. For example, the outgoing parameter region can be used as scratch storage whenever it is not needed for passing parameters.

4.5.2 Stack Overflow Detection

This section defines the conventions to support the execution of multiple threads in a multilanguage OpenVMS environment. Specifically defined is how compiled code must perform stack limit checking. While this standard is compatible with a multithreaded execution environment, the detailed mechanisms, data structures, and procedures that support this capability are not specified in this manual.

For a multithreaded environment, the following characteristics are assumed:

- There can be one or more threads executing within a single process.
- The state of a thread is represented in a thread environment block (TEB).
- The TEB of a thread contains information that determines a stack limit below which the stack pointer must not be decremented by the executing code (except for code that implements the multithreaded mechanism itself).

- Exception handling is fully reentrant and multithreaded.

4.5.2.1 Stack Limit Checking

A program that is otherwise correct can fail because of stack overflow. Stack overflow occurs when extension of the stack (by decrementing the stack pointer, SP) allocates addresses not currently reserved for the current thread's stack. This section defines the conventions for stack limit checking in a multithreaded environment.

In the following sections, the term **new stack region** refers to the region of the stack from one less than the old value of SP to the new value of SP.

Stack Guard Region

In a multithreaded environment, the address space beyond each thread's stack is protected by contiguous guard pages, which trap on any access. These pages form the stack guard region.

Stack Reserve Region

In some cases, it is useful to maintain a stack reserve region, which is a minimum-sized region that is between the current top of stack and the stack guard region. A stack reserve region can ensure that the following conditions exist:

- Exceptions or asynchronous system faults (ASTs, analogous to asynchronous signals) have stack space to execute on a thread's stack.
- The exception dispatcher and any exception handler that it might call have stack space to execute after detection of an invalid attempt to extend the stack.

This calling standard does not require a stack reserve region, but it does allow a language (for example, Ada) and its run-time system to implement one.

4.5.2.2 Methods for Stack Limit Checking

Because accessible memory may be available at addresses lower than those occupied by the stack guard region, compilers must generate code that never extends the stack past the stack guard region into accessible memory that is not allocated to the thread's stack.

A general strategy to prevent extending the stack past the stack guard region is to access each page of memory down to and possibly including the page corresponding to the intended new value of the SP. If the stack is to be extended by an amount larger than the size of a memory page, then a series of accesses is required that works from higher to lower addressed pages. If any access results in a memory access violation, then the code has made an invalid attempt to extend the stack of the current thread.

This calling standard defines two methods for stack limit checking, implicit and explicit, which are explained in the following sections.

Implicit Stack Limit Checking

If a byte (not necessarily the lowest) of the new stack region is guaranteed to be accessed prior to any further stack extension, then the stack can be extended by an increment that is up to one-half the stack guard region (without any additional accesses).

This standard requires that the minimum stack guard region size is 8192 bytes.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.5 Memory Stack

If the stack is being extended by 4096 bytes or less and the application does not use a stack reserve region, then explicit checking is not required. However, because asynchronous interrupts and calls to other procedures may also cause stack extension without explicit checking, stack extension with implicit checking must adhere to the following rules:

- Explicit stack limit checking must be performed unless the amount by which the SP is decremented is known to be less than or equal to 4096 and the application does not use a stack reserve region.
- Some byte in the new stack region must be accessed before the SP can be further decremented for a subsequent stack extension.
This access can be performed either before or after the SP is decremented for this stack extension, but it must be done before the SP can be decremented again.
- No standard procedure call can be made before some byte in the new stack region is accessed.
- The system exception dispatcher ensures that the lowest addressed byte in the new stack region is accessed if any kind of asynchronous interrupt occurs both after the SP is decremented and before the access in the new stack region occurs.

These conventions ensure that the stack pointer is not decremented so that it points to accessible storage beyond the stack limit without this error being detected (either by the guard region being accessed by the thread or by an explicit stack limit check failure).

As a matter of practice, the system can provide multiple guard pages in the stack guard region. When a stack overflow is detected as a result of access to the stack guard region, one or more guard pages can be unprotected for use by the exception-handling facility, as long as one or more guard pages remain protected to provide implicit stack limit checking during exception processing.

Explicit Stack Limit Checking

If the stack is being extended by an unknown amount or by a known amount that is greater than the maximum implicit check size 4096, then a code sequence that follows the rules for implicit stack limit checking can be executed in a loop to access the new stack region incrementally in segments that are less than or equal to the minimum stack guard region size 8192. At least one access must occur in each such segment.

The first access must occur between SP and SP-4096, because in the absence of more specific information, the previous guaranteed access relative to the current stack may be as much as 4096 bytes greater than the current stack pointer address.

The last access must be within 4096 of the intended new value of the stack pointer. These accesses must occur in order, starting with the highest addressed segment and working toward the lowest addressed segment.

A more optimal strategy is:

1. Perform a read access using the intended new value of the stack pointer. This is nondestructive, even if the read is beyond the stack guard region, and may facilitate OS mapping of new stack pages, if appropriate, in a single operation.

2. Proceed with sequential accesses as just described.

Note

A simple algorithm that is consistent with this requirement (but achieves up to twice the minimum number of accesses) is to perform a sequence of accesses in a loop starting with the previous value of SP, decrementing by the minimum no-check extension size (4096) to, but not including, the first value that is less than the new value for the stack pointer.

The stack must *not* be extended incrementally in procedure prologues. A procedure prologue that needs to extend the stack by an amount of unknown size or known size greater than the minimum implicit check size must test new stack segments as just described in a loop that does not modify SP, and then update the stack with one instruction that copies the new stack pointer value into the SP.

Note

An explicit stack limit check can be performed either by inline code that is part of a prologue or by a run-time support routine that is tailored to be called from a procedure prologue.

Stack Reserve Region Checking

The size of the stack reserve region must be included in the increment size used for stack limit checks, after which it is not included in the amount by which the stack is actually extended. (Depending on the size of the stack reserve region, this may partially or even completely eliminate the ability to use implicit stack limit checking.)

4.6 Register Stack

General registers R32 through R127 form a register stack that is automatically managed across procedure calls and returns. Each procedure frame on the register stack is divided into two dynamically-sized regions: one for input parameters and local variables, and one for output parameters.

On a procedure call, the registers are automatically renamed by the hardware so that the caller's output registers form the base of the register stack frame of the callee. On return, the registers are restored to the previous state, so that the input and local registers are preserved across the call.

The ALLOC instruction is used at the beginning of a procedure to allocate the input, local, and output regions; the sizes of these regions are supplied as immediate operands. A procedure is not required to issue an ALLOC instruction if it does not need to store any values in its register stack frame. It may write to the first N stacked registers, where N is the value of the argument count passed in the argument information (AI) register (see Section 4.7.5.3). It may not write to any other stack register without first issuing an ALLOC instruction.

Figure 4-2 illustrates the operation of the register stack across an example procedure call. In this example, the caller allocates eight input, twelve local, and four output registers; the callee allocates four input, six local, and five output registers with the following instruction:

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.6 Register Stack

ALLOC R36=rspfs, 4, 6, 5, 0

The actual registers to which the stacking registers are physically mapped are not directly addressable by the application software.

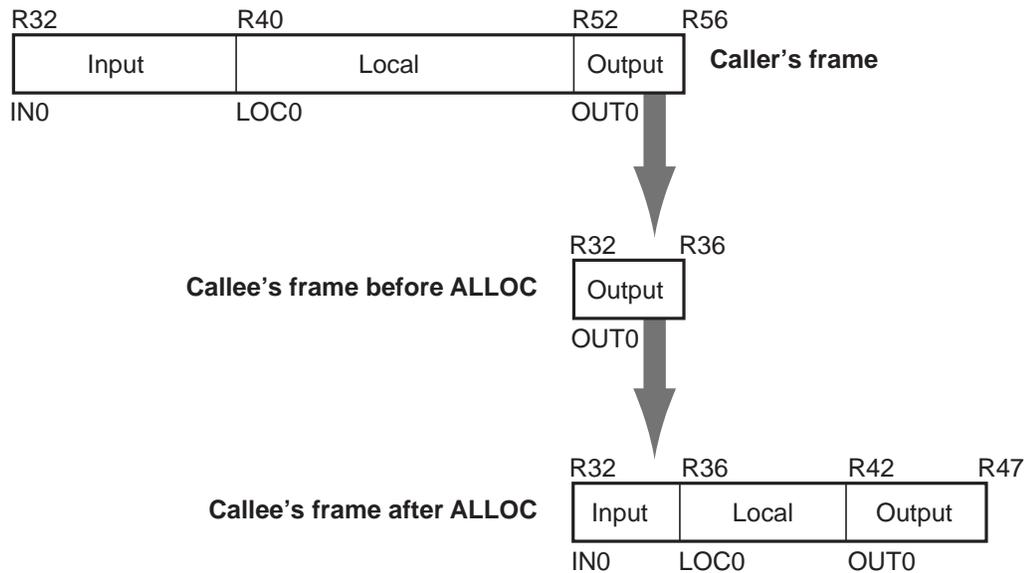
4.6.1 Input and Local Registers

The hardware makes no distinction between input and local registers. The caller's output registers automatically become the callee's register stack frame on a procedure call, with all registers initially allocated as output registers. An ALLOC instruction may increase or decrease the total size of the register stack frame, and may adjust the boundary between the input and local region and the output region.

The software conventions specify that up to eight general registers are used for parameter passing. Any registers in the input and local region beyond those eight may be allocated for use as preserved locals. Floating-point parameters may produce holes in the parameter list that is passed in the general registers; those unused input registers may also be used for preserved locals.

The caller's output registers do not need to be preserved for the caller. Once an input parameter is no longer needed, or has been copied elsewhere, that register may be reused for any other purpose within the procedure.

Figure 4-2 Operation of the Register Stack



VM-0958A-AI

4.6.2 Output Registers

Up to eight output registers are used for passing parameters. If a procedure call requires fewer than eight general registers for its parameters, the calling procedure does not need to allocate more than are needed. If the called procedure expects more parameters, it will allocate extra input registers; these registers will be uninitialized.

A procedure may also allocate more than eight registers in the output region. While the extra registers may not be used for passing parameters, they can be used as extra scratch registers. On a procedure call, they will show up in the called procedure's output area as excess registers, and may be modified by that procedure. The called procedure may also allocate few enough total registers in its stack frame that the top of the called procedure's frame is lower than the caller's top-of-frame, but those registers will become available again when control returns to the caller.

4.6.3 Rotating Registers

A subset of the registers in the procedure frame may be designated as rotating registers. The rotating register region always starts with R32, and may be any multiple of eight registers in number, up to a maximum of 96 rotating registers. The renaming is under control of the Register Rename Base (RRB).

If the rotating registers include any or all of the output registers, software must be careful when using the output registers for passing parameters, because a non-zero RRB will change the virtual register numbers that are part of the output region. In general, software should ensure either that the rotating region does not overlap the output region, or that the RRB is cleared to zero before setting output parameter registers.

4.6.4 Frame Markers

The current application-visible state of the register stack is stored in an architecturally inaccessible register called the current frame marker. On a procedure call, this register is automatically saved by copying it to an application register, the previous function state (AR.PFS). The current frame marker is modified to describe a new stack frame whose input and local area is initially zero size, and whose output area is equal in size to the previous output area. On return, the previous frame state register is used to restore the current frame marker to its earlier value, and the base of the register stack is adjusted accordingly.

It is the responsibility of a procedure to save the previous function state register before issuing any procedure calls of its own, and to restore it before returning.

4.6.5 Backing Store for Register Stack

When the depth of the procedure call stack exceeds the capacity of the physical register file, the hardware frees physical registers by saving them into a memory stack. This backing store is distinct from the memory stack described in Section 4.5.

As returns unwind the procedure call stack, the hardware also restores previously-saved physical registers from the backing store.

The operation of this register stack engine (RSE) is mostly transparent to application software. While the RSE is running, application software may not examine the contents of the backing store, and may not make any assumptions about how much of the register stack is still in physical registers or in the backing store. In order to examine previous stack frames, application software must synchronize the RSE with the FLUSHRS instruction. Synchronizing the RSE forces all stack frames up to, but not including, the current frame to be saved in backing store, allowing the software to examine the contents of the backing store without asynchronous operations modifying the memory. Modifications to the backing store require setting the RSE to enforced lazy mode after synchronizing it, which prevents the RSE from doing any operations other

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.6 Register Stack

than those required by calls and returns. The procedure for synchronizing the RSE and setting the mode is described in the *Itanium® Software Conventions and Runtime Architecture Guide*.

The backing store grows towards higher addresses. The top of the stack, which corresponds to the top of the previous procedure frame, is available in the Backing Store Pointer (BSP) application register. The BSP must always point to a valid backing store address, because the operating system may need to start the RSE to process an exception.

Backing store overflow is automatically detected by the OpenVMS operating system, which will either extend the backing store to allow continued operation or will raise an exception. Unlike for the memory stack (see Section 4.5), there are no specific rules or requirements that must be satisfied to facilitate detection of backing store overflow.

A NaT collection register is stored into the backing store following each group of 63 physical registers. The NaT bit of each register stored is shifted into the collection register. When the BSP reaches the quadword just before a 64-quadword boundary, the RSE stores the collection register. Software can determine the position of the NaT collection registers in the backing store by examining the memory address. This process is described in greater detail in the *Intel IA-64 Architecture Software Developer Manual*.

4.7 Procedure Linkage

This calling standard states that a standard call (see Section 1.4) can be accomplished in any way that presents the called routine with the required environment. However, typically, most standard-conforming external calls are implemented with a common sequence of instructions and conventions. Because a common set of call conventions is so pervasive, these conventions are included for reference as part of this standard.

4.7.1 The GP Register

Every procedure that references statically-allocated data or calls another procedure requires a pointer to an associated short data segment in the GP register, so that it can access its static data and its linkage tables. Typically, an image has one such data segment, and the GP register must be set correctly prior to calling any entry point within that image. Optionally, an image may be partitioned into subcomponents called clusters in which case each cluster may have its own associated data segment (clusters may also share a common data segment). For further information on images and clusters, see the *OpenVMS Linker Utility Manual*.

Throughout this chapter, rules regarding the use of the GP register are described in terms of images. However, these same rules apply between clusters within an image (keeping in mind that clusters within an image may share a common GP address and short data segment, while images cannot share a common GP address and short data segment).

The linkage conventions require that each image (or cluster) define exactly one GP value to refer to a location within its short data segment. This location should be chosen to maximize the usefulness of short-displacement immediate instructions for addressing scalars and linkage table entries. The image activator determines the absolute value of the GP register for each image after loading its data segment into memory.

Because the GP register remains unchanged for calls within an image, calls known to be local can be optimized accordingly. For calls between images, the GP register must be initialized with the correct GP value for the new image, and the calling function must ensure that its own GP value is saved and restored.

Note that there is a small set of compiler run-time support procedures that take a special pseudo-GP value as a kind of input parameter. See Section 4.7.7 for more information about support for bound function descriptors. See Section 5.1.2 for information about support for translated images.

4.7.2 Types of Calls

The following types of procedure calls are defined:

- **Direct local calls.** Direct calls within the same image can be made directly to the entry point of the target procedure. In this case, the GP register does not need to be changed.
- **Direct non-local calls.** Calls made outside the same image are routed through an import stub (which can be inlined at compile time if the call is known or suspected to be to another image). The import stub obtains the address of the main entry point and the GP register value from the linkage table. Although coded in source as a direct call, a dynamically-linked call therefore becomes indirect.
- **Indirect calls.** A function pointer points to a descriptor that contains both the address of the function entry point and the GP register value for the target function. The compiler must generate code for an indirect call that sets the new GP value before transferring control to the target procedure.
- **Special calls.** Other special calling conventions are allowed to the extent that the compiler and the run-time library agree on the conventions, and provided that the stack can be unwound through such a call. Such calls are outside the scope of this document. See Section A.3.1 for a discussion of stack unwind requirements.

4.7.3 Calling Sequence

Direct and indirect procedure calls are described in the following sections. Because the compiler is not required to know whether any given call is local or to a dynamically linked image, the two types of direct calls are described together in Section 4.7.3.1.

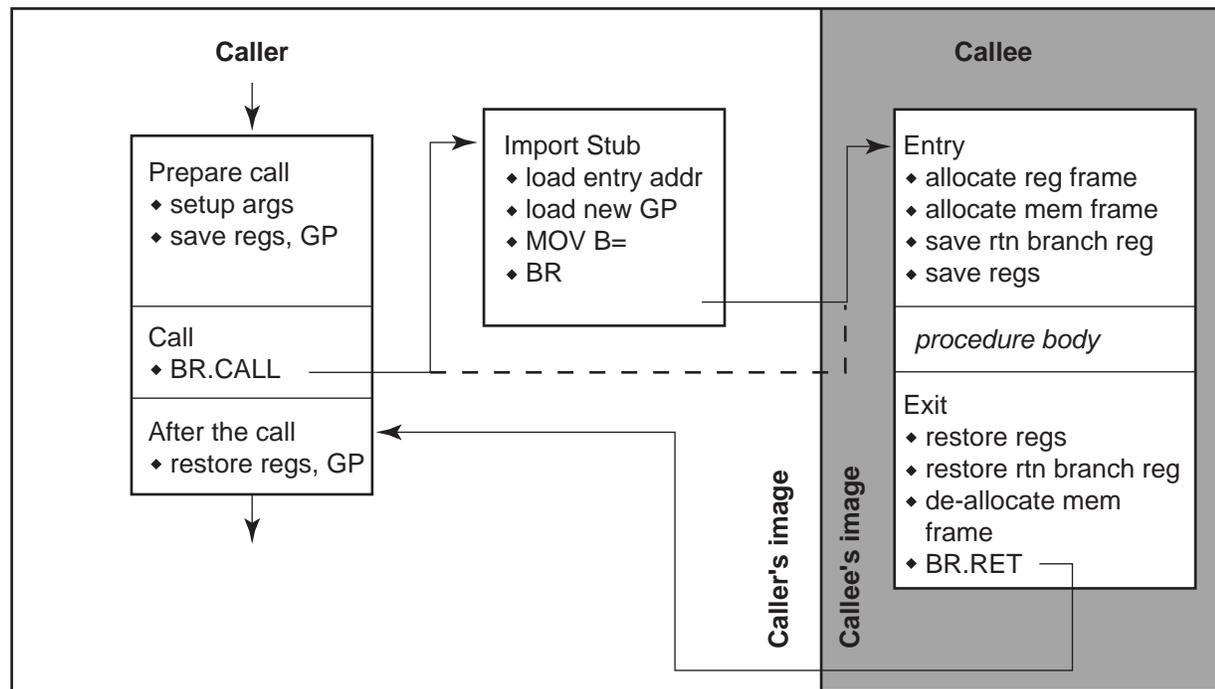
4.7.3.1 Direct Calls

Direct procedure calls follow the sequence of steps shown in Figure 4-3. The following paragraphs describe these steps in detail.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

Figure 4–3 Direct Procedure Calls



VM-0960A-AI

- **Caller: Prepare call.** Values in scratch registers that must be kept live across the call must be saved. They can be saved by copying them into local stacked registers, or by saving them on the memory stack. If the NaT bits associated with any live scratch registers must be saved, the compiler should use ST8.SPILL or STF.SPILL instructions. The User NaT collection register itself is preserved by the call, so the NaT bits need no further treatment at this point.

If the call is not known (at compile time) to be within the same image, the GP register must be saved.

The parameters must be set up in registers and memory as described in Section 4.7.4

- **Caller: Call.** All direct calls are made with a BR.CALL instruction, specifying B0 for the return link.

For direct local calls, the PC-relative displacement is computed at link time. Compilers may assume that the standard displacement field in the BR.CALL instruction is sufficiently wide to reach the target of the call. If the displacement is too large, the linker must supply a branch stub at some convenient point in the code; compilers must guarantee the existence of such a point by ensuring that code sections in the relocatable object files are no larger than the maximum reach of the BR.CALL instruction. With a 25-bit displacement, the maximum reach is 16 megabytes in either direction from the point of call.

Because direct calls to other images cannot be statically bound at link time, the linker must supply an import stub for the target procedure; the import stub obtains the address of the target procedure from the linkage table. The BR.CALL instruction can then be statically bound to the import stub using the PC-relative displacement.

The BR.CALL instruction performs the following actions:

- Saves the return link in the return branch register
 - Saves the current frame marker in the AR.PFS register
 - Sets the base of the new register stack frame to the beginning of the output region of the old frame
- Caller: Import stub (direct non-local calls only). The import stub is allocated in the image of the caller, so that the BR.CALL instruction can be statically bound to the address of the import stub. It must access the linkage table via the current GP (which means that GP must be valid at the point of call), and obtain the address of the target procedure's entry point and its GP value. The import stub then establishes the new GP value and branches to the target entry point.

If the compiler knows or suspects that the target of a call is in a separate image, it can generate calling code that performs the functions of the import stub, which saves an extra branch.

When the target of a call is in the same image, an import stub is not used (which also means that GP must be valid at the point of call).

- Callee: Entry. The prologue code in the target procedure is responsible for allocating the register stack frame. It is also responsible for allocating a frame on the memory stack when necessary. It may use the 16 bytes at the top of its caller's stack frame as a scratch area.

A non-leaf procedure must save the return branch register and previous function state, either in the memory stack frame or in a local stacked general register.

The prologue must also save any preserved registers to be used in this procedure. The NaT bits for those registers must be preserved as well, by copying the NaT bits to local stacked general registers, or by using ST8.SPILL or STF.SPILL instructions. However, the User NaT collection register (AR.UNAT) must be saved first because it is guaranteed to be preserved by the call.

- Callee: Exit. The epilogue code is responsible for restoring the return branch register and previous function state, if necessary, and any preserved registers that were saved. The NaT bits must be restored using the LD8.FILL or LDF.FILL instructions. The User NaT collection register must also be restored if it was saved.

If a memory stack frame was allocated, the epilogue code must deallocate it.

Finally, the procedure exits by branching through the return branch register with the BR.RET instruction.

- Caller: After the call. Any saved values (including GP) should be restored.

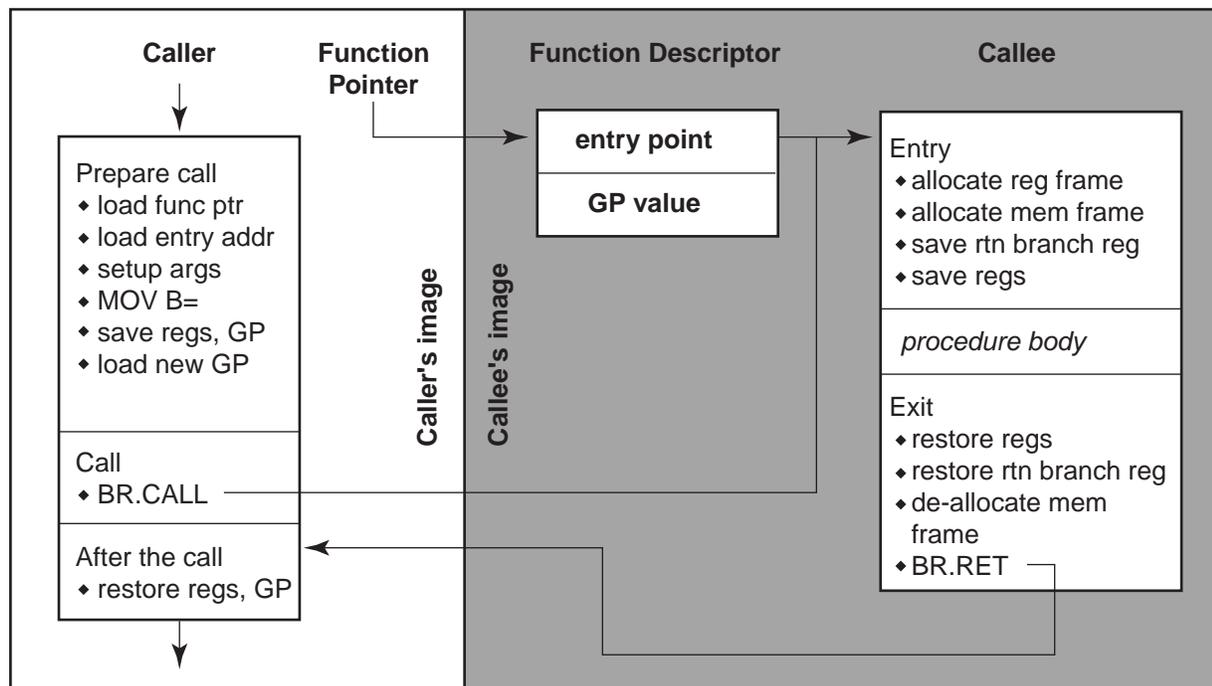
OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

4.7.3.2 Indirect Calls

Indirect procedure calls follow nearly the same sequence as direct calls (see Section 4.7.3.1), except that the branch target is established indirectly. This sequence is illustrated in Figure 4–4.

Figure 4–4 Indirect Procedure Calls



VM-0961A-AI

- **Caller: Function Pointer.** A function pointer is always the address of a function descriptor for the target procedure (see Section 4.3). An indirect call loads the GP value into the GP register before branching to the entry point address.

In order to guarantee the uniqueness of a function pointer, and because its value is determined at program invocation time, code must materialize function pointers only by loading a pointer from the data segment.

- **Caller: Prepare call.** Indirect calls are made by first loading the function pointer into a general register, loading the entry point address and the new GP value, and using the Move to Branch Register operation to move the address of the procedure entry point into the branch register to be used for the call.

Values in scratch registers that must be kept live across the call must be saved. They can be saved by copying them into local stacked registers, or by saving them on the memory stack. If the NaT bits associated with any live scratch registers must be saved, the compiler should use ST8.SPILL or STF.SPILL instructions. The User NaT collection register itself is preserved by the call, so the NaT bits need no further treatment at this point.

Unless the call is known (at compile time) to be within the same image, the GP register must be saved before the new GP value is loaded.

The parameters must be set up in registers and memory as described in Section 4.7.4

- **Caller: Call.** All indirect calls are made with the indirect form of the BR.CALL instruction, specifying B0 for the return link.
The BR.CALL instruction saves the return link in the return branch register, saves the current frame marker in the AR.PFS register, and sets the base of the new register stack frame to the beginning of the output region of the old frame. Because the indirect call sequence obtains the entry point address and new GP value from the function descriptor, control flows directly to the target procedure, without the need for any intervening stubs.
- **Callee: Entry; Exit.** The remainder of the calling sequence is the same as for direct calls (Section 4.7.3.1).

4.7.4 Parameter Passing

Parameters are passed in a combination of general registers, floating-point registers, and memory, as described below, and as illustrated in Figure 4–5.

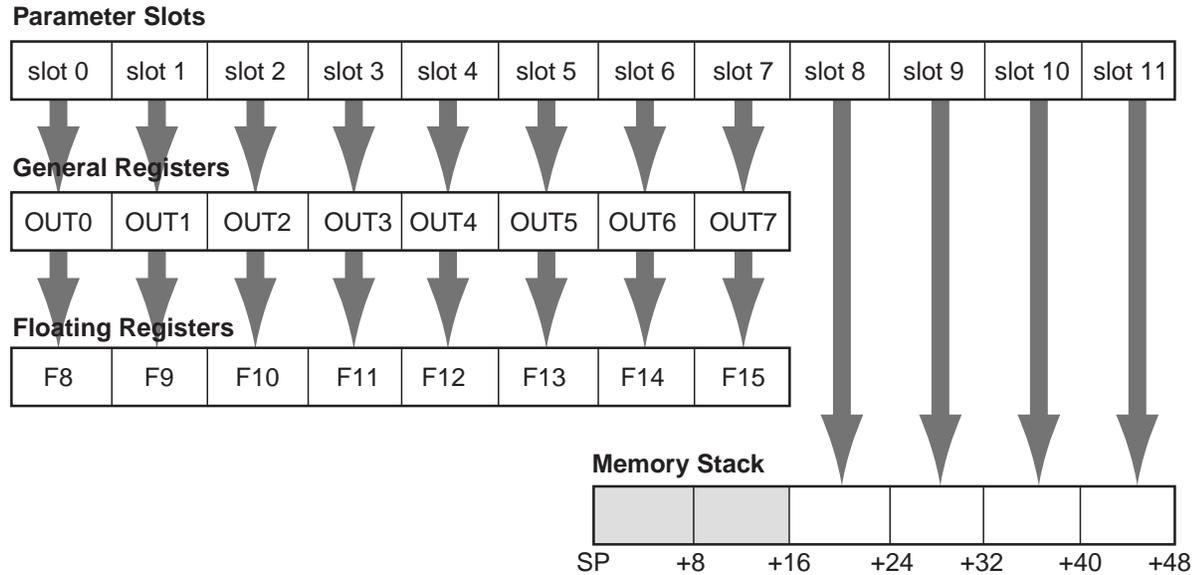
The parameter list is formed by placing each individual parameter into fixed-size elements of the parameter list, referred to as **parameter slots**. Each parameter slot is 64 bits wide; parameters larger than 64 bits are placed in as many consecutive parameter slots as are needed to contain the entire parameter. The rules for allocation and alignment of parameter slots are described in Section 4.7.5.1.

The contents of the first eight parameter slots are always passed in registers, while the remaining parameters are always passed on the memory stack, beginning at the caller's stack pointer plus 16 bytes. The caller uses up to eight of the registers in the output region of its register stack for integer and VAX floating-point parameters, and up to eight floating-point registers for IEEE floating-point parameters. The maximum number of registers used is eight.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

Figure 4–5 Parameter Passing in Registers and Memory



VM-0962A-AI

To accommodate variable argument lists in the C language, there is a fixed correspondence between parameter slots; the first parameter slot is always in either the first general output register or the first floating-point register (never both), the second parameter slot is always in the second general output register or the second floating-point register (never both), and so on. This allows a procedure to spill its register parameters easily to memory to form the argument home area before stepping through the parameter list with a pointer. The Argument Information register (AI) makes this possible, as explained in Section 4.7.5.3.

A procedure can assume that the NaT bits on its incoming general register arguments are clear, and that the incoming floating-point register arguments are not NaTVals. A procedure making a call must ensure only that registers containing actual parameters are clear of NaT bits or NaTVals; registers not used for actual parameters are undefined.

4.7.5 Parameter Passing Mechanisms

This OpenVMS calling standard defines three classes of argument items according to the mechanism used to pass the argument:

- Immediate value
- Reference
- Descriptor

Argument items are not self-defining; interpretation of each argument item depends on agreement between the calling and called procedures.

This standard does not dictate which passing mechanism must be used by a given language compiler. Language semantics and interoperability considerations might require different mechanisms in different situations.

Immediate value

An **immediate value** argument item contains the value of the data item. The argument item, or the value contained in it, is directly associated with the parameter.

Reference

A **reference** argument item contains the address of a data item such as a scalar, string, array, record, or procedure. This data item is associated with the parameter.

Descriptor

A **descriptor** argument item contains the address of a descriptor, which contains structural information about the argument's type (such as array bounds) and the address of a data item. This data item is associated with the parameter.

Requirements for using the argument passing mechanisms follow:

- **By immediate value.** An argument may be passed by immediate value only if the argument is one of the following:
 - One of the noncomplex scalar data types with a size known (at compile time) to be ≤ 64 bits
 - Either single or double precision complex
 - A record with a known size (at compile time)
 - A set, implemented as a bit vector, with a size known (at compile time) to be ≤ 64 bits

No form of string or array data type may be passed by immediate value in a standard call.

Unused high-order bits must be zero or sign extended, as appropriate depending on the data type, to fill all bits of each argument list item (as specified in Table 4–9).

A single-precision or double-precision complex value is passed as two single- or double-precision floating-point values, respectively. Note that the argument count reflects that two argument positions are used rather than just one actual argument.

A record value, which may be larger than 64 bits, is passed by immediate value as follows:

- Allocate as many fully occupied argument item positions to the argument value as are needed to represent the argument.
- If the final argument position is only partially occupied by the argument, the contents of the remaining bits are undefined.
- If an argument position is passed in one of the registers, it can only be passed in an integer register (never in a floating-point register).

Other argument values that are larger than 64 bits can be passed by immediate value using nonstandard conventions, typically using a method similar to those for passing records. Thus, for example, a 26-byte string can be passed by value in four integer registers.

- **By reference.** Nonparametric arguments (arguments for which associated information such as string size and array bounds are not required) can be passed by reference in a standard call. This includes extended precision floating and extended precision complex values.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

- **By descriptor.** Parametric arguments (arguments for which associated information such as string size and array bounds must be passed to the caller) are passed by a single descriptor in a standard call.

Note that extended floating values are not passed using the immediate value mechanism; rather, they are passed using the by reference mechanism. (However, when by value semantics is required, it may be necessary to make a copy of the actual parameter and pass a reference to that copy in order to avoid improper alias effects.)

Also note that when a record is passed by immediate value, the component types are not material to how the argument is aligned; the record will always be quadword aligned.

4.7.5.1 Allocation of Parameter Slots

Parameter slots are allocated for each parameter, based on the parameter passing mechanism, type, and size, treating each parameter in sequence, from left to right. The rules for allocating parameter slots and placing the contents within the slot are given in Table 4–8. The allocation column of the table indicates how parameter slots are allocated to each type of parameter.

Table 4–8 Rules for Allocating Parameter Slots

Type	Size (Bits)	Number of Slots
Integer, small set	1-64	1
Address/pointer (including all types passed by reference or descriptor)	64	1
IEEE single-precision floating-point (S_floating)	32	1
IEEE single-precision floating-point complex (S_floating)	64	2
IEEE double-precision floating-point (T_floating)	64	1
IEEE double-precision floating-point complex (T_floating)	128	2
IEEE quad-precision floating-point (X_floating)	64 (by reference)	1
IEEE quad-precision floating-point complex (X_floating)	64 (by reference)	1
Aggregates (noncomplex)	any	(size+63)/64
VAX single-precision floating-point (F_floating)	32	1
VAX single-precision floating-point complex (F_floating)	64	2
VAX double-precision floating-point (D_ & G_floating)	64	1
VAX double-precision floating-point complex (D_ & G_floating)	128	2

Note

These rules are applied based on the type of the parameter after any type-promotion rules specified by the language have been applied. For example, a short integer passed without a function prototype in C is promoted to the int type, and is then passed according to the rules for the int type.

OpenVMS does not support passing the Itanium double-precision extended floating-point type (`_float80`), although that type may be used from time to time in code generation sequences.

This placement policy does not ensure that parameters greater than 64 bits in size will fall on a natural alignment boundary if passed in memory. Such parameters may need to be copied by the called procedure into an aligned temporary prior to use, or accessed in a way that does not depend on natural alignment.

4.7.5.2 Normal Register Parameters

The first eight parameter slots (64 bytes) are passed in registers, according to the rules in this section.

- These eight argument slots are associated, one-to-one, with the stacked output general registers, as shown in Figure 4–5.
- Integral scalar parameters, (including addresses and pointers), VAX floating-point parameters, and aggregate parameters in these slots are passed only in the corresponding output general registers.
- Aggregate parameters in these slots are passed by value only in the corresponding output general registers. The aggregate is treated as a sequence of 64-bit integral values, with each value allocated into the next available slot in aggregate memory address order. If the size of the aggregate is not an even multiple of 64 bits, then the unused bits in the last slot are undefined.
- If an aggregate or VAX floating-point complex parameter straddles the boundary between slot 7 and slot 8, the part that lies within the first eight slots is passed in general registers, and the remainder is passed in memory, as described in Table 4–9.

Complex values (other than IEEE quad-precision floating-point complex), in those languages that include complex types, are passed as a pair of floating-point values (either single-precision or double-precision as appropriate). It is possible for the first of the two floating-point values in a complex value to occupy the last output register slot; in this case, the second floating-point value is passed in memory. IEEE quad-precision floating-point complex values are passed by reference.

- IEEE single-precision and double-precision floating-point scalar parameters are passed in the corresponding floating-point register slot. IEEE quad-precision floating point scalar parameters are passed by reference in the corresponding output general registers.

When IEEE floating-point parameters are passed in floating-point registers, they are passed in the register format, rounded to the appropriate precision. They are never passed in the general registers unless part of an aggregate, in which case they are passed in the aggregate memory format. When VAX floating-point parameters are passed in general registers, they are passed in memory format.

Parameters allocated beyond the eighth parameter slot are never passed in registers.

Unsigned integral (except unsigned 32-bit), set, and VAX floating-point values passed in registers are zero-filled; signed integral values as well as unsigned 32-bit integral values are sign-extended to 64 bits. For all other types passed in the general registers, unused bits are undefined.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

Note

Bit 31 is replicated in bits 32–63, even for unsigned 32-bit integers.

The rules contained in this section are summarized in Tables 4–9 and 4–10.

Table 4–9 Data Types and the Unused Bits in Passed Data

Data Type (OpenVMS Names)	Type Designator ¹	Data Size (bytes)	Register Extension Type	Memory Extension Type
Byte logical	DSC\$K_DTYPE_BU	1	Zero64	Zero64
Word logical	DSC\$K_DTYPE_WU	2	Zero64	Zero64
Longword logical	DSC\$K_DTYPE_LU	4	Sign64	Sign64
Quadword logical	DSC\$K_DTYPE_QU	8	Data64	Data64
Byte integer	DSC\$K_DTYPE_B	1	Sign64	Sign64
Word integer	DSC\$K_DTYPE_W	2	Sign64	Sign64
Longword integer	DSC\$K_DTYPE_L	4	Sign64	Sign64
Quadword integer	DSC\$K_DTYPE_Q	8	Data64	Data64
F_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_F	4	VAXF64	Data32
D_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_D	8	VAXDG64	Data64
G_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_G	8	VAXDG64	Data64
F_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FC	2 * 4	2*VAXF64	2*Data32
D_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE_DC	2 * 8	2*VAXDG64	2*Data64
G_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE_GC	2 * 8	2*VAXDG64	2*Data64
S_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FS	4	Hard	Data32
T_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FT	8	Hard	Data64
X_floating	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FX	16	N/A	N/A
S_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FSC	2 * 4	2*Hard	2*Data32
T_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE FTC	2 * 8	2*Hard	2*Data64
X_floating complex	DSC\$K_DTYPE_FXC	2 * 16	N/A	N/A
Small structures of 8 bytes or less	N/A	≤8	Nostd	Nostd
Small arrays of 8 bytes or less	N/A	≤8	Nostd	Nostd
32-bit address	N/A	4	Sign64	Sign64
64-bit address	N/A	8	Data64	Data64

¹OpenVMS also provides symbols of the form DSC64\$K_DTYPE_XXX for each type designator.

Table 4–10 contains the defined meanings for the memory extension type symbols used in Table 4–9.

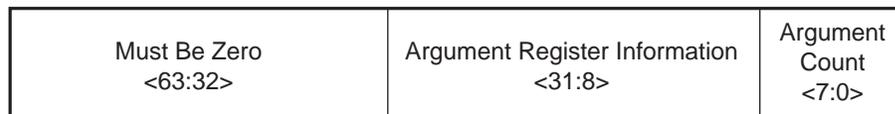
Table 4–10 Extension Type Codes

Sign Extension Type	Defined Function
Sign64	Sign-extended to 64 bits.
Zero64	Zero-extended to 64 bits.
Data32	Data is 32 bits. The state of bits <63:32> is unpredictable.
2*Data32	Two single-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as Data32).
Data64	Data is 64 bits.
2*Data64	Two double-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as Data64).
VAXF64	Data is 64 bits. Low-order 32 bits are the same as the F_floating memory format and the high-order 32 bits are zero. (Used only in a general register, never in a floating-point register.)
VAXDG64	Data is 64 bits. Uses the corresponding D_floating or G_floating memory format. (Used only in a general register, never in a floating-point register.)
2*VAXF64	Two single-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as VAXF64).
2*VAXDG64	Two double-precision parts of the complex value are stored in memory as independent floating-point values (each handled as VAXDG64).
Hard	Passed in the layout defined by the hardware SRM.
2*Hard	Two floating-point parts of the complex value are stored in a pair of registers as independent floating-point values (each handled as Hard).
Nostd	State of all high-order bits not occupied by the data is unpredictable across a call or return.

4.7.5.3 Argument Information (AI) Register

In addition to the normal parameters, an implicit argument information value is passed in register R25, the Argument Information (AI) register. This value is shown in Figure 4–6.

Figure 4–6 Argument Information Register Representation



VM-1006A-AI

Argument Count is an unsigned byte that specifies the number of 64-bit argument slots used for the argument list. (Note that single and double-precision complex values use two slots, which is reflected in this count.)

Argument Register Information is a contiguous group of eight 3-bit fields that correspond to the eight arguments passed in registers. The first group, bits <10:8>, describes the first argument, the second group, bits <13:11>, describes

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

the second argument, and so on. The encoding for each group is described in Table 4–11.

Table 4–11 Argument Information Register Codes

Value	OpenVMS Name	Meaning
0	AISK_AR_I64	64-bit or 32-bit sign-extended to 64-bit argument passed in an integer register (including addresses) <i>or</i> Argument is not present
1	AISK_AR_FF	F_floating (also known as VAX single-precision floating-point) argument passed in a general register
2	AISK_AR_FD	D_floating (also known as VAX double-precision floating-point) argument passed in a general register
3	AISK_AR_FG	G_floating (also known as VAX double-precision floating-point) argument passed in a general register
4	AISK_AR_FS	S_floating (also known as IEEE single-precision floating-point) argument passed in a floating-point register
5	AISK_AR_FT	T_floating (also known as IEEE double-precision floating-point) argument passed in a floating-point register
6,7		Reserved

4.7.5.4 Memory Stack Parameters

The remainder of the parameter list, beginning with slot 8, is passed in the outgoing parameter area of the memory stack frame, as described in Section 4.5.1. Parameters are mapped directly to memory, with slot 8 placed at location SP+16, slot 9 placed at location SP+24, and so on. Each argument is stored in memory as a series of one or more 64-bit storage units, with unused bits in the last unit undefined.

4.7.5.5 Variable Argument Lists

The rules above support variable-argument list functions in both the K&R and the ANSI dialects of the C language. (Note that argument location is independent of whether a prototype is in scope.)

The *n*th argument is in either *R_n* or *F_n* regardless of the type of parameter in the preceding register slot. Therefore, a function with variable arguments may assume that the variable arguments that lie within the first eight argument slots can be found in either the stacked input integer registers (IN0-IN7), or in the floating-point parameter registers (F8-F15). Using the information codes from the the AI (Argument Information) register (see Table 4–11), the function can then store these registers to memory using the 16-byte scratch area for IN6/F14 and IN7/F15, and up to 48 bytes at the base of its own stack frame for IN0/F8-IN5/F13, as necessary. This arrangement places all of the variable parameters in one contiguous block of memory.

4.7.5.6 Pointers to Formal Parameters

Whenever the address is formed of a formal parameter that is passed in a register, the compiler must store the parameter to the stack, as it would for a variable argument list.

4.7.5.7 Languages Other than C

The placement of arguments in general registers versus floating-point registers does not depend on any notion or concept of a prototype being in scope. It is therefore applicable to all languages at all times.

4.7.5.8 Rounding Floating-point Values

There must be no difference in behavior between a floating-point parameter passed directly in a register and a floating-point parameter that has been stored to memory and reloaded. In either case, the floating-point value must be the same. This implies that floating-point parameters passed in floating-point registers must be explicitly rounded to the proper precision by the caller.

4.7.5.9 Order of Argument Evaluation

Because most high-level languages do not specify the order of evaluation (with respect to side effects) of arguments, those language processors can evaluate arguments in any convenient order. The choice of argument evaluation order and code generation strategy is constrained only by the definition of the particular language. Programs should not depend on the order of evaluation of arguments.

4.7.5.10 Examples

The following examples illustrate the parameter passing conventions. Floating-point types are IEEE floating-point representations.

Scalar Integers and Floats, With or Without Prototype

```
extern int func(int, double, double, int);
func(i, a, b, j);
```

The parameters are passed as follows:

Slot	Variable	Allocation	Argument Register Information
0	i	OUT0	AISK_AR_I64
1	a	F9	AISK_AR_FT
2	b	F10	AISK_AR_FT
3	j	OUT3	AISK_AR_I64

Aggregates Passed by Value

```
extern int func();
struct { int array[20]; } a;
func(i, a);
```

No padding is provided in the parameter list for the structure (independent of its external alignment). The parameters are passed as follows:

Slot	Variable	Allocation	Argument Register Information
0	i	OUT0	AISK_AR_I64
1-7	a.array[0-13]	OUT1-OUT7	AISK_AR_I64 (all 7 slots)
8-24	a.array[14-19]	In memory, at SP+16 through SP+39	Not applicable

```
extern int func();
struct { __float128 x; int array[20]; } a;
func(i, a);
```

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

The parameters are passed as follows:

Slot	Variable	Allocation	Argument Register Information
0	i	OUT0	AISK_AR_I64
1-2	a.x	OUT1–OUT2	AISK_AR_I64 (both slots)
3-7	a.array[0–9]	OUT3–OUT7	AISK_AR_I64 (all 5 slots)
8-21	a.array[10–19]	In memory, at SP+16 through SP+55	Not applicable

Floating-Point Aggregates, With or Without Prototype

```
struct s { float a, b, c; } x;
extern func();
func(x);
```

The parameters are passed as follows:

Slot	Variable	Allocation	Argument Register Information
0	x.a & x.b	OUT0	AISK_AR_I64
1	x.c	OUT1	AISK_AR_I64 (low 32 bits)

4.7.6 Return Values

Values up to 128 bits are returned directly in the registers, according to the rules in Table 4–12.

Integer, enumeration, record, and set values (bit vectors) smaller than 64 bits must be zero-filled (unsigned integers, enumerations, records, sets) or sign-extended (signed integrals) to a full 64 bits. However, for unsigned 32-bit integers, bit 31 is replicated in bits 32–63.

When floating-point values are returned in floating-point registers, they are returned in the register format, rounded to the appropriate precision. When they are returned in the general registers (for example, as part of a record), they are returned in their memory format.

OpenVMS does not support a general notion of homogeneous floating-point aggregates. However, the special case of two single-precision or double-precision floating-point values implementing values of a complex type are handled in an analogous manner.

Table 4–12 Rules for Return Values

Type	Size (Bits)	Location of Return Value	Alignment
Integer/Pointer, small Record, Set	1–64	R8	LSB
IEEE Single-Precision Floating-Point (S_floating)	32	F8	N/A
IEEE Double-Precision Floating-Point (T_floating)	64	F8	N/A
IEEE Single-Precision Complex (S_floating)	64	F8, F9	N/A
IEEE Double-Precision Complex (T_floating)	128	F8, F9	N/A

(continued on next page)

Table 4–12 (Cont.) Rules for Return Values

Type	Size (Bits)	Location of Return Value	Alignment
VAX Single-Precision Floating-Point (F_floating)	32	R8	N/A
VAX Double-Precision Floating-Point (D_ & G_floating)	64	R8	N/A
VAX Single-Precision Floating-Point Complex (F_floating)	64	R8, R9	N/A
VAX Double-Precision Floating-Point Complex (D_ & G_floating)	64	R8, R9	N/A

Note

X_floating and X_floating complex are not included in this table because they are returned using the hidden parameter method (see below).

The rules in Table 4–12 are expressed in more detail in Table 4–9. F_floating and F_floating complex values in the general registers are zero-extended (Zero64), because this most closely approximates the effect of using the Alpha register format.

Hidden Parameter

Return values other than those covered by Table 4–12 are returned in a buffer allocated by the caller. A pointer to the buffer is passed to the called procedure as a hidden first parameter, and all normal parameters are shifted one slot to make this possible. The return buffer must be aligned at a 16-byte boundary.

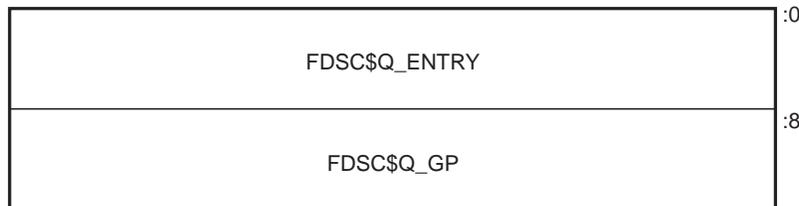
4.7.7 Simple and Bound Procedures

There are two distinct classes of procedures:

- Simple procedure
- Bound procedure

A **simple procedure** is a procedure that does not need direct access to the stack of its execution environment. In order to call a simple procedure, a simple function descriptor is created, as shown in Figure 4–7, and described in Table 4–13.

Figure 4–7 Simple Function Descriptor



VM-1088A-AI

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.7 Procedure Linkage

Table 4–13 Simple Function Descriptor

FDSC\$Q_ENTRY	Entry code address for the procedure to be called.
FDSC\$Q_GP	GP value for the procedure to be called.

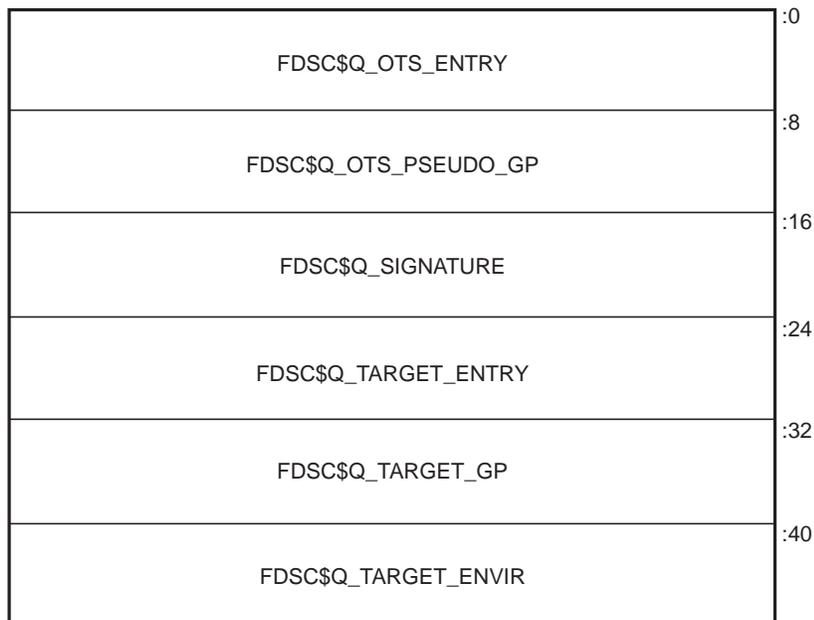
A **bound procedure** is a procedure that does need direct access to the stack of its execution environment, typically to reference an up-level variable or to perform a nonlocal GOTO operation.

When a bound procedure is called, the caller must pass some kind of pointer to the called code that allows it to reference its up-level environment. Typically, this pointer is a frame pointer for that environment, but many variations are possible. When the caller itself is executing within that outer environment, it can usually make such a call directly to the code for the nested procedure without recourse to any additional function descriptors. However, when a procedure value for the nested procedure must be passed outside of that environment to a call site that has no knowledge of the target procedure, a **bound function descriptor** is created so that the nested procedure can be called just like a simple procedure.

Bound procedure values, as defined by this standard, are designed for multilanguage use and utilize the properties of function descriptors to allow callers of procedures to use common code to call both bound and simple procedures.

A bound function descriptor is similar to a simple function descriptor, with several additional fields as shown in Figure 4–8 and described in Table 4–14.

Figure 4–8 Bound Function Descriptor



FDSC\$K_BOUND_SIZE = 48

VM-1080A-AI

Table 4–14 Contents of Bound Function Descriptor

Field Name	Contents
FDSCSQ_OTS_ENTRY	Code address for a suitable library helper routine, for example, OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV
FDSCSQ_OTS_PSEUDO_GP	Address of this bound function descriptor
FDSCSQ_SIGNATURE	Signature information field (see Section 5.1.3)
FDSCSQ_TARGET_ENTRY	Entry code address for the procedure to be called
FDSCSQ_TARGET_GP	GP value for the procedure to be called
FDSCSQ_TARGET_ENVIR	Environment value for the procedure to be called

A bound procedure descriptor is inherently dynamic because the environment value must be determined at runtime by code executing within the bound procedure environment. Therefore, when a bound procedure descriptor such as this is needed, it is usually allocated on the creating procedure's stack.

When a procedure value that refers to a bound procedure descriptor is used to make a call, the routine designated in the OTS_ENTRY field (typically OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV) receives control with the GP register pointing to the bound procedure descriptor (instead of a global offset table). This routine performs the following steps:

1. Load the "real" target entry address into a volatile branch register, for example, B6.
2. Load the dynamic environment value into the appropriate uplevel-addressing register for the target function, for example, OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV uses R9.
3. Load the "real" target GP address into the GP register
4. Transfer control (branch, not call) to the target entry address.

Control arrives at the real target procedure address with both the GP and environment register values established appropriately.

Support routine OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV is included as a standard library routine. The operation of OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV is logically equivalent to the following code:

```

OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV:
    add    gp=gp,24          ; Adjust GP to point to entry address
    ld8   r9=[gp],16       ; Load target entry address
    mov   b6=r9
    ld8   r9=[gp],-8       ; Load target environment value
    ld8   gp=[gp]          ; Load target GP
    br    b6               ; Transfer to target

```

Because the address of a bound function descriptor is a valid function pointer, it may be passed to translated code which uses it to call back into native code; therefore, the value of the signature information field must be the same as that in the official function descriptor for the real target procedure (see Section 5.1.2).

Note that there can be multiple OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV-like support routines, corresponding to different target registers where the environment value should be placed. The code that creates the bound function descriptor is also necessarily compiled by the same compiler that compiles the target procedure, thus can correctly select an appropriate support routine.

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

Except for null-frame procedures, a procedure is an **active procedure** while its body is executing, including while any procedure it calls is executing. When a procedure is active, its designated condition handler may handle an exception that is signaled during its execution.

Associated with each active procedure is an **invocation context**, informally called a **frame**, which consists of the set of registers and space in memory that is allocated and that may be accessed during execution for a particular call of that procedure.

When a procedure begins to execute, it has no invocation context. The initial instructions that allocate and initialize its context, which may include saving information from the invocation context of its caller, are termed a **procedure prologue**. Once execution of the prologue is complete, the procedure is said to be **active**.

When a procedure is ready to return to its caller, the instructions that deallocate and discard the procedure's invocation context (which may include restoring state of the caller's invocation context that was saved during the prologue), are termed a **procedure epilogue**. A procedure ceases to be **active** when execution of its epilogue begins.

A procedure may have more than one prologue if there are multiple entry points. A procedure may also have more than one epilogue if there are multiple return points. One of each will be executed during any given invocation of the procedure.

Some procedures, notably **null frame procedures** (see Section 4.4), are said to execute in the context of their caller. A null frame procedure has no prologue or epilogue, and consists solely of body instructions. Such a procedure never becomes **current** or **active**.

A **procedure call stack** (for a thread) consists of the stack of invocation contexts that exists at any point in time. New invocation contexts are pushed on that stack as procedures are called and invocations are popped from the call stack as procedures return.

The invocation context of a procedure that calls another procedure is said to precede or be previous to the invocation context of the called procedure.

4.8.1 Current Procedure

The **current procedure** is the active procedure whose execution began most recently; its invocation context is at the top of the call stack. Note that a procedure executing in its prologue or epilogue is not active, and hence cannot be the current procedure. Similarly, a null frame procedure cannot be the current procedure.

For OpenVMS, the PC (instruction pointer) register in combination with associated unwind information determines what procedure is current (for exception handling purposes). See Section A.4 for a description of the unwind information data structures.

A procedure is current at a given PC (when OpenVMS semantics apply, see Section A.4.1), if and only if the following conditions are true:

- The procedure is either a stack frame procedure or a register frame procedure (not a null frame procedure).

- The PC is in a range described by an unwind descriptor body region but not in an epilogue.

4.8.2 Procedure Call Tracing

Mechanisms for each of the following functions are needed to support procedure call tracing:

- To provide the context of a procedure invocation
- To walk (navigate) the procedure call stack
- To refer to a given procedure invocation
- To examine or modify the register context of an active procedure

This section describes the data structure mechanisms. The run-time library functions that support these functions are described in Section 4.8.3

4.8.2.1 Invocation Context Block

The context of a specific procedure invocation is provided through the use of a data structure called an **invocation context block (ICB)**. Table 4–15 describes the contents of the OpenVMS I64 invocation context block.

Table 4–15 Contents of the Invocation Context Block

Field	Size	Description
LIBICBSL_CONTEXT_LENGTH	Longword	Unsigned total length in bytes of the invocation context block. See Section 4.8.3.1.
LIBICBSV_FRAME_FLAGS	3 Bytes	See Table 4–16.
LIBICBSB_BLOCK_VERSION	Byte	ICB version; initial value of 2 for OpenVMS I64 (1 is for OpenVMS Alpha). See Section 4.8.3.1.
LIBICBSIH_IREG	128 Quadwords	Array of general registers (only those allocated; unallocated registers are uninitialized). LIBICBSIH_IREG[0] is reserved. IREG[1], the global data pointer, can be referenced using the symbol LIBICBSIH_GP. IREG[12], the memory stack pointer, can be referenced using the symbol LIBICBSIH_SP. IREG[13], the thread pointer, can be referenced using the symbol LIBICBSIH_TP. IREG[25], the argument information register, can be referenced using the symbol LIBICBSIH_AI.
LIBICBSIH_GRNAT	2 Quadwords	General register NaT collection. ¹
LIBICBSFO_F2_F31	30 Octawords	Floating-point registers F2-F31. Array of floating-point register values in register format, as saved by a SPILL instruction.

¹Bits in the field LIBICBSIH_GRNAT represent the NaT bits for the general registers. The bit position for a given register is relative to its original spill location, the base address of which is stored at LIBICBSIH_ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR. The first quadword of LIBICBSIH_GRNAT contains the NaT bits for R0-R63, the second quadword contains the NaT bits for R64-R127. The formula for the bit corresponding to register Rn within each quadword is

```
uint64 * spill = (uint64 *)icb->LIBICBSIH_ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR;
uint64 bitpos = (((uint64)&spill[n]) >> 3) & 63;
uint64 bitmask = 1LL << bitpos;
```

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

Table 4–15 (Cont.) Contents of the Invocation Context Block

Field	Size	Description
LIBICB\$PH_F32_F127	Quadword	Pointer to array of floating point values in register format for registers F32-F127, as saved by SPILL instruction. A pointer value of 0 indicates that the contents of registers F32-F127 are not defined.
LIBICB\$IH_BRANCH	8 Quadwords	Array of branch registers.
LIBICB\$IH_RSC	Quadword	Register Stack Configuration register.
LIBICB\$IH_BSP	Quadword	Backing store pointer.
LIBICB\$IH_BSPSTORE	Quadword	Backing store write pointer.
LIBICB\$IH_RNAT	Quadword	RSE NaT collection register.
LIBICB\$IH_CCX	Quadword	Compare and Exchange Value register.
LIBICB\$IH_UNAT	Quadword	User NaT collection register.
LIBICB\$FH_FPSR	Quadword	Floating-point status register.
LIBICB\$IH_PFS	Quadword	Previous function state.
LIBICB\$IH_LC	Quadword	Loop count register.
LIBICB\$IH_EC	Quadword	Epilogue Count register.
LIBICB\$IH_CSD	Quadword	Copy of the AR.CSD.
LIBICB\$IH_SSD	Quadword	Copy of the AR.SSD.
LIBICB\$Q_PRED	Quadword	Predicate collection register, P0-P63. This field is a bitvector with bit 0 reserved.
LIBICB\$IH_PC	Quadword	Current instruction pointer; the slot number overlays <1:0>.
LIBICB\$IH_CFM	Quadword	Current Frame Marker.
LIBICB\$IH_UM	Quadword	User mask bits from PSR.
LIBICB\$O_GR_VALID	Octaword	General Register validity mask. ²
LIBICB\$L_FR_VALID	Longword	Floating-Point Register validity mask for registers F2-F31. ²
LIBICB\$Q_BR_VALID	Quadword	Branch Register validity mask. ²
LIBICB\$Q_AR_VALID	Quadword	Application Register validity mask. ²
LIBICB\$Q_OTHER_VALID	Quadword	PC and CFM validity mask. ²
LIBICB\$Q_PR_VALID	Quadword	Predicate Register validity mask. ²
LIBICB\$IH_ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR	Quadword	Original address of the general register spill area (normally &icb->LIBICB\$IH_IREG[0]). ¹
LIBICB\$IH_PSP	Quadword	Previous stack pointer.
LIBICB\$IH_RETURN_PC	Quadword	Return PC.

¹Bits in the field LIBICB\$IH_GRNAT represent the NaT bits for the general registers. The bit position for a given register is relative to its original spill location, the base address of which is stored at LIBICB\$IH_ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR. The first quadword of LIBICB\$IH_GRNAT contains the NaT bits for R0-R63, the second quadword contains the NaT bits for R64-R127. The formula for the bit corresponding to register Rn within each quadword is

```
uint64 * spill = (uint64 *)icb->LIBICB$IH_ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR;
uint64 bitpos = (((uint64)&spill[n]) >> 3) & 63;
uint64 bitmask = 1LL << bitpos;
```

²The *valid* bit mask indicates which registers have been realized for a given invocation context. Normally, scratch registers are not realizable except for a context immediately preceding an exception or AST frame. Refer to the LIBICB include files to find the bit position for the Application Registers, AR.RSC being bit 0.

(continued on next page)

Table 4–15 (Cont.) Contents of the Invocation Context Block

Field	Size	Description
LIBICBSIH_PREV_BSP	Quadword	Previous BSP
LIBICBSPH_CHFCTX_ADDR	Quadword	Pointer to condition handler facility context block.
LIBICBSIH_OSSD	Quadword	Copy of OSSD from Unwind Information Block.
LIBICBSIH_HANDLER_FV	Quadword	Condition Handler Function Value.
LIBICBSPH_LSDA	Quadword	Address of the Language Specific Data Area of the Unwind Information Block
Beginning of User Override Parameters (offset LIBICBSR_UO_BASE)		
LIBICBSQ_UO_FLAGS	Quadword	Operational flags: LIBICBSV_UO_FLAG_CACHE_UNWIND - Cache unwind information during a walk of the call stack. See Section 4.8.3.2.
LIBICBSIH_UO_IDENT	Quadword	User context variable; passed by value to the callback routines. See Section 4.8.5.
LIBICBSPH_UO_READ_MEM	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>read memory</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.3.
LIBICBSPH_UO_GETUEINFO	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>get unwind entry information</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.1.
LIBICBSPH_UO_GETCONTEXT	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>get initial context</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.2.
LIBICBSPH_UO_WRITE_MEM	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>write memory</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.4.
LIBICBSPH_UO_WRITE_REG	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>write register</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.5.
LIBICBSPH_UO_MALLOC	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>memory allocate</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.6.
LIBICBSPH_UO_FREE	Quadword	Pointer to user <i>memory free</i> routine. See Section 4.8.5.7.
End of user override parameters (length of LIBICBSK_UO_LENGTH)		
LIBICBSL_ALERT_CODE	Longword	Stack walk detailed status. Alert codes are enumerated in the LIBICB include files (see Section 4.8.3.4).
LIBICBSIH_SYSTEM_DEFINED [n]	n Quadwords	Variable-sized area; unused and undefined at this time.

Table 4–16 Flags in LIBICBSV_FRAME_FLAGS Field of the invocation context block

Flag	Description
LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK	Set to 1 if this is the bottom of the stack and there is absolutely no previous frame.
LIBICBSV_HANDLER_PRESENT	Set to 1 if this frame has a condition handler.
LIBICBSV_IN_PROLOGUE	Set to 1 if the PC is in a prologue region.
LIBICBSV_IN_EPILOGUE	Set to 1 if the PC is in an epilogue region.
LIBICBSV_HAS_MEM_STK_FRAME	Set to 1 if this frame has a memory stack.
LIBICBSV_HAS_REG_STK_FRAME	Set to 1 if this frame has a register stack.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

Static scratch registers, unless saved and described in the unwind table information, are not realizable except for an invocation context preceding an exception or AST frame.

4.8.2.2 Invocation Context Handle

To refer to a specific procedure invocation at run time, an **invocation context handle** can be used. The invocation context handle is a quadword that uniquely identifies any one of the active frames on a call stack, even when one or more of the frames correspond to procedures that have no associated stack storage.

The OpenVMS invocation context handle is defined as follows:

- For a frame that has a memory stack, the invocation context handle is the value of the stack pointer at the time of entrance to the routine (sometimes also referred to as the previous stack pointer, or PSP, of the frame).
- For a frame that has a register stack (and no memory stack), the invocation context handle is the value of the AR.BSP register for that frame.
- For a null frame (which has neither a memory stack nor a register stack), the invocation context handle is the value of the stack pointer at the time of entrance to the routine (sometimes also referred to as the previous stack pointer, or PSP, of the frame).

4.8.3 Invocation Context Block Access Routines

A thread can manipulate the invocation context of any procedure in the thread's virtual address space by calling the run-time library functions described in this section.

Note

The OpenVMS I64 stack tracing routines use heap storage during the analysis of unwind descriptors. The default heap storage mechanism uses a LIBRTL implementation of the C RTL function *malloc*, the use of which may result in virtual memory being expanded using the \$EXPREG system service. See Section 4.8.5 on how to override the defaults. See also Section 4.8.3.9.

4.8.3.1 Initializing the Invocation Context Block

When allocating a new invocation context block, the user must perform the following steps prior to calling any of the routines described in Section 4.8.3:

- Allocate the block on an octaword (16-byte) boundary.
- Initialize the LIBICBSL_CONTEXT_LENGTH field to LIBICBSK_INVO_CONTEXT_BLK_SIZE and the LIBICBSB_BLOCK_VERSION field to LIBICBSK_INVO_CONTEXT_VERSION.
- Clear the *user override* portion of the invocation context block, starting at LIBICBSR_UO_BASE for LIBICBSK_UO_LENGTH bytes.
- Set any required parameters in the *user override* portion of the invocation context block.
- Set the LIBICBSV_UO_FLAG_CACHE_UNWIND flag if appropriate. See also Section 4.8.3.2 and Section 4.8.3.9 regarding subsequent use of LIB\$I64_PREV_INVO_END.

Failure to do so will cause these routines to return an error status. Note that this is a change from Alpha, where this was not necessary.

4.8.3.2 Walking the Call Stack

During the course of program execution, it is sometimes necessary to walk the call stack. Frame-based exception handling is one case where this is done. Call stack navigation is possible only in the reverse direction (in a latest-to-earliest or top-to-bottom sequence).

To walk the call stack, perform the following steps:

1. Given a program state (which contains a register set), build an invocation context.

For the current routine, an initial invocation context block can be obtained by calling the LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT routine (see Section 4.8.3.4).

2. Repeatedly call the LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT routine (see Section 4.8.3.5) until the desired invocation context, or the end of the call chain, has been reached.

LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT indicates the end of the invocation call chain if either of the following conditions is true:

- The OSSD\$V_BOTTOM_OF_STACK flag is set for the target frame (see Table A-15).
- The return address (IP) of the target frame is zero.

To make the stack walk more efficient, you can set the LIBICBSV_UO_FLAG_CACHE_UNWIND flag. This causes unwind information to be carried over from one call to LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT to the next. At the conclusion of the stack walk, you must call LIB\$I64_PREV_INVO_END to free any cached unwind information. This is the recommended practice, but not the default behavior.

Compilers are allowed to optimize high-level language procedure calls in such a way that they do not appear in the invocation chain. For example, inline procedures never appear in the invocation chain.

Make no assumptions about the relative positions of any memory used for procedure frame information. There is no guarantee that successive stack frames will always appear at higher addresses.

4.8.3.3 LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of any active procedure by using this function:

```
LIB$I64_GET_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_handle, invo_context)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	quadword	read	by reference
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference

Arguments:

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

invo_handle

Address of the location that contains the handle for the desired invocation.

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block into which the procedure context of the frame specified by **invo_handle** will be written.

Note

The invocation context block **must** be properly initialized as described in Section 4.8.3.1 before calling this routine.

Function Value Returned:

status

Status value. A value of 1 indicates success; a value of 0 indicates failure.

Note

If the invocation handle that was passed does not represent any procedure context in the active call stack, the new contents of the context block is unpredictable.

4.8.3.4 LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of a current procedure by using this function:

```
LIB$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_context)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference

Argument:

invo_context

Address of an invocation context block into which the procedure context of the caller will be written.

Note

The invocation context block **must** be properly initialized as described in Section 4.8.3.1 before calling this routine.

Function Value Returned:

Zero. (This facilitates use in the implementation of the C language unwind `setjmp` or `longjmp` function. Check the `LIBICBSL_ALERT_CODE` field of the invocation context block for further status indication.)

4.8.3.5 LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT

A thread can obtain the invocation context of the procedure context preceding any other procedure context by using this function:

LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT(invo_context)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference

Argument:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block. The given invocation context block is updated to represent the context of the previous (calling) frame.

The LIBICBSV_BOTTOM_OF_STACK flag of the invocation context block is set if the target frame represents the end of the invocation call chain or if stack corruption is detected.

Function Value Returned:

status

Status value. A value of 1 indicates success. When the initial context represents the bottom of the call stack, a value of 0 is returned. If the current operation completed without error, but a stack corruption was detected at the next level down, a value of 3 is returned.

4.8.3.6 LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_HANDLE

A thread can obtain an invocation handle corresponding to any invocation context block by using this function:

LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_HANDLE(invo_context, invo_handle)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference
invo_handle	invo_handle	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

invo_handle

Address of the location into which the invocation context handle is to be written. If the call fails, the value of the invocation context handle is LIB\$K_INVO_HANDLE_NULL.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.
A value of 0 indicates failure.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

4.8.3.7 LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_HANDLE

A thread can obtain the invocation handle for the current procedure by using this function.

LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_HANDLE(invo_handle)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

invo_handle

Address of a quadword into which the invocation handle of the caller will be written.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.3.8 LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE

A thread can obtain an invocation handle of the procedure context preceding that of a specified procedure context by using this function:

LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE(invo_handle_in, invo_handle_out)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle_in	invo_handle	quadword	read	by reference
invo_handle_out	invo_handle	quadword	write	by reference

Argument:

invo_handle_in

The address of an invocation handle that represents a target invocation context.

invo_handle_out

Address of the location into which the invocation context handle of the previous context is to be written. If the call fails, the value of the previous invocation context handle is LIB\$K_INVO_HANDLE_NULL.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

Note

Each call to this routine involves a stack walk from the top of the stack to find the procedure matching the input handle. Consequently, using this routine repeatedly is an inefficient way to walk the stack, compared to using LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT.

4.8.3.9 LIB\$I64_PREV_INVO_END

This routine should be called at the conclusion of call tracing operations to free the memory used to process unwind descriptors. The call tracing routines are LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_CONTEXT, LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT, LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT.

To provide efficient call tracing, some unwind information is tracked in heap storage from one call to the next. This heap storage should be freed before you release or reuse the invocation context block.

Calling this routine is necessary if the LIBICBSV_UO_FLAG_CACHE_UNWIND flag is set in the LIBICBSQ_UO_FLAGS field of the invocation context block. If this flag is not set, unwind information is released and recreated at each call, and calling this routine is not required.

LIB\$I64_PREV_INVO_END (invo_context)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block previously used for call tracing.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.3.10 LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS

The fields of a given procedure invocation context can be updated with new register contents by using this function:

LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS(invo_handle, invo_context [,gr_mask] [,fr_mask] [,br_mask] [,pr_mask] [,misc_mask])

Note that if user override routines are specified in the invocation context block, then they are used to find and modify the invocation context.

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_handle	invo_handle	quadword	read	by reference
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference
gr_mask	mask_octaword	128-bit vector	read	by reference
fr_mask	mask_octaword	128-bit vector	read	by reference
br_mask	mask_byte	8-bit vector	read	by reference
pr_mask	mask_quadword	64-bit vector	read	by reference
misc_mask	mask_quadword	64-bit vector	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_handle

Handle for the invocation to be updated.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block that contains new register contents.

Each register that is set in the **xx_mask** argument (along with its NaT bit, if any) is updated using the value found in the corresponding IREG[*n*], FREG[*n*], BRANCH[*n*], or PRED[*n*] field. GP, TP, and AI can also be updated in this way. No other fields of the invocation context block are used.

gr_mask

Address of a 128-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the **invo_context** argument. Bits 0 through 127 correspond to IREG[0] through IREG[127].

Bit 0 corresponds to R0, which can not be written, and is ignored.

Bit 1 corresponds to the global data pointer (GP).

Bit 13 corresponds to the thread pointer (TP).

Bit 25 corresponds to the argument information register (AI).

If bit 12, which corresponds to SP, is set, then no changes are made.

fr_mask

Address of a 128-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the passed **invo_context**. To update floating point registers F32-F127, provide a pointer to an array of 96 octawords in LIBICBSPH_F32_F127. Bits 0 through 127 correspond to FREG[0] through FREG[127].

Bit 0 corresponds to F0, which can not be written, and is ignored.

Bit 1 corresponds to F1, which can not be written, and is ignored.

br_mask

Address of a 8-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the passed **invo_context**. Bits 0 through 7 correspond to BRANCH[0] through BRANCH[7].

pr_mask

Address of a 64-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the passed **invo_context**. Bits 0 through 63 correspond to PRED[0] through PRED[63].

misc_mask

Address of a 64-bit bit vector, where each bit corresponds to a register field in the passed **invo_context** as follows:

Bit 0=PC.

Bit 1=FPSR.

Bits 2-63 are reserved.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 is returned (and nothing is changed) in the following circumstances:

- When the invocation handle does not represent an active invocation context.
- When bit 12 of the **gr_mask** argument is set
- When a scratch register has not been saved, or a register's save location or status cannot be determined (valid bit clear).

Caution

Great care must be taken to assure that a valid stack frame and execution environment result; otherwise, execution may become unpredictable.

4.8.4 Supplemental Invocation Context Access Routines

The routines described in this section can be used to perform some of the more common operations involving invocation contexts.

4.8.4.1 LIB\$I64_GET_FR

Given an invocation context block and floating-point register **index** such that $0 \leq \text{index} < 128$, copy the register value to **fr_copy**. For example, an **index** value of 4 fetches the value, which represents the contents of F4 for the context.

LIB\$I64_GET_FR returns failure status if the index represents a scratch register whose contents have not been realized.

LIB\$I64_GET_FR (invo_context, index, fr_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference
index	index	longword	read	by value
fr_copy	floating-point value	octaword	write	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

index

Floating point register index.

fr_copy

Address of an octaword to receive the contents of the specified floating-point register.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.2 LIB\$I64_SET_FR

Given an invocation context block, a floating-point register index, and a floating-point register value in **fr_copy**, writes the corresponding invocation context block FREG entry, and calls LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS to write the actual context. The invocation context block remains unchanged if the routine fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_FR fails if LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_FR (invo_context, index, fr_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference
index	index	longword	read	by value
fr_copy	floating-point value	octaword	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

index

Index into the FREG array of the invocation context block.

fr_copy

Address of an octaword that contains the floating-point value to be written to the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.3 LIB\$I64_GET_GR

Given an invocation context block and general register **index** such that $0 \leq \text{index} < 128$, copy the register value to **gr_copy**, for example, **index** 4 fetches the invocation context block IREG[4] value, which represents the contents of R4 for the context.

If the register represented by **index** has its corresponding NaT bit set, the read succeeds and the return status is set to 3. If the register represented by **index** lies beyond the allocated general registers, the read fails and **gr_copy** is unchanged. That is, the highest allowed **index** is $32 + \text{ICB.CFM.SOF} - 1$.

LIB\$I64_GET_GR fails if the index represents a scratch register whose contents have not been realized.

LIB\$I64_GET_GR (invo_context, index, gr_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	read	by reference
index	index	longword	read	by value
gr_copy	integer value	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

index

Index into the IREG array of the invocation context block.

gr_copy

Address of a quadword to receive the value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 3 indicates success, and the NaT bit was set.

A value of 1 indicates success, and the NaT bit was clear.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.4 LIB\$I64_SET_GR

Given an invocation context block, a general register **index** such that $1 \leq \text{index} < 128$, and a quadword value **gr_copy**, writes the corresponding invocation context block general register, clears the corresponding NaT bit and uses LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS to write to the actual context. The invocation context block remains unchanged if the routine fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_GR fails if LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_GR (invo_context, index, gr_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference
index	index	longword	read	by value
gr_copy	integer value	quadword	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

index

Index into the IREG array of the invocation context block.

gr_copy

Address of a quadword that contains the value to be written to the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.5 LIB\$I64_SET_PC

Given an invocation context block and a quadword PC value in **pc_copy**, write the **pc_copy** value to the invocation context block PC and then use LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS to write to the actual context. The invocation context block remains unchanged if the routine fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_PC fails if LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_PC (invo_context, pc_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference
pc_copy	PC value	quadword	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

pc_copy

Address of a quadword that contains the PC value to be written to the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

4.8.4.6 LIB\$I64_SET_FPSR

Given an invocation context block and a quadword FPSR value in **fpsr_copy**, write the **fpsr_copy** value to the invocation context block FPSR and then use LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS to write to the actual context. The invocation context block remains unchanged if the routine fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_FPSR fails if LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS fails.

LIB\$I64_SET_FPSR (invo_context, fpsr_copy)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference
fpsr_copy	FPSR value	quadword	read	by reference

Arguments:

invo_context

Address of a valid invocation context block.

fpsr_copy

Address of a quadword that contains FPSR value to be written to the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.7 LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_LSDA

Given a **pc_value**, find the address of the unwind information block language-specific data area (LSDA), and write it to **unwind_ksda_p**. If not present, then write 0 to **unwind_ksda_p**.

LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_LSDA (pc_value, unwind_ksda_p)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
pc_value	PC value	quadword	read	by reference
unwind_ksda_p	address	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

pc_value

Address of a location that contains the PC value. **pc_value** is used to find the unwind information block and the unwind information block language-specific data area address.

unwind_ksda_p

Address of a quadword to receive the address of the language-specific data area, if there is one.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.8 LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_OSSD

Given a **pc_value**, find the address of the unwind information block operating system-specific data area, if present, and write it to **unwind_ossd_p**. If not present, then write 0 to **unwind_ossd_p**.

LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_OSSD (pc_value, unwind_ossd_p)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
pc_value	PC value	quadword	read	by reference
unwind_ossd_p	address	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

pc_value

Address of a location that contains the PC value. **pc_value** is used to find the unwind information block and the unwind information block operating system-specific data area address.

unwind_ossd_p

Address of a quadword to receive the address of the operating system-specific data area.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.4.9 LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_HANDLER_FV

Given a **pc_value**, find the function value (address of the procedure descriptor) for the condition handler, if present, and write it to **handler_fv**. If not present, then write 0 to **handler_fv**.

LIB\$I64_GET_UNWIND_HANDLER_FV (pc_value, handler_fv)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
pc_value	PC value	quadword	read	by reference
handler_fv	address	quadword	write	by reference

Arguments:

pc_value

Address of a location that contains the PC value.

pc_value is used to find the unwind information block and the unwind information block condition handler pointer.

handler_fv

A quadword to receive the function value of the procedure descriptor for the condition handler, if there is one.

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

4.8.4.10 LIB\$I64_IS_EXC_DISPATCH_FRAME

Used to determine whether a given PC value represents an exception dispatch frame.

LIB\$I64_IS_EXC_DISPATCH_FRAME (pc_value)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
pc_value	PC value	quadword	read	by reference

Arguments:

pc_value

Address of a quadword that contains the PC value.

The **pc_value** is used to find the operating system-specific data area in the unwind information for this routine.

Function Value Returned:

status

Returns 1 if the operating system-specific data area is present and the EXCEPTION_FRAME flag is set.

Returns 0 if the operating system-specific data area is present and the EXCEPTION_FRAME flag is clear. Returns 0 if the operating system-specific data area is not present.

4.8.4.11 LIB\$I64_IS_AST_DISPATCH_FRAME

Used to determine whether a given PC value represents an AST dispatch frame.

LIB\$I64_IS_AST_DISPATCH_FRAME (pc_value)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
pc_value	PC value	quadword	read	by reference

Arguments:

pc_value

Address of a quadword that contains the PC value.

The **pc_value** is used to find the operating system-specific data area in the unwind information block for this routine.

Function Value Returned:

status

Returns 1 if the operating system-specific data area is present and the EXCEPTION_FRAME flag is set.

Returns 0 if the operating system-specific data area is present and the EXCEPTION_FRAME flag is clear. Returns 0 if the operating system-specific data area is not present.

4.8.5 Invocation Context Callback Routines

Advanced users can override the way the call stack is traced by providing custom callback routines. These routines can be used to perform the following functions:

- Perform a call trace on a process other than the current process.
- Override the heap storage mechanism used to allocate memory used during the analysis of unwind descriptors.

The **user override callback mechanism** provides a **user ident** value that is passed to each callback routine. The user ident value is stored in the LIBICBSIH_UO_IDENT field of the invocation context block.

The routines described in this section must be provided to override the call stack walk.

Note

The callback routines cannot be used with the following routines, which are not passed a context block:

- LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_HANDLE
 - LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE
-

4.8.5.1 The Get Unwind Information Routine

Place a function pointer for this routine in the LIBICB\$PH_UO_GETUEINFO field of the invocation context block.

```
int (* getueinfo) (uint64 pc, void *get_ue_block, void *name, ...);
```

This routine should mimic SY\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO for the target process. See Section A.6 for detailed argument descriptions and return status, with the following notes:

The name argument is not used, and can be ignored. If a read memory callback has been specified, the contents of LIBICB\$PH_UO_READ_MEM are passed as a fourth argument, and the contents of LIBICB\$PH_UO_IDENT are passed as a fifth argument, otherwise the routine is called with three arguments.

4.8.5.2 The Get Initial Context Routine

Place a function pointer for this routine in the LIBICB\$PH_UO_GETCONTEXT field of the invocation context block.

The **get initial context** routine is used to seed the invocation context block from the target process. This routine should initialize the **invocation context block** structure with the preserved general, floating, branch, and predicate registers, as well as Application Registers such as AR.RSC, AR.BSP, and AR.PFS from the target process. This routine should set the valid bits corresponding to the saved registers in the VALID fields. This routine must store the original spill address corresponding to R0 in the ORIGINAL_SPILL_ADDR field. This callback routine is used by LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT and should be followed by at least one call to LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT to generate a working context.

```
int (* getcontext) (void *invo_context, uint64 ident);
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
invo_context	invo_context_blk	structure	modify	by reference
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

invo_context

The address of the invocation context block.

ident

Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:**status**

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.5.3 The Read Memory Routine

Place a function pointer for this routine in the LIBICB\$PH_UO_READ_MEM field of the invocation context block.

The read memory routine is used to transfer data from the target process.

```
int (* read_mem) (void *dst, uint64 src, size_t length, uint64 ident);
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
dst	memory_access	byte_array	write	by reference
src	memory_address	quadword	read	by value
length	size_t	longword	read	by value
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:**dst**

A local memory address and the destination for the read operation.

src

An address in the target process to be read.

length

The length in bytes to be read.

ident

Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:**status**

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.5.4 The Write Memory Routine

Place a function pointer for this routine in the LIBICB\$PH_UO_WRITE_MEM field of the invocation context block.

The write memory routine is used to transfer data to the target process. It is used by LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS for a register that has been saved in memory.

```
int (* write_mem) (void *src, uint64 dst, size_t length, uint64 ident);
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
src	memory_access	byte_array	read	by value

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
dst	memory_address	quadword	write	by reference
length	size_t	longword	read	by value
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

- src**
A local memory address and the source for the write operation.
- dst**
An address in the target process to be written.
- length**
The length in bytes to be written.
- ident**
Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

- status**
A value of 1 indicates success.
A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.5.5 The Write Register Routine

Place a function pointer for this routine in the LIBICB\$PH_UO_WRITE_REG field of the invocation context block.

The write register routine is used to write a register in the target process. It is used by LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS for a register that has not been saved in memory.

This routine is optional, or subset of registers can be implemented, in this case LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS will return an error if this routine is not present, or is unable to write the desired register.

int (* write_reg) (int whichReg, uint64 value_1, uint64 value_2, uint64 ident);

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
whichReg	enumeration	longword	read	by value
value_1	register_value	quadword	read	by value
value_2	register_value	quadword	read	by value
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

- whichReg**
Indicates the register to be written (see **enum** in libicb.h).
- value_1**
Specifies the register contents, or lower quadword for a FR fill operation.
- value_2**
Specifies the NaT bit for GRs, or upper quadword for a FR fill.
- ident**
Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.8 Procedure Call Stack

Function Value Returned:

status

A value of 1 indicates success.

A value of 0 indicates failure.

4.8.5.6 The Memory Allocation Routine

The memory allocation routine is used to allocate heap storage required during the analysis of unwind descriptors. This routine should mimic the behavior of the C RTL routine **malloc**.

```
void * (* malloc) (size_t size, uint64 ident);
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
length	size_t	longword	read	by value
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

length

The length in bytes of memory to be allocated. The returned memory block should be aligned on a 16-byte boundary.

ident

Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

ptr

Address of the memory block allocated, or 0 for failure.

In the case where local memory is being read, that is, you have not overridden the *read memory* routines, the malloc requests are reduced to:

- One Unwind Context block of size LIBICB\$K_CONTEXT_BLK_SIZE
- One Unwind Descriptor block of size LIBICB\$K_DESCRIPTOR_BLK_SIZE
- Several Unwind region blocks of size LIBICB\$K_REGION_BLK_SIZE
- Several Unwind region label blocks of size LIBICB\$K_REGIONLABEL_BLK_SIZE

The number of the last two required depends on the complexity of the unwind descriptors for a given procedure being traced.

4.8.5.7 The Memory Deallocation Routine

The memory deallocation routine is used to free heap storage allocated by the memory allocation routine (see Section 4.8.5.6). This routine should mimic the behavior of the C RTL routine **free**.

```
void (* free) (void * ptr, uint64 ident);
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
ptr	address	quadword	read	by value
ident	user_value	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

ptr

Address of a memory block previously allocated by a call to the user *malloc* routine.

ident

Specifies a user ident value from the invocation context block.

Function Value Returned:

None.

4.9 Data Allocation

In order to make the most effective use of the addressing modes available to Intel Itanium processors, each image's data is partitioned into one or two short data segments and some number of long data segments. The short data segments, addressed by the GP register in each image, contain the following areas:

- A **linkage table**, containing pointers to imported data and functions, and to data in the code segments and long data segments. This area is generally protected by OpenVMS against being written after image activation is complete.
- A read-only **short data area**, containing small initialized own data items. This area is generally protected by OpenVMS against being written after image activation is complete. (This area is optional.)
- A read-write short data area, containing small initialized own data items.
- A read-write **short bss area**, containing small uninitialized own data items.

The long data segments contain either or both of the following areas:

- One or more **long data areas**, which contain large initialized data items, and initialized non-own data items of any size.
- One or more **long bss areas**, which contain large uninitialized data items, and uninitialized non-own data items of any size.

Own data items are those that are either local to an image, or are such that all references to these items from the same image will always refer to these items. Because non-own variables cannot be referenced directly, there is no benefit to placing them in the short data area or bss area. Small own data items are placed in the short bss area or short data areas, and are guaranteed to be within 2 megabytes (in either direction) of the GP address; this allows compilers to use a short direct addressing sequence (using the add with 22-bit immediate instruction) to access any data item allocated in these areas.

The compiler should place all own data items that are 8 bytes or less in size (regardless of structure) in one of the short data areas or the short bss area. All other data items, including items that are larger than 8 bytes in size, must be placed in one of the long data areas or long bss areas. The compiler must address these items indirectly, using a linkage table entry. Linkage table entries are typically allocated by the linker in response to a relocation request generated by the compiler; an entry in the linkage table is either a pointer to a data item, or a function descriptor. A function descriptor placed in the linkage table is a local copy of an official function descriptor that is generally allocated by the linker or image activator.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.9 Data Allocation

This design allows for a maximum size of 4 megabytes for the short data segment, because everything must be addressable via the GP register using the 22-bit add immediate instruction. This allows for up to 256,000 individually-named variables and functions. If an image requires more than this, linker options may be used to divide the image into multiple clusters (see Section 4.7.1).

4.9.1 Alignment

On Itanium hardware, memory references to data that is not naturally aligned can result in alignment faults, which can severely degrade the performance of all procedures that reference the unaligned data. To avoid such performance degradation, all data values should be naturally aligned, as shown in Table 4–17.

In addition, common blocks, dynamically allocated (heap) regions (for example from `malloc`), and global data items greater than 8 bytes must be aligned on a 16-byte boundary.

Table 4–17 Natural Alignment Requirements

Data Type	Alignment Starting Position
8-bit character string	Byte boundary
16-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 2 (word alignment)
32-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword alignment)
64-bit integer	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword alignment)
F_floating F_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword)
D_floating D_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
G_floating G_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
S_floating S_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 4 (longword alignment)
T_floating T_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 8 (quadword)
X_floating X_floating complex	Address that is a multiple of 16 (octaword)

For aggregates such as strings, arrays, and records, the data type to be considered for purposes of alignment is *not* the aggregate itself, but rather the elements of which the aggregate is composed. The alignment requirement of an aggregate is that all elements of the aggregate be naturally aligned. For example, varying 8-bit character strings must start at addresses that are a multiple of at least 2 (word alignment) because of the 16-bit count at the beginning of the string; 32-bit integer arrays start at a longword boundary, irrespective of the extent of the array.

The rules for passing a record in an argument that is passed by immediate value (see Section 4.7.4) always provide quadword alignment of the record value independent of the normal alignment requirement of the record. If deemed appropriate by an implementation, normal alignment can be established within the called procedure by making a copy of the record argument at a suitably aligned location.

4.9.2 Global Data

Access to global variables that are not known (at compile time) to be defined in the same image must be indirect. Each image has a linkage table in its data segment, pointed to by the GP register; code must load a pointer to the global variable from the linkage table, then access the global variable through the pointer. Access to global variables known to be defined in the same image or to static locals that are placed in the short data area may be made with a GP-relative offset.

4.9.3 Local Static Data

Access to short local static data can be made with a GP-relative offset; access to long local static data must be indirect.

4.9.4 Constants and Literals

Constants and literals may be placed in the text segment or in the data segment. If placed in the text segment, the access must be PC-relative or indirect using a linkage table entry. Literals placed in the data segment may be placed in the short initialized data area if they are 8 bytes or less in size. Larger literals must be placed in the long initialized data area or in the text segment. Literals in the long initialized data area require an indirect access using a linkage table entry.

4.9.5 Record Layout Conventions

The OpenVMS I64 calling standard rules for record layout are designed to provide good run-time performance on all implementations of the Itanium architecture and to provide the required level of compatibility with conventional VAX and Alpha operating environments.

Therefore, this standard defines the following record layout conventions:

- Those optimized for optimal access characteristics (referred to as **aligned** record layouts)
- Those compatible with conventions that are traditionally used by VAX languages (referred to as **VAX compatible** record layouts)

Note

Although compiler implementers must make appropriate business decisions, Hewlett-Packard strongly recommends that all OpenVMS I64 high-level language compilers should support both record layouts.

Only these record layouts may be used across standard interfaces or between languages. Languages can support other language-specific record layout conventions, but such layouts are nonstandard.

The aligned record layout conventions should be used unless interchange is required with conventional VAX applications that use the OpenVMS VAX compatible record layouts.

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.9 Data Allocation

4.9.5.1 Aligned Record Layout

The aligned record layout conventions ensure that:

- All components of a record or subrecord are naturally aligned.
- Layout and alignment of record elements and subrecords are independent of any record or subrecord in which they are embedded.
- Layout and alignment of a subrecord is the same as if it were a top-level record.
- Declaration in high-level languages of standard records for interlanguage use is straightforward and obvious, and meets the requirements for source-level compatibility between OpenVMS I64 languages and OpenVMS Alpha and VAX languages.

The aligned record layout is defined by the following conventions:

- The components of a record must be laid out in memory corresponding to the lexical order of their appearance in the high-level language declaration of the record.
- The first bit of a record or subrecord must be directly addressable (byte aligned).
- Records and subrecords must be aligned according to the largest natural alignment requirements of the contained elements and subrecords.
- Bit fields (packed subranges of integers) are characterized by an underlying integer type that is a byte, word, longword, or quadword in size together with an allocation size in bits. A bit field is allocated at the next available bit boundary, provided that the resulting allocation does not cross an alignment boundary of the underlying type. Otherwise, the field is allocated at the next byte boundary that is aligned as required for the underlying type. (In the later case, the space skipped over is left permanently not allocated.) In addition, if necessary, the alignment of the record as a whole is increased to that of the underlying integer type.
- Unaligned bit strings, unaligned bit arrays, and elements of unaligned bit arrays must start at the next available bit in the record. No fill is ever supplied preceding an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or unaligned bit array element.
- All other components of a record must start at the next available naturally aligned address for the data type.
- The length of a record must be a multiple of its alignment. (This includes the case when a record is a component of another record.)
- Strings and arrays must be aligned according to the natural alignment requirements of the data type of which the string or array is composed.
- The length of an array element is a multiple of its alignment, even if this leaves unused space at its end. The length of the whole array is the sum of the lengths of its elements.

4.9.5.2 OpenVMS VAX Compatible Record Layout

The OpenVMS VAX compatible record layout is defined by the following conventions:

- The components of a record must be laid out in memory corresponding to the lexical order of their appearance in the high-level language declaration of the record.
- Unaligned bit strings, unaligned bit arrays, and elements of unaligned bit arrays must start at the next available bit in the record. No fill is ever supplied preceding an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or unaligned bit array element.
- All other components of a record must start at the next available byte in the record. Any unused bits following the last-used bit in the last-used byte of each component must be filled out to the next byte boundary so that any following data starts on a byte boundary.
- Subrecords must be aligned according to the largest alignment of the contained elements and subrecords. A subrecord always starts at the next available byte unless it consists entirely of unaligned bit data and it immediately follows an unaligned bit string, unaligned bit array, or a subrecord consisting entirely of unaligned bit data.
- Records must be aligned on byte boundaries.

4.9.6 Sample Code Sequences

In the sample code sequences in this section, register names of the form t1, t2, and so on, are temporary registers, and may be assigned to any available scratch register. The code sequences show necessary cycle breaks, but no other scheduling considerations have been made. It is assumed that these code sequences will be scheduled with surrounding code to make best use of the processor resources.

4.9.6.1 Addressing Own Data in the Short Data Area

Own short data can be addressed with a simple direct reference relative to the GP register, as shown in the following example:

```
addl    t1=@gprel(var),gp ;;           // calc. address of var
ld8     loc0=[t1]                // load contents of var
```

Own long data can be addressed either via the linkage table, as shown in Section 4.9.6.2, or directly as shown in the following example:

```
movl    t1=@gprel(var) ;;           // form gp-relative offset of var
add     t2=t1,gp ;;                // calc. address of var
ld8     loc0=[t2]                  // load contents of var
```

4.9.6.2 Addressing External Data or Data in a Long Data Area

When data is not known to be defined in the current image (that is, it is not own), or if it is too large for the short data region, it must be accessed indirectly through the linkage table, as shown in the following example:

```
addl    t1=@ltoff(var),gp ;;        // calc. address of LT entry
ld8     t2=[t1] ;;                  // load address of var
ld8     loc0=[t2]                   // load contents of var
```

OpenVMS I64 Conventions

4.9 Data Allocation

4.9.6.3 Addressing Literals in the Text Segment

Literals in the text segment may be addressed either through the linkage table, as in Section 4.9.6.2, or with PC-relative addressing, as shown in the following example:

```
L1: mov    r3=ip ;;                // get current IP
     addl  loc0=litbase-L1,r3 ;;   // calc. addr. of lit. area
     adds  t2=(lit-litbase),loc0 ;; // calc. address of lit.
     ld8   loc1=[t2]              // load value of literal
```

Note

The first two instructions can be moved towards the beginning of the procedure, and the base address of the literal area (in LOC0) can be shared by other literal references in the same procedure.

4.9.6.4 Materializing Function Pointers

Function pointers must always be obtained from the data segment, either as an initialized quadword or through the linkage table, as shown in the following examples:

Materializing function pointers through linkage table:

```
addl  t1=@ltoff(@fptr(func)),gp ;; // calc address of LT entry
ld8   loc0=[t1]                   // load function pointer
```

Materializing function pointers in data:

```
fptr:
data8 @fptr(func)                 // initialize function ptr
```

4.9.6.5 Jump Tables

High-level language constructs such as case and switch statements, where there are several possible local targets of a branch, may use a number of different code generation strategies, ranging from sequential conditional branches to a direct-lookup branch table.

Two branch table methods are described: The first places the branch table in a read-only segment separate from the code segment. The second places the branch table in the code segment. The advantage of the first is that it allows the code segment to have execute-only access, while the second may require the code segment to allow read access as well. The advantage of the second is that it does not require addressing the branch table via the GP and hence may be slightly faster. Both methods avoid the need for relocation during image activation.

The branch table method descriptions that follow include examples that use 64-bit entries. It is also valid to use 32-bit, 16-bit or even 8-bit entries providing it is known that the smaller entry size is sufficient to allow the required displacement to be represented (without overflow).

4.9.6.5.1 Preferred Method If a branch table is placed in a data segment separate from the code, each entry should be a byte displacement from a dispatch address located in the code segment to the branch target for that entry.

A sample branch table and its using code is shown below:

```

//
// Assume case index in loc0
//
    addl    loc1=@ltoff($DSPTBL1), gp // addr of GOT entry
    ld8     loc2=[loc1]              // load addr of dsp table
    shladd  loc3=loc0,3,loc2         // calc addr of dsp entry
    ld8     loc4=[loc3]              // load dsp table entry
$DA1: mov   loc5=ip                  // get "dispatch address"
    add     loc6=loc5,loc4           // calc target address
    mov     b6=loc6
    br.cond b6                      // perform dispatch

$L1: {target for case 1}
    ...
$L2: {target for case 2}
    ...
...   etc

// The dispatch table is in the linkage section. It consists
// of only constants (no relocations involved)
//
$DSPTBL1:
    .data8  $L1-$DA1
    .data8  $L2-$DA1
    .
    .
    .

```

4.9.6.5.2 Alternative Method If a branch table is placed in the same segment as the code, each table entry should be a 64-bit byte displacement from the base of the branch table to the branch target for that entry.

A sample indirect branch is shown below. The branch table is assumed to be an array of entries, each of which is an offset relative to the beginning of the branch table to the branch target. The branch table index is assumed to have been computed or loaded into register LOC0.

```

    addl loc1=@ltoff(brtab),gp // calc. address of
    ;;                          // linkage table entry
    ld8  loc2=[loc1] ;;         // load addr. of br. table
    shladd loc3=loc0,3,loc2 ;; // calc. address of branch
    ;;                          // table entry
    ld8  loc4=[loc3] ;;         // load branch table entry
    add  loc5=loc4,loc2 ;;      // calc. target address
    mov  b6=loc5 ;;             // move address to B6...
    br.cond b6 ;;              // ...and branch

```

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

To support interoperability between images built from native OpenVMS Alpha code and images translated from OpenVMS VAX code, native Alpha compilers can optionally generate information that describes the parameters and result of a procedure. Similarly, for interoperability between images built from native OpenVMS I64 code and images translated from VAX or Alpha code, I64 compilers can also optionally generate information that describes the parameters and result of a procedure. This auxiliary information is called **signature information**.

Translated VAX code on Alpha and I64 systems uses VAX argument list and function return conventions as described in Section 2.4 and Section 2.5.

Translated Alpha code on I64 systems uses Alpha argument list and function return conventions as described in Chapter 3.

The following sections describe the conventions for using signature information to control the passing of arguments and returning a function value when a native procedure passes control to a translated procedure and vice versa.

The Translated Image Executive (TIE) is the user-mode support facility (itself a sharable image) that performs the following functions:

- Mediates calls between native and translated code
- Controls execution of translated code
- Performs interpretation where necessary

5.1 Overview

OpenVMS compilers for Alpha and I64 provide a compilation option that causes signature information to be included in the resulting object file. To support interoperability between OpenVMS native and translated code, the native code must contain signature information.

With one exception related to indirect calls (see Section 5.1.1.3 and Section 5.1.2.3), code generation is not affected by the presence or absence of translated code support.

The operation of translated images on OpenVMS Alpha and I64 systems is very similar, though different in certain details.

5.1.1 Translated VAX Images on Alpha Systems

When a VAX image is translated to an Alpha image, the VAX registers R0–15 are represented using the lower half of the corresponding Alpha registers R0–15 at call interface boundaries. No “type conversion” is performed in making parameters from either native or translated code available to each other.

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1 Overview

5.1.1.1 Direct Calls From Translated to Native Code

When the TIE encounters a call in translated code that passes control to native Alpha code, it obtains signature information for the target procedure using the PDSCSW_SIGNATURE_OFFSET field of the target procedure descriptor (see Section 3.4.1).

If the value in the PDSCSW_SIGNATURE_OFFSET is zero, then no signature information is available, the call cannot be performed, and the TIE signals an error.

Otherwise, the TIE uses the signature information to create an appropriate Alpha argument list (in the integer registers and stack as appropriate), then calls the native procedure. When control returns, the TIE obtains the returned result (if any), makes it available to translated code, and resumes translated code execution.

5.1.1.2 Direct Calls From Native to Translated Code

Calls from native Alpha code to a routine in a translated image depend on special linker and image activator support. If the linker can confirm that the target of the call is also in native code (because the target is local to the same image), then the call is resolved normally. Otherwise, the linker passes the compiler generated signature information for use by the image activator.

If the image activator can determine that the target of the call is also in native code, then the call is resolved normally. Otherwise, the image activator creates a bound procedure descriptor (see Section 3.6.4) and resolves the procedure value to that descriptor. This descriptor is setup to pass control to a special TIE entry point which obtains the target VAX procedure value and signature information from that same descriptor.

5.1.1.3 Indirect Calls From Native to Translated Code

If interoperation with translated images is not required, then an indirect call is made as described in Section 3.6.3. If interoperation with translated images must be considered, the procedure value (in R4 in the following example) might be the address of a VAX entry point or the address of an Alpha procedure descriptor.

A VAX entry point can be dynamically distinguished from an Alpha procedure descriptor by examining bits 12 and 13 of a VAX entry call mask, which are required to be 0 by the VAX architecture. For an Alpha procedure, bit 12 corresponds to the PDSCSV_NATIVE flag, which is required to be set in all Alpha procedure descriptors. Bit 13 corresponds to the PDSCSV_NO_JACKET flag, which is currently required to be set but reserved for enhancements to this standard in all Alpha procedure descriptors.

If the procedure value is determined to correspond to an Alpha procedure, then the call can be completed as discussed. If the procedure value is determined to correspond to a VAX procedure, then the call must be completed using system TIE facilities that will effect the transition into and out of the code of the translated image.

Example 5–1 illustrates a code sequence for examining the procedure value.

Example 5–1 Code for Examining the Procedure Value

(continued on next page)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1 Overview

Example 5–1 (Cont.) Code for Examining the Procedure Value

```
LDL      R28,0(R4)           ;Load the flags field of the target PDSC
MOV      #AI_LITERAL,R25    ;Load Argument Information register
SRL      R28,#PDSC$V_NO_JACKET,R26 ;Position jacket flag
BLBC     R26,CALL_JACKET    ;If clear then jacket needed
LDQ      R26,8(R4)          ;Entry address to scratch register
MOV      R4,R27              ;Procedure value to R27
JSR      R26,(R26)          ;Call entry address.
back_in_line:
...                               ;Rest of procedure code goes here
TRANSLATED:                       ;Generated out of line, R2 contains a
LDQ      R26,N_TO_T_LKP(R2)      ;Entry address to scratch register
LDQ      R27,N_TO_T_LKP+8(R2)    ;Load procedure value
MOV      R4,R23                 ;Address of routine to call to R23
JSR      R26,(R26)              ;Call jacket routine
BR       back_in_line           ;Return to normal code path
CALL_JACKET:                       ;
SRL      R28,#PDSC$V_NATIVE,R28 ;Jacketing for translated or native?
LDA      R24,PSIG_OUT(R2)        ;Pass address of our argument
                                           ; signature information in R24
BLBC     R28,TRANSLATED         ;If clear, then translated jacketing
(Native Jacketing Reserved for Future Use)
BR       back_in_line           ;Return to normal code path
```

In Example 5–1, TIE jacketing functionality is provided by the SYSS\$NATIVE_TO_TRANSLATED routine. This system procedure is called with the actual arguments for the target procedure in their normal locations (as though the target procedure were an Alpha procedure) and with two additional, nonstandard arguments:

- R23 contains the procedure value for the target VAX procedure.
- R24 contains the address of a signature information block for the call, as described in Section 5.2.

The conventions just described are normally accomplished using the special service routine OTSS\$CALL_PROC. The actual parameters to the target function are passed to OTSS\$CALL_PROC as though the target routine is native code that is being invoked directly. In addition, OTSS\$CALL_PROC receives two additional parameters in registers R23 and R24 as described above for SYSS\$NATIVE_TO_TRANSLATED.

5.1.2 Translated Images on I64 Systems

When a VAX or Alpha image is translated to an I64 image, there is no defined relationship between the registers in the original image and those in the I64 image. Information can only be passed between translated and native code using the arguments and function result in accordance with the signature information present in the I64 image. For calls between a translated VAX and a translated Alpha image on I64 systems, the rules for calls between translated VAX and native Alpha images apply and make use of signature information in the translated Alpha image.

OpenVMS I64 implements a static mapping that:

- Allows an address corresponding to a translated image to be identified
- Specifies whether it is an Alpha or VAX translated image

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1 Overview

However, the means for creating and accessing this mapping is not part of this calling standard.

It is not possible for dynamically generated non-native code to be reflected in this mapping. As a result, OpenVMS does not support translated images that dynamically generate non-native code and call the in-memory result.

5.1.2.1 Calls From Translated to Native I64 Code

When the TIE encounters a call in translated code that passes control to native I64 code, it obtains signature information for the target routine from the function descriptor for that routine.

If the value in the signature information field is zero, then no signature information is available, the call cannot be performed, and the TIE signals an exception.

Otherwise, the TIE uses the signature information to create an appropriate I64 argument list (in the stacked registers and memory stack as appropriate), then calls the target native function. When control returns, the TIE obtains the returned result (if any), makes it available to the translated code, and resumes translated code execution.

To assure that any routine that can potentially be called from translated code has either signature information or a zero indicating the lack of signature information, it is necessary that every official function descriptor be allocated with room for the signature information field.

5.1.2.2 Direct Calls From Native I64 Code to Translated Code

Calls from native I64 code to a routine in a translated image depend on special linker and image activator support. If the linker can confirm that the target of a call is also in native code (because the target is local to the same image), then the call is resolved normally. Otherwise, the linker creates an import stub and an associated local function descriptor in the linkage table in the normal way; however, in this case the local function descriptor must be a jacket function descriptor as described below.

The linker also passes through the compiler generated signature information for use by the image activator. If the image activator can determine that the target of a call is also in native code, then the jacket function descriptor is initialized as for a simple function descriptor (the extra space in the jacket descriptor is unused). Otherwise, the image activator initializes the jacket function descriptor so that the call using that descriptor will transfer control into the TIE.

A jacket function descriptor is similar to a bound function descriptor (see Section 4.7.7) except that it initially transfers control to an entry point in the TIE. The TIE uses the signature information field together with other information in the descriptor to construct an appropriate parameter list for the translated code and effects the transfer of control into that code. When the call completes, control returns to the TIE, which sets up the return value for the native code and returns to normal execution.

A jacket function descriptor consists of the following fields:

- Entry (code) address of the TIE entry point that handles transfers of control into translated code
- Pseudo-GP value, which is the address of the jacket function descriptor
- Signature information for the call (see Section 5.1.3)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1 Overview

- Function pointer to the official function descriptor for the entry point in the translated image (or other unique identification that can be interpreted by the TIE)

More complete details are beyond the scope of this Standard.

Calls made by translated code to other entry points in translated code are not visible to the OpenVMS I64 calling standard. From the outside, a call from native I64 code to translated code looks like a single call to the TIE entry point, regardless of how many calls are made within the translated image.

5.1.2.3 Indirect Calls From Native to Translated Code

When translated code support is not requested, the code generated for calling a dynamic function value follows the I64 conventions. In particular, the target code address and target global pointer value are obtained from the function pointer and used in the standard way (Section 4.7.3.2.)

When translated code support is requested, the compiled code must instead call a special service routine, OTSSCALL_PROC. The actual parameters to the target function are passed to OTSSCALL_PROC as though the target routine is native code that is being invoked directly. In addition, OTSSCALL_PROC receives two additional parameters in special registers:

- R17 contains the address of a signature information block for the call (see Section 5.1.3).
- R18 contains the function pointer for the target of the call.

OTSSCALL_PROC first determines whether the target routine is part of a translated image or not using the static mapping mentioned earlier.

If the target is in native code, then OTSSCALL_PROC completes the call in a way that makes its mediation transparent (that is, control need not pass back through it for the return). The native parameters are used without modification.

If the target is in translated code, then OTSSCALL_PROC passes control to the TIE which handles the call as described in Section 5.1.2.2.

5.1.3 Signature Information Fields in Function Descriptors

The signature information field of the function descriptor is encoded using the low three bits of the field as a tag that specifies the interpretation of the rest of the field. Table 5–1 contains the meaning of the values specified by the tag value.

Table 5–1 Signature Information Field Tag Values

Tag Value (low 3 bits)	Meaning
0	The signature information field as a whole (including the tag bits) is the address of a signature information block (see Section 5.2). However, if the address is null, no signature information is available.
1	Default signature information applies, which is based on the information in the argument information register (see Section 5.2.5). In this case the rest of the field must be zero.

(continued on next page)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.1 Overview

Table 5–1 (Cont.) Signature Information Field Tag Values

Tag Value (low 3 bits)	Meaning
2	The field as a whole is a signature information block (see Section 5.2) that is immediately contained in the function descriptor. This can only be used for a signature information block whose size is less than or equal to 64 bits (which can represent up to 12 arguments).
3–7	Reserved.

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

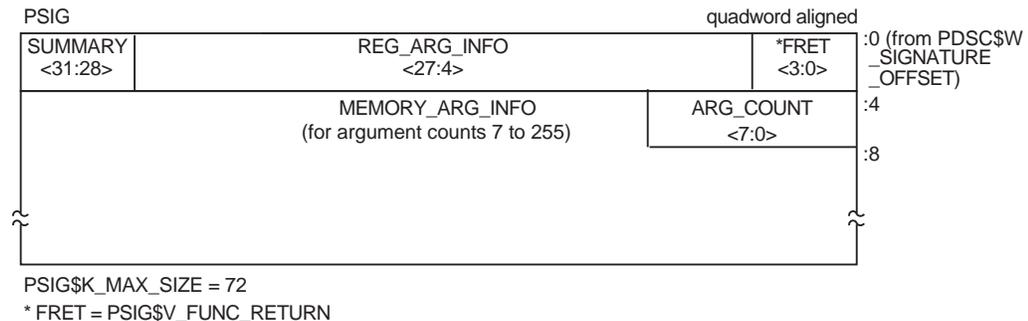
Signature information blocks on Alpha and I64 systems are nearly identical in content and interpretation. However, they differ in the following ways:

- Signature information blocks are associated with the corresponding Alpha procedure descriptor or I64 function descriptor differently (see Section 5.1).
- Signature information fields are arranged in different orders.
- An I64 signature information block includes control information that is not present in an Alpha signature information block (see Section 5.1.3).

5.2.1 Signature Information on Alpha Systems

If a procedure is compiled with signature information, `PDSC$W_SIGNATURE_OFFSET` contains a byte offset from the procedure descriptor to the start of a **signature information block**. The maximum size of the signature information block is 72 bytes (defined by constant `PSIG$K_MAX_SIZE`). The fields defined in the signature information block are illustrated in Figure 5–1 and described in Table 5–2.

Figure 5–1 Alpha Signature Information Block (PSIG)



ZK-4713A-GE

5.2.2 Signature Information on I64 Systems

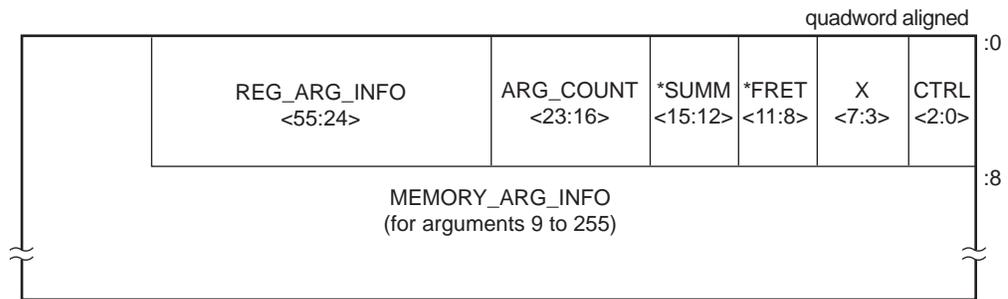
Signature information is represented in Figure 5–2, and is explained in Table 5–2, Table 5–3, and Table 5–4.

Signature information is defined only for standard calls, that is, for normal parameters passed using standard mechanisms and locations as defined in this calling standard. For all other cases, the signature information will be null so that an attempted call between native and translated code will fail.

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Figure 5–2 I64 Signature Information Block (PSIG)



PSIG\$K_MAX_SIZE = 72 bytes
 * FRET = PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN
 * SUMM = PSIG\$V_SUMMARY

VM-1028A-AI

5.2.3 Signature Information Block Content

The content of Alpha and I64 signature information blocks is described in Table 5–2, Table 5–3, and Table 5–4. Table 5–2 omits reference to particular bit positions. In these tables and subsequence sections, the following logical names are used to refer to corresponding Alpha and Itanium registers:

Name	Interpretation	Alpha Register	Itanium Register
RetVal	First (or only) integer return register	R0	R8
RetVal2	Second integer return register	R1	R9
RetFlt	First (or only) floating-point return register	F0	F8 for S_ & T_ floating R8 for F_, D_ & G_ floating
RetFlt2	Second floating-point return register	F1	F9 for S_ & T_ floating R9 for F_, D_ & G_ floating

Table 5–2 Contents of the Signature Information Block (PSIG)

Field Name	Contents
PSIG\$V_CTRL	(I64 systems only) A 3-bit control information field. Not used in a signature information block. Contents are unspecified. Allows a signature information block to occur as an immediate value in the signature information field of a function descriptor (see Section 5.1.3).
PSIG\$V_X	(I64 systems only) A 5-bit unused field. Must be zero.

(continued on next page)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Table 5–2 (Cont.) Contents of the Signature Information Block (PSIG)

Field Name	Contents															
PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN	<p>A 4-bit field that describes which registers are used for the function value return (if there is one) and what format is used for those registers.</p> <p>Table 5–4 lists and describes the possible encoded values of PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN.</p>															
PSIG\$V_REG_ARG_INFO	<p>A field that is divided into groups of 4 bits that correspond to the arguments that can be passed in registers. There are six groups for a total of 24 bits on Alpha systems and eight groups for a total of 32 bits on I64 systems. The first group (lowest order bits) describes the first register argument, the second group (next lowest order bits) describes the second register argument, and so on. Table 5–3 lists the possible codes.</p>															
PSIG\$V_SUMMARY	<p>A 4-bit field that contains coded argument signature information as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Bit</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0, 1</td> <td>PSIG\$M_SU_ASUM</td> <td> Summary of arguments 7 through PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT: 00 = All arguments are 64-bit or not used 01 = All arguments are 32-bit sign extended or not used 10 = Reserved 11 = Other (not 00 or 01) </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>PSIG\$M_SU_VLIST</td> <td>VAX formatted argument list expected</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td>Must be 0 (reserved)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>PSIG\$M_SU_ASUM values of 00 and 01 (binary) allow a quick test for the occurrence of either an all 32-bit or an all 64-bit argument list. The values for the PSIG\$V_MEMORY_ARG_INFO field must be valid even when these occurrences apply.</p>	Bit	Name	Meaning	0, 1	PSIG\$M_SU_ASUM	Summary of arguments 7 through PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT: 00 = All arguments are 64-bit or not used 01 = All arguments are 32-bit sign extended or not used 10 = Reserved 11 = Other (not 00 or 01)	2	PSIG\$M_SU_VLIST	VAX formatted argument list expected	3		Must be 0 (reserved)			
Bit	Name	Meaning														
0, 1	PSIG\$M_SU_ASUM	Summary of arguments 7 through PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT: 00 = All arguments are 64-bit or not used 01 = All arguments are 32-bit sign extended or not used 10 = Reserved 11 = Other (not 00 or 01)														
2	PSIG\$M_SU_VLIST	VAX formatted argument list expected														
3		Must be 0 (reserved)														
PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT	<p>Unsigned byte (bits 0–7) that specifies the number of 64-bit argument items described in the argument signature information. This count includes the initial arguments that are passed in registers.</p>															
PSIG\$V_MEMORY_ARG_INFO	<p>Array of 2-bit values that describe each of the arguments through PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT that are passed in memory (rather than registers). PSIG\$S_MEMORY_ARG_INFO data is only defined for the arguments described by PSIG\$B_ARG_COUNT. These memory argument signature bits are defined as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Value</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Meaning¹</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>MASE\$K_MA_Q</td> <td>64-bit argument</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>Reserved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>MASE\$K_MA_I32</td> <td>32-bit sign-extended argument</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td>Reserved</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Name	Meaning ¹	0	MASE\$K_MA_Q	64-bit argument	1		Reserved	2	MASE\$K_MA_I32	32-bit sign-extended argument	3		Reserved
Value	Name	Meaning ¹														
0	MASE\$K_MA_Q	64-bit argument														
1		Reserved														
2	MASE\$K_MA_I32	32-bit sign-extended argument														
3		Reserved														

¹For a more detailed description of these conversions, see Section 5.2.4.

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Table 5–3 Register Argument Signature Encodings

Value	Name	Meaning ^{1,2}
0	RASE\$K_RA_NOARG	Argument is not present
1	RASE\$K_RA_Q	64-bit argument passed in an integer register
2	RASE\$K_RA_I32	32-bit argument sign extended to 64 bits passed in an integer register
3	RASE\$K_RA_U32	32-bit unsigned argument zero extended to 64 bits passed in an integer register
4	RASE\$K_RA_FF	F_floating argument passed in a floating-point register on Alpha or a general register on I64 systems
5	RASE\$K_RA_FD	D_floating argument passed in a floating-point register on Alpha or a general register on I64 systems
6	RASE\$K_RA_FG	G_floating argument passed in a floating-point register on Alpha or a general register on I64 systems
7	RASE\$K_RA_FS	S_floating argument passed in a floating-point register
8	RASE\$K_RA_FT	T_floating argument passed in a floating-point register
9–15		Reserved for future use

Table 5–4 Function Return Signature Encodings

Value	Name	Meaning ^{1,2}
0	PSIG\$K_FR_I64	64-bit result in RetVal <i>or</i> No function result provided <i>or</i> First parameter mechanism used
1	PSIG\$K_FR_D64	64-bit result with low 32 bits sign extended in RetVal and high 32 bits sign extended in RetVal2
2	PSIG\$K_FR_I32	32-bit sign extended to 64-bit result in RetVal
3	PSIG\$K_FR_U32	32-bit unsigned result (zero extended) in RetVal
4	PSIG\$K_FR_FF	F_floating result in RetFlt
5	PSIG\$K_FR_FD	D_floating result in RetFlt
6	PSIG\$K_FR_FG	G_floating result in RetFlt
7	PSIG\$K_FR_FS	S_floating result in RetFlt
8	PSIG\$K_FR_FT	T_floating result in RetFlt
9, 10		Reserved for future use
11	PSIG\$K_FR_FFC	F_floating complex result in RetFlt and RetFlt2
12	PSIG\$K_FR_FDC	D_floating complex result in RetFlt and RetFlt2
13	PSIG\$K_FR_FGC	G_floating complex result in RetFlt and RetFlt2
14	PSIG\$K_FR_FSC	S_floating complex result in RetFlt and RetFlt2
15	PSIG\$K_FR_FTC	T_floating complex result in RetFlt and RetFlt2

¹For a more detailed description of these conversions, see Section 5.2.4.

²The X_floating and X_floating complex data types do not appear in this table because these types are not passed using the by value mechanism (see Section 3.7.5.1 and Section 4.7.5.1).

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

5.2.4 Call Parameter PSIG Conversions

Note that for the purposes of translated images, an address on OpenVMS Alpha or I64 is described using RASE\$K_RA_I32 or MASE\$K_MA_I32 as appropriate.

5.2.4.1 Native-Alpha-to-Translated-VAX PSIG Conversions

A detailed description of the native-to-translated call conversions for the PSIG\$V_REG_ARG_INFO and the PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN field values is given in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5 Native-to-Translated Conversion of the PSIG Field Values

Name	Description
PSIG\$V_REG_ARG_INFO Field Conversions	
RASE\$K_RA_Q	The low-order 32 bits of the native integer register contents are used to fill the first of two longword entries in the VAX formatted argument list, while the high-order 32 bits are used to fill the second longword entry. This counts as two arguments in the VAX formatted argument list.
RASE\$K_RA_I32 RASE\$K_RA_U32	The low-order 32 bits of the integer register contents are used to fill one longword entry in the VAX formatted argument list passed to the translated procedure. The high-order 32 bits are ignored. This counts as one argument in the VAX formatted argument list.
RASE\$K_RA_FF	The single-precision contents of a floating-point register are used to fill one longword entry in the VAX formatted argument list passed to the translated procedure. This counts as one argument in the VAX formatted argument list. The Alpha store instruction STF (or an equivalent sequence on Itanium systems) is used to place the register contents into memory.
RASE\$K_RA_FD RASE\$K_RA_FG	The double-precision contents of a floating-point register are used to fill two longword entries in the VAX formatted argument list passed to the translated procedure. This counts as two arguments in the VAX formatted argument list. The Alpha store instruction STG (or an equivalent sequence on Itanium systems) is used to place the register contents into memory.
RASE\$K_RA_FS RASE\$K_RA_FT	Undefined.
PSIG\$V_MEMORY_ARG_INFO Field Conversions	
MASE\$K_MA_Q MASE\$K_MA_I32	These convert like the RASE\$K_RA_Q and RASE\$K_RA_I32 field conversions, except that the native argument list entry is stored in memory (rather than in a register).
PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN Field Conversions	
PSIG\$K_FR_I64	The translated code is returning a 64-bit result split between VAX R0 and R1. The low-order 32 bits of R1 are shifted left and combined with the low-order 32 bits of R0 to form the 64-bit result that is returned to the native caller in RetVal.
PSIG\$K_FR_D64	The translated code is returning a 64-bit result split between VAX R0 and R1. Both R0 and R1 are sign extended from 32 to 64 bits and returned to the native caller in RetVal and RetVal2.

(continued on next page)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Table 5–5 (Cont.) Native-to-Translated Conversion of the PSIG Field Values

Name	Description
PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN Field Conversions	
PSIG\$K_FR_I32 PSIG\$K_FR_U32	The translated code is returning a 32-bit result in VAX R0. R0 is sign extended from 32 to 64 bits and returned to the native caller in RetVal.
PSIG\$K_FR_FF	The single-precision contents of the result in VAX R0 is loaded into native register RetFlt.
PSIG\$K_FR_FD PSIG\$K_FR_FG	The double-precision contents in VAX registers R0 and R1 are combined and loaded into native register RetFlt.
PSIG\$K_FR_FS PSIG\$K_FR_FT	Undefined.
PSIG\$K_FR_FFC	The single-precision complex contents in VAX registers R0 and R1 are loaded into native registers RetFlt and RetFlt2.
PSIG\$K_FR_FDC PSIG\$K_FR_FGC	The translated code is returning a double-precision complex result using the hidden first parameter method (by reference). The storage for the result is allocated prior to the call and the address is passed as the extra parameter. Upon return, the result is copied from the temporary storage into the native floating-point return registers and returned to the native caller.
PSIG\$K_FR_FSC PSIG\$K_FR_FTC	Undefined.

In all 64-bit cases, the longword at the lower memory address forms the earlier argument in the VAX formatted argument list. Also, for single-precision floating-point types, the unused 32 bits of a native 64-bit argument list entry are undefined.

5.2.4.2 Translated-VAX-to-Native-Alpha PSIG Conversions

A detailed description of the translated-to-native call conversions for the PSIG\$V_REG_ARG_INFO and the PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN field values is given in Table 5–6.

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Table 5–6 Translated-to-Native Conversion of the PSIG Field Values

Name	Description
PSIG\$V_REG_ARG_INFO Field Conversions	
RASE\$K_RA_Q	The contents of two successive longwords from the VAX formatted argument list are combined to form a single quadword value that is placed in an integer register. This counts as one argument in the native argument list.
RASE\$K_RA_I32 RASE\$K_RA_U32	The contents of one longword entry from the VAX formatted argument list is sign extended and placed in the integer register. This counts as one argument in the native argument list.
RASE\$K_RA_FF	A single longword entry from the VAX formatted argument list is used to form a floating-point value in a floating-point register. This counts as one argument in the native argument list. The Alpha load instruction LDF (or an equivalent sequence on I64 systems) is used to place the argument in the floating-point register.
RASE\$K_RA_FD RASE\$K_RA_FG	Two longword entries from the VAX formatted argument list are combined to form a single floating-point value in a floating-point register. This counts as one argument in the native argument list. The Alpha load instruction LDG (or an equivalent sequence on I64 systems) is used to place the argument in the floating-point register.
RASE\$K_RA_FS RASE\$K_RA_FT	Undefined.
PSIG\$V_MEMORY_ARG_INFO Field Conversions	
MASE\$K_MA_Q MASE\$K_MA_I32	These convert like RASE\$K_RA_Q and RASE\$K_RA_I32 field conversions, except that the native argument list entry is stored in memory (rather than a register). ¹
PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN Field Conversions	
PSIG\$K_FR_I64	The native code is returning a 64-bit result in RetVal. The high 32 bits of RetVal are moved to the VAX R1 register and the low 32 bits of RetVal are moved to the VAX R0 register. The 64-bit result is then returned to the translated caller in VAX R0 and R1.
PSIG\$K_FR_D64	The native code is returning a 64-bit result split between RetVal and RetVal2. Both are returned to the translated caller in place.
PSIG\$K_FR_I32 PSIG\$K_FR_U32	The native code is returning a 32-bit result in RetVal. The low 32 bits of RetVal are returned to the translated caller.
PSIG\$K_FR_FF	The single-precision result in native register RetFlt is returned in the VAX register R0. ¹
PSIG\$K_FR_FD PSIG\$K_FR_FG	The double-precision result in native register RetFlt is returned in VAX registers R0 and R1.
PSIG\$K_FR_FS PSIG\$K_FR_FT	Undefined.
PSIG\$K_FR_FFC	The single-precision complex result in native registers RetFlt and RetFlt2 is returned in the VAX registers R0 and R1. ¹

¹Note that for single-precision floating-point types, the unused 32 bits of a native 64-bit argument list entry are undefined.

(continued on next page)

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Table 5–6 (Cont.) Translated-to-Native Conversion of the PSIG Field Values

Name	Description
PSIG\$V_FUNC_RETURN Field Conversions	
PSIG\$K_FR_FDC PSIG\$K_FR_FGC	The native code is returning a double-precision complex result in the native floating-point registers. The result is copied into the storage given by the hidden first parameter passed by the translated caller.
PSIG\$K_FR_FSC PSIG\$K_FR_FTC	Undefined.

5.2.4.3 Native-I64-to-Translated-Alpha PSIG Conversions

Conversion of native I64 arguments and results and translated Alpha arguments and results is trivial; it is concerned solely with moving the already properly formatted data to the appropriate location for the target environment.

5.2.4.4 Translated-Alpha-to-Native-I64 PSIG Conversions

Conversion of translated Alpha arguments and results and native I64 arguments and results is trivial; it is concerned solely with moving the already properly formatted data to the appropriate location for the target environment.

5.2.5 Default Signature Information

Default signature information is defined for common special cases. Such a default is a short-hand description that can always be represented explicitly but may sometimes be more compact than the corresponding explicit representation.

Translated VAX Image Calling a Native Alpha Procedure

- The number of parameters is taken from the count byte in the VAX argument list
- All parameters (if any) are 32-bit sign extended (RASE\$K_RA_I32 for register arguments, MASE\$K_MA_I32 for memory arguments).
- The function result (if any) is 32-bit sign extended (PSIG\$K_FR_I32).

Native Alpha Procedure Calling a Translated VAX Image

- The number of parameters passed is contained in the AI (R25) register.
- The register parameters (if any) are described in the AI register.
- The memory parameters (if any) are 32-bit sign extended (MASE\$K_MA_I32).
- The function result (if any) is 32-bit sign extended (PSIG\$K_FR_I32).

Translated VAX or Alpha Image Calling a Native I64 Procedure

- The number of parameters is taken from the count byte in the VAX argument list or the argument count in the Alpha AI register (R25) as appropriate.
- All parameters (if any) are 32-bit sign extended (RASE\$K_RA_I32 for register arguments, MASE\$K_MA_I32 for memory arguments).
- The function result (if any) is 32-bit sign extended (PSIG\$K_FR_I32).

Signature Information and Translated Images (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

5.2 Signature Information Blocks

Native I64 Procedure Calling a Translated VAX or Alpha Image

- The number of parameters is contained in the I64 AI (R25) register.
- The register parameters (if any) are described in the AI register.
- The memory parameters (if any) are 32-bit sign extended (MASE\$K_MA_I32).
- The function result (if any) is 32-bit sign extended (PSIG\$K_FR_I32).

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

This chapter defines the argument-passing data types that are used to call a procedure for OpenVMS VAX, Alpha, and I64 environments. All features defined here apply to all OpenVMS systems unless otherwise noted.

Each data type implemented for a high-level language uses one of the following classes of VAX data types for procedure parameters and elements of file records:

- Atomic
- String
- Miscellaneous

When existing data types fail to satisfy the semantics of a language, new data types, including certain language-specific ones, are added to this standard. These data types can generally be passed by immediate value (if 32 bits or less), by reference, or by descriptor.

Each data type code presented in this chapter indicates a unique data format. Use these encodings whenever you need to identify data types to achieve greater commonality across user software.

The encoding given in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 can help you to identify data types, such as in a descriptor. However, in addition to their use in descriptors, these data type codes are also useful for identifying VAX, Alpha, and I64 data types in areas outside the scope of the calling standard. Therefore, each data-type code indicates a unique data format independent of its use in descriptors.

Some data types are composed of a recordlike structure consisting of two or more elementary data types. For example, the F_floating complex (FC) data type is made up of two F_floating data types, and the varying character string (VT) data type is made up of a word (unsigned, WU) data type followed by a character string (T) data type.

Unless stated otherwise, all data types in this standard represent signed quantities. The unsigned quantities do not allocate space for the sign; all bit or character positions are used for significant data.

6.1 Atomic Data Types

Table 6–1 shows how atomic data types are defined and encoded for VAX, Alpha, and I64 environments.

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.1 Atomic Data Types

Table 6–1 Atomic Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
DSC\$K_DTYPE_Z	0	Unspecified The calling program has specified no data type. The default argument for the called procedure should be the correct type.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_BU	2	Byte (unsigned) 8-bit unsigned quantity.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_WU	3	Word (unsigned) 16-bit unsigned quantity.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_LU	4	Longword (unsigned) 32-bit unsigned quantity.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_QU	5	Quadword (unsigned) 64-bit unsigned quantity.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_OU	25	Octaword (unsigned) 128-bit unsigned quantity.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_B	6	Byte integer (signed) 8-bit signed two's complement integer.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_W	7	Word integer (signed) 16-bit signed two's complement integer.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_L	8	Longword integer (signed) 32-bit signed two's complement integer.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_Q	9	Quadword integer (signed) 64-bit signed two's complement integer.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_O	26	Octaword integer (signed) 128-bit signed two's complement integer.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_F	10	F_floating 32-bit F_floating quantity representing a single-precision number.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_D ¹	11	D_floating 64-bit D_floating quantity representing a double-precision number.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_G	27	G_floating 64-bit G_floating quantity representing a double-precision number.

¹While the calling standard supports the manipulation of D_floating and D_floating complex data, compiled code support will invoke conversion from D_floating to G_floating as needed for Alpha and Itanium arithmetic operations, and conversion of G_floating intermediate results back to D_floating when needed for stores to memory or parameter passing. This allows D_floating data to be used in Alpha and Itanium arithmetic operations without required source changes but with results limited to G_floating precision.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.1 Atomic Data Types

Table 6–1 (Cont.) Atomic Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
†DSC\$K_DTYPE_H ²	28	H_floating 128-bit H_floating quantity representing a quadruple-precision number.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_FC	12	F_floating complex Ordered pair of F_floating quantities representing a single-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_DC	13	D_floating complex Ordered pair of D_floating quantities representing a double-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_GC	29	G_floating complex Ordered pair of G_floating quantities representing a double-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
†DSC\$K_DTYPE_HC ²	30	H_floating complex Ordered pair of H_floating quantities representing a quadruple-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FS	52	S_floating 32-bit IEEE S_floating quantity representing a single-precision number.
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FT	53	T_floating 64-bit IEEE T_floating quantity representing a double-precision number.
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FSC	54	S_floating complex Ordered pair of S_floating quantities representing a single-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FTC	55	T_floating complex Ordered pair of T_floating quantities representing a single-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FX	57	X_floating 128-bit IEEE X_floating quantity representing an extended-precision number.

²H_floating data is not supported for general use on OpenVMS Alpha and I64 systems. However, conversion routines are supplied to allow users to convert existing H_floating data to other storage representations.

†OpenVMS VAX specific.

‡OpenVMS Alpha and I64 specific.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.1 Atomic Data Types

Table 6–1 (Cont.) Atomic Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
‡DSC\$K_DTYPE_FXC	58	X_floating complex Ordered pair of X_floating quantities representing an extended-precision complex number. The lower addressed quantity is the real part; the higher addressed quantity is the imaginary part.
‡OpenVMS Alpha and I64 specific.		

6.2 String Data Types

String data types are ordinarily described by a string descriptor. Table 6–2 shows how the string data types are defined and encoded for all OpenVMS environments.

Table 6–2 String Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
DSC\$K_DTYPE_T	14	Character string A single 8-bit character (atomic data type) or a sequence of 0 to $2^{16} - 1$ 8-bit characters (string data type).
DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT	37	Varying character string A 16-bit unsigned count of the current number of 8-bit characters in the following string, followed by a string of 0 to $2^{16} - 1$ 8-bit characters (see Section 6.5 for details). When this data type is used with descriptors, it can only be used with the varying string and varying string array descriptors, because the length field is interpreted differently from the other 8-bit string data types. (See Sections 6.5, 7.8, and 7.9 for further discussion.)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NU	15	Numeric string, unsigned
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NL	16	Numeric string, left separate sign
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NLO	17	Numeric string, left overpunched sign
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NR	18	Numeric string, right separate sign
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NRO	19	Numeric string, right overpunched sign
DSC\$K_DTYPE_NZ	20	Numeric string, zoned sign
DSC\$K_DTYPE_P	21	Packed-decimal string

(continued on next page)

Table 6–2 (Cont.) String Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
DSC\$K_DTYPE_V	1	<p>Aligned bit string</p> <p>A string of 0 to $2^{16} - 1$ contiguous bits. The first bit is bit <0> of the first byte, and the last bit is any bit in the last byte. Remaining bits in the last byte must be 0 on read and are cleared on write. Unlike the unaligned bit string (VU) data type, when the aligned bit string (V) data type is used in array descriptors, the ARSIZE field is in units of bytes, not bits, because allocation is a multiple of 8 bits.</p>
DSC\$K_DTYPE_VU	34	<p>Unaligned bit string</p> <p>The data is 0 to $2^{16} - 1$ contiguous bits located arbitrarily with respect to byte boundaries. See also aligned bit string (V) data type. Because additional information is required to specify the bit position of the first bit, this data type can be used only with the unaligned bit string and unaligned bit array descriptors (see Sections 7.10 and 7.11).</p>

6.3 Miscellaneous Data Types

Table 6–3 shows how miscellaneous data types are defined and encoded for all OpenVMS environments.

Table 6–3 Miscellaneous Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
†DSC\$K_DTYPE_ZI	22	Sequence of instructions
†DSC\$K_DTYPE_ZEM	23	Procedure entry mask
DSC\$K_DTYPE_DSC	24	<p>Descriptor</p> <p>This data type allows a descriptor to be a data type; thus, levels of descriptors are allowed.</p>
†DSC\$K_DTYPE_BPV	32	<p>Bound procedure value (for VAX environment only)</p> <p>A two-longword entity in which the first longword contains the address of a procedure entry mask and the second longword is the environment value. The environment value is determined in a language-specific manner when the original bound procedure value is generated. When the bound procedure is called, the calling program loads the second longword into R1. When the environment value is not needed, this data type can be passed using the immediate value mechanism. In this case, the argument list entry contains the address of the procedure entry mask and the second longword is omitted.</p>

†VAX specific.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.3 Miscellaneous Data Types

Table 6–3 (Cont.) Miscellaneous Data Types

Symbol	Code	Name/Description
DSC\$K_DTYPE_BLV	33	Bound label value A two-longword entity in which the first longword contains the address of an instruction and the second longword is the language-specific environment value. The environment value is determined in a language-specific manner when the original bound label value is generated.
DSC\$K_DTYPE_ADT	35	Absolute date and time A 64-bit unsigned, scaled, binary integer representing a date and time in 100-nanosecond units offset from the OpenVMS operating system base date and time, which is 00:00 o'clock, November 17, 1858 (the Smithsonian base date and time for astronomical calendars). The value 0 indicates that the date and time have not been specified, so a default value or distinctive print format can be used. Note that the ADT data type is the same as the OpenVMS date format for positive values only.

6.4 Reserved Data-Type Codes

All codes from 0 through 191 not otherwise defined in this standard are reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Codes 192 through 255 are reserved for Hewlett-Packard custom systems and for customers for their own use.

Table 6–4 lists the data types and codes that are obsolete or reserved to Hewlett-Packard.

Table 6–4 Reserved Data Types

Symbol	Code	Purpose
DSC\$K_DTYPE_CIT	31	Reserved to COBOL (intermediate temporary)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_CIT2	64	Reserved to COBOL (intermediate temporary alternative 2)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_TF	40	Reserved to DEBUG (Boolean true/false)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_SV	41	Reserved to DEBUG (signed bit-field, aligned)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_SVU	42	Reserved to DEBUG (signed bit-field, unaligned)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_FIXED	43	Reserved to DEBUG (fixed binary—fixed point in Ada and fixed binary in PL/I)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_TASK	44	Reserved to DEBUG (task type in Ada)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_AC	45	Reserved to DEBUG (ASCIC text)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_AZ	46	Reserved to DEBUG (ASCIZ text)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_M68_S	47	Reserved to DEBUG (Motorola 68881 single precision, 32-bit) ¹
DSC\$K_DTYPE_M68_D	48	Reserved to DEBUG (Motorola 68881 double precision, 64-bit) ¹

¹Differs from Alpha IEEE floating because of byte ordering.

(continued on next page)

Table 6–4 (Cont.) Reserved Data Types

Symbol	Code	Purpose
DSC\$K_DTYPE_M68_X	49	Reserved to DEBUG (Motorola 68881 extended precision, 96-bit) ²
DSC\$K_DTYPE_1750_S	50	Reserved to DEBUG (1750 single precision, 32-bit)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_1750_X	51	Reserved to DEBUG (1750 extended precision, 48-bit)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_WC	56	Reserved to DEBUG (setlocale dependent C string)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_F80	59	Reserved to DEBUG (Itanium extended precision, 80-bit)
DSC\$K_DTYPE_F80C	60	Reserved to DEBUG (Itanium extended precision complex, two 80-bit)
DCS\$K_DTYPE_FIR	61	Reserved to DEBUG (Itanium Floating Point Register format, 84-bit)
DCS\$K_DTYPE_FIRC	62	Reserved to DEBUG (Itanium Floating Point Register format complex, two 84-bit)
No symbol defined	36	Obsolete
DSC\$K_DTYPE_T2	38	Obsolete
DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT2	39	Obsolete

²Differs from Alpha IEEE floating because of byte ordering and size.

6.4.1 Facility-Specific Data-Type Codes

Data-type codes 160 through 191 are reserved to Hewlett-Packard for facility-specific purposes. These codes must not be passed between facilities because different facilities can use the same code for different purposes. These codes might be used by compiler-generated code to pass parameters to the language-specific run-time support procedures associated with that language or with the OpenVMS Debugger.

As shown in Table 6–4, data-type codes 31 and 64 are reserved for the COBOL facility. Codes 40 through 51 and 56 are reserved for the OpenVMS Debugger facility.

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

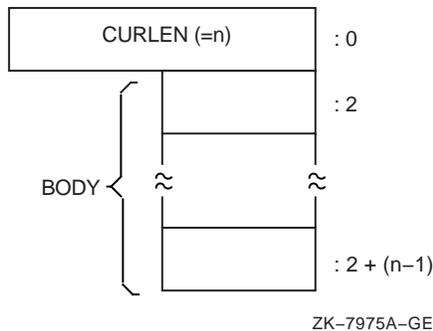
6.5 Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)

6.5 Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)

The varying character string data type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT) consists of the following two fixed-length areas allocated contiguously with no padding in between (see Figure 6-1):

- CURLen** An unsigned word specifying the current length in bytes of the immediately following string.
- BODY** A fixed-length area containing the string that can vary from 0 to a maximum length defined for each instance of string. The range of this maximum length is 0 to $2^{16} - 1$.

Figure 6-1 Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)—General Format



When passed by reference or by descriptor, the address of the varying character string (VT) data type is always the address of the CURLen field, not the BODY field.

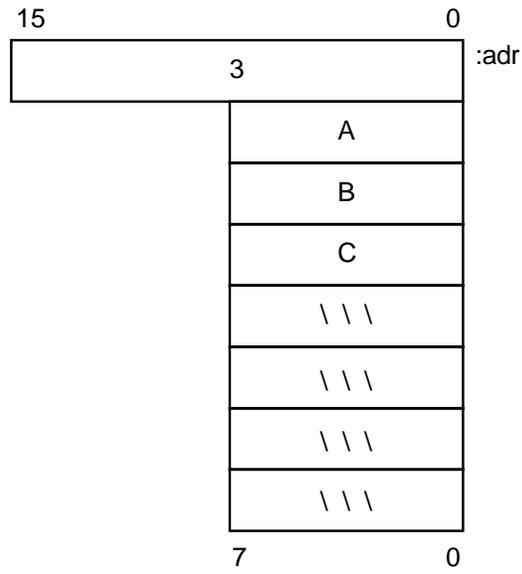
When a called procedure modifies a varying character string data type passed by reference or by descriptor, it writes the new length, n , into CURLen and can modify all bytes of BODY, even those beyond the new length.

For example, consider a varying string with a maximum length of seven characters. To represent the string ABC, CURLen will have a value of 3 and the last four bytes will be undefined, as shown in Figure 6-2.

OpenVMS Argument Data Types

6.5 Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT)

Figure 6-2 Varying Character String Data Type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VT) Format



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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

This chapter describes the argument descriptors used in calling a procedure for both VAX and Alpha environments.

A uniform descriptor mechanism is defined for use by all VAX and Alpha procedures that conform to the OpenVMS calling standard. Descriptors are self-describing and the mechanism is extensible. When existing descriptors fail to satisfy the semantics of a language, new descriptors are added to this standard.

Unless stated otherwise, the calling program fills in all fields in descriptors. This is true whether the descriptor is generated by default or by a language extension. The fields are filled in even if a called procedure written in the same language ignores the contents of some of the fields. Therefore, a descriptor conforms to this calling standard if all fields are filled in by the calling program, even if the called program does not need the field.

Note

Unless stated otherwise, all fields in descriptors represented as unsigned quantities are read-only from the point of view of the called procedure, and can be allocated in read-only memory at the option of the calling program.

If a language processor implements a language-specific data type that is not added to this standard (see Chapter 6), the processor is not required to use a standard descriptor to pass an array of such a data type. However, if a language processor passes an array of such a data type using a standard descriptor, the language processor fills in the `DSC$B_DTYPE` field with the value 0, indicating that the data-type field is unspecified, rather than using a more general data-type code.

For example, an array of PL/I `POINTER` data types has the `DTYPE` field filled in with the value 0 (unspecified data type), rather than with the value 4 (longword [unsigned] data type). The remaining fields are filled in as specified by this standard; for example, `DSC$W_LENGTH` is filled in with the size in bytes. Because the language-specific data type might be added to the standard in the future, generic application procedures that examine the `DTYPE` field should be prepared for 0 and for additional data types.

Table 7-1 identifies the classes of argument descriptors for use in the standard VAX and Alpha environments. Each class has two synonymous names—one for 32-bit environments (`DSC$`) and one for 64-bit environments (`DSC64$`). Descriptions and formats of each of these descriptors follow.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

Table 7–1 Argument Descriptor Classes for OpenVMS Alpha and OpenVMS VAX

Descriptor	Code	Class
DSC\$K_CLASS_S DSC64\$K_CLASS_S	1	Fixed-length scalar/string
DSC\$K_CLASS_D DSC64\$K_CLASS_D	2	Dynamic string
DSC\$K_CLASS_A DSC64\$K_CLASS_A	4	Contiguous array
DSC\$K_CLASS_P ¹ DSC64\$K_CLASS_P ¹	5	Procedure argument descriptor
DSC\$K_CLASS_SD DSC64\$K_CLASS_SD	9	Decimal (scalar) string
DSC\$K_CLASS_NCA DSC64\$K_CLASS_NCA	10	Noncontiguous array
DSC\$K_CLASS_VS DSC64\$K_CLASS_VS	11	Varying string
DSC\$K_CLASS_VSA DSC64\$K_CLASS_VSA	12	Varying string array
DSC\$K_CLASS_UBS DSC64\$K_CLASS_UBS	13	Unaligned bit string
DSC\$K_CLASS_UBA DSC64\$K_CLASS_UBA	14	Unaligned bit array
DSC\$K_CLASS_SB DSC64\$K_CLASS_SB	15	String with bounds
DSC\$K_CLASS_UBSB DSC64\$K_CLASS_UBSB	16	Unaligned bit string with bounds

¹The pointer field usage for this descriptor differs from VAX usage (see Section 7.5).

7.1 Descriptor Prototype

Figure 7–1 shows the descriptor prototype format. There are two forms: one for use with 32-bit addresses and one for use with 64-bit addresses. The two forms are compatible in that the forms can be distinguished dynamically at run time and, except for the size and consequential placement of fields, 32-bit and 64-bit descriptors are identical in content and interpretation.

The 32-bit descriptors are used on both OpenVMS VAX and OpenVMS Alpha systems. When used on OpenVMS Alpha systems, 32-bit descriptors provide full compatibility with their use on OpenVMS VAX. The 64-bit descriptors are used only on OpenVMS Alpha systems—they have no counterparts and are not recognized on OpenVMS VAX systems.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.1 Descriptor Prototype

The DSC\$W_LENGTH and DSC\$A_POINTER fields in the 32-bit descriptors correspond in placement to the DSC64\$W_MBO (must be 1) and DSC64\$SL_MBMO (must be -1) fields in the 64-bit descriptors. The values of these fields are used to distinguish whether a given descriptor has the 32-bit or 64-bit form as described later in this section.

When the CLASS field is 0, no more information can be assumed than is shown in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2 Contents of the Prototype Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Defines the data item length specific to the descriptor class.
DSC64\$W_MBO	In a 64-bit descriptor, this field must contain the value 1. This field overlays the DSC\$W_LENGTH field of a 32-bit descriptor and the value 1 is necessary to correctly distinguish between the two forms (see below).
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	A descriptor class code that identifies the format and interpretation of the other fields of the descriptor as specified in the following sections. This interpretation is intended to be independent of the DTYPE field, except for the data types that are made up of units less than a byte (packed-decimal string [P], aligned bit string [V], and unaligned bit string [VU]). The CLASS code can be used at run time by a called procedure to determine which descriptor is being passed.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	The address of the first byte of the data element described.
DSC64\$SL_MBMO	In a 64-bit descriptor, this field must contain the value -1 (all 1 bits). Note that this field overlays the DSC\$A_POINTER field of a 32-bit descriptor and the value -1 is necessary to correctly distinguish between the two forms (see below).

As previously mentioned, the MBO field (a word at offset 0) and the MBMO field (a longword at offset 4) are used to distinguish between a 32-bit and 64-bit descriptor. A called routine that is designed to handle both kinds of descriptors must do both of the following:

- Confirm that the MBO field contains 1
- Confirm that the MBMO field contains -1

before concluding that it has a 64-bit form descriptor.

Note

It may seem sufficient to test just the MBMO field. However, that allows a 32-bit descriptor with a length of 0 and an undefined pointer to be inadvertently treated as a 64-bit descriptor.

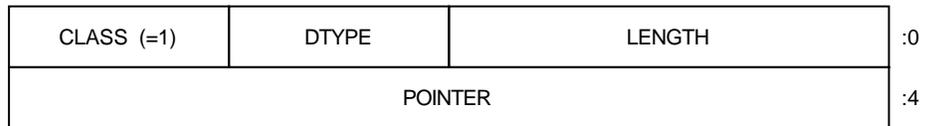
If the MBMO field contains -1, then 0 and 1 are the only values of the MBO field that have defined interpretations.

7.2 Fixed-Length Descriptor (CLASS_S)

A single descriptor class is used for scalar data and fixed-length strings. Any OpenVMS data type, except data type 34 (unaligned bit string), can be used with this descriptor. Figure 7-2 shows the format of a fixed-length descriptor. Table 7-3 describes the fields of the descriptor.

Figure 7-2 Fixed-Length Descriptor Format

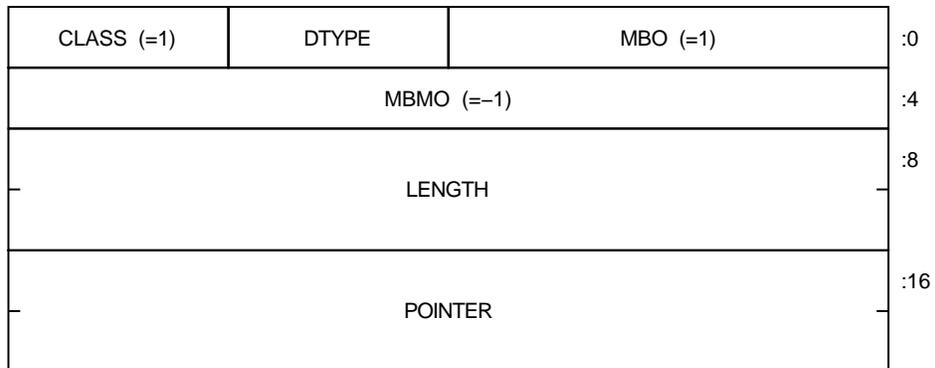
32-Bit Form (DSC)



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64-Bit Form (DSC64)

quadword aligned



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Table 7-3 Contents of the CLASS_S Descriptor

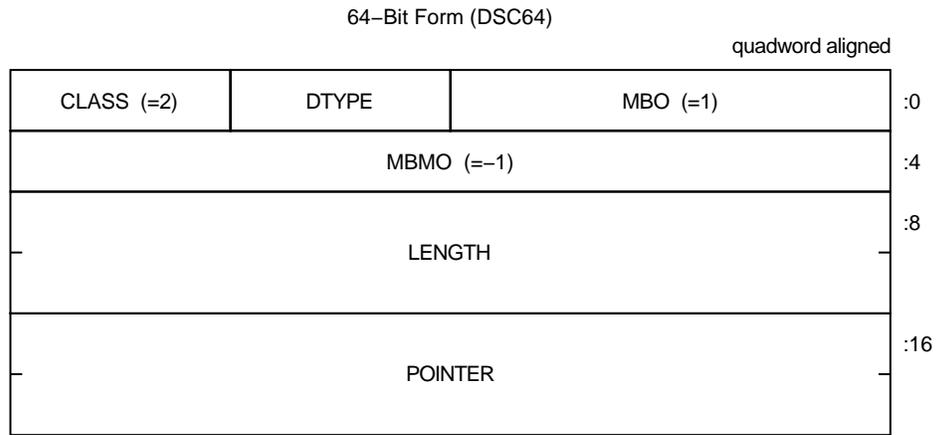
Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of the data item in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 1 (aligned bit string) or 21 (packed-decimal string). Length of the data item is in bits for bit string. Length of the data item is the number of 4-bit digits (not including the sign) for a packed-decimal string.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.

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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.3 Dynamic String Descriptor (CLASS_D)

Figure 7–3 (Cont.) Dynamic String Descriptor Format



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Table 7–4 Contents of the CLASS_D Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of the data item in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 1 (aligned bit string) or 21 (packed-decimal string). Length of the data item is in bits for the bit string. Length of the data item is the number of 4-bit digits (not including the sign) for a packed-decimal string.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 2 for CLASS_D.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of first byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.

7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

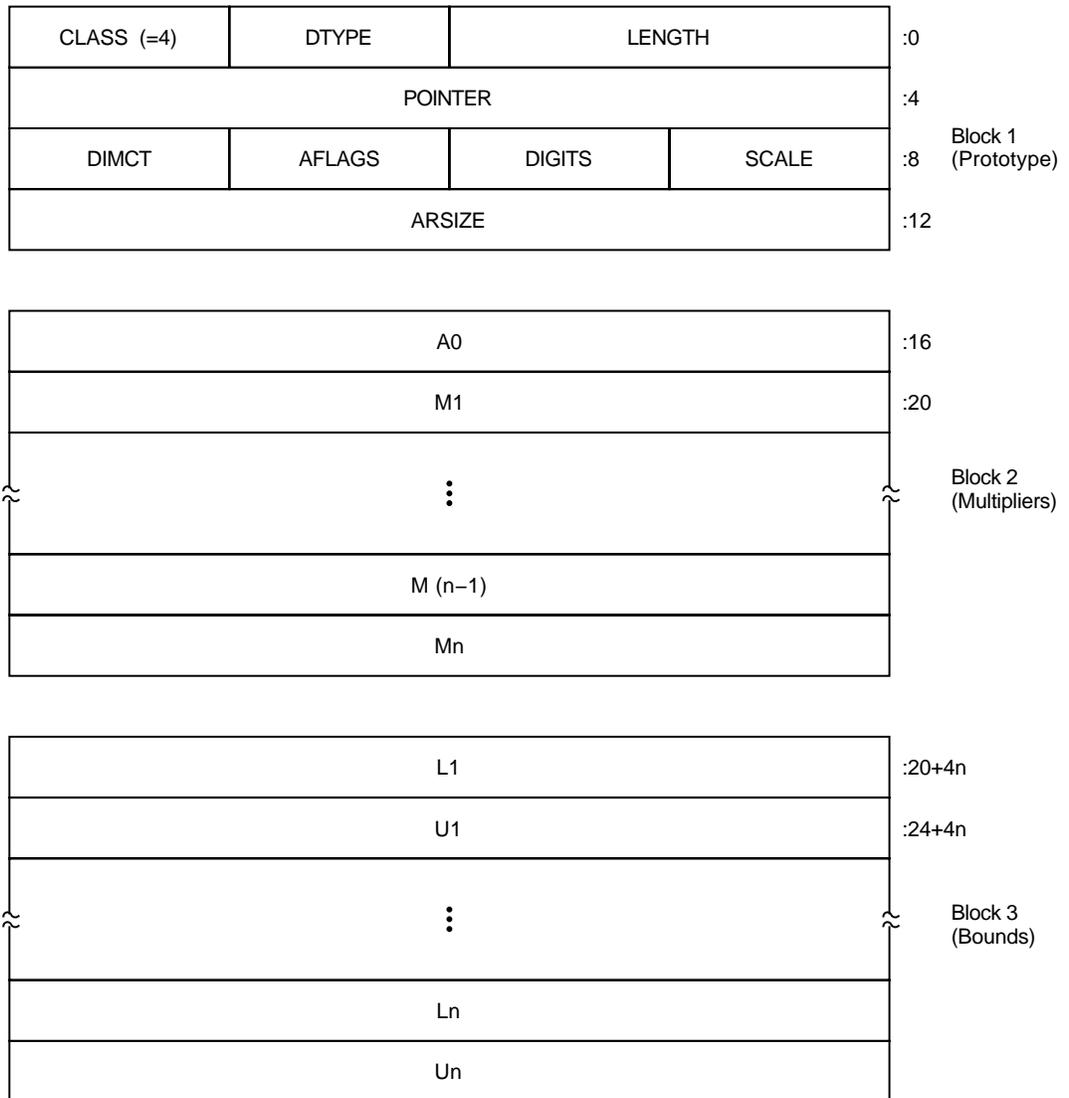
The array descriptor shown in Figure 7–4 is used to describe contiguous arrays of atomic data types or contiguous arrays of fixed-length strings. An array descriptor consists of three contiguous blocks. The first block contains the descriptor prototype information and is part of every array descriptor. The second and third blocks are optional. If the third block is present, so is the second. Table 7–5 describes the fields of the descriptor.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

Figure 7-4 Array Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)

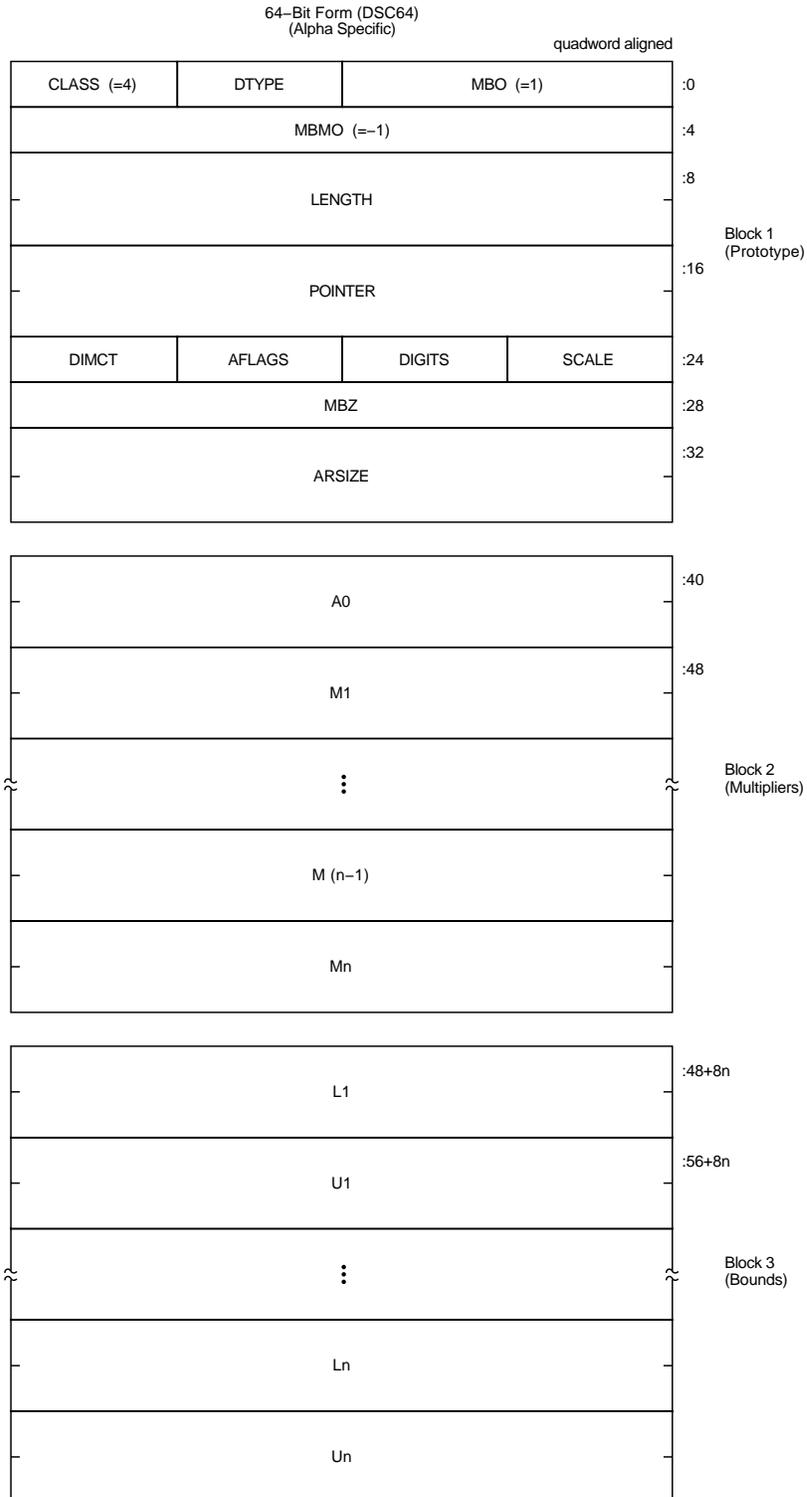


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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors 7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

Figure 7-4 (Cont.) Array Descriptor Format



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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

Table 7-5 Contents of the CLASS_A Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of an array element in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 1 (aligned bit string) or 21 (packed-decimal string). Length of an array element is in bits for the bit string. Length of an array element is the number of 4-bit digits (not including the sign) for a packed-decimal string.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 4 for CLASS_A.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of the first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_SCALE DSC64\$B_SCALE	Signed power-of-two or power-of-ten multiplier, as specified by FL_BINSCALE, to convert the internal form to external form. (See Section 7.6.)
DSC\$B_DIGITS DSC64\$B_DIGITS	If nonzero, the unsigned number of decimal digits in the internal representation. If 0, the number of digits can be computed based on LENGTH. This field should be 0 unless the TYPE field specifies a string data type that could contain numeric values.

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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors 7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

Table 7–5 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_A Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$B_AFLAGS DSC64\$B_AFLAGS	Array flag bits <23:16>: Bits <18:16>
DSC\$V_FL_BINSCALE DSC64\$V_FL_BINSCALE	Reserved and must be 0. If set, the scale factor specified by SCALE is a signed power-of-two multiplier to convert the internal form to external form. If not set, SCALE specifies a signed power-of-ten multiplier. (See Section 7.6.)
DSC\$V_FL_REDIM DSC64\$V_FL_REDIM	If set, the array can be redimensioned; that is, A_0 , M_i , L_i , and U_i can be changed. The redimensioned array cannot exceed the size allocated to the array ARSIZE.
DSC\$V_FL_COLUMN DSC64\$V_FL_COLUMN	If set, the elements of the array are stored by columns (FORTRAN). That is, the leftmost subscript (first dimension) is varied most rapidly, and the rightmost subscript (n th dimension) is varied least rapidly. If not set, the elements are stored by rows (most other languages). That is, the rightmost subscript is varied most rapidly and the leftmost subscript is varied least rapidly.
DSC\$V_FL_COEFF DSC64\$V_FL_COEFF	If set, the multiplicative coefficients in block 2 are present. Must be set if FL_BOUNDS is set.
DSC\$V_FL_BOUNDS DSC64\$V_FL_BOUNDS	If set, the bounds information in block 3 is present and requires that FL_COEFF be set.
DSC\$B_DIMCT DSC64\$B_DIMCT	Number of dimensions, n .
DSC\$L_ARSIZE DSC64\$Q_ARSIZE	Total size of array (in bytes, unless the TYPE field contains the value 21; see the description for LENGTH). A redimensioned array can use less than the total size allocated. For data type 1 (aligned bit string), LENGTH is in bits while ARSIZE is in bytes because the unit of length is bits, while the unit of allocation is aligned bytes.
DSC\$A_A0 DSC64\$PQ_A0	Address of element $A(0,0, \dots, 0)$. This need not be within the actual array. It is the same as POINTER for zero-origin arrays.
DSC\$L_Mi DSC64\$Q_Mi	Addressing coefficients ($M_i = U_i - L_i + 1$).

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.4 Array Descriptor (CLASS_A)

Table 7-5 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_A Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSCSL_Li DSC64\$Q_Li	Lower bound (signed) of <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSCSL_Ui DSC64\$Q_Ui	Upper bound (signed) of <i>i</i> th dimension.

The following formulas specify the effective address, E, of an array element.

Caution

Modification of the following formulas is required if DTYPE contains a 1 or 21, because LENGTH is given in bits or 4-bit digits rather than in bytes.

The effective address, E, for element A(I):

$$E = A_0 + I * \text{LENGTH}$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + [I - L_1] * \text{LENGTH}$$

The effective address, E, for element A(I₁, I₂) with FL_COLUMN clear:

$$E = A_0 + [I_1 * M_2 + I_2] * \text{LENGTH}$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + [[I_1 - L_1] * M_2 + I_2 - L_2] * \text{LENGTH}$$

The effective address, E, for element A(I₁, I₂) with FL_COLUMN set:

$$E = A_0 + [I_2 * M_1 + I_1] * \text{LENGTH}$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + [[I_2 - L_2] * M_1 + I_1 - L_1] * \text{LENGTH}$$

The effective address, E, for element A(I₁, . . . , I_n) with FL_COLUMN clear:

$$E = A_0 + [[[[\dots [I_1] * M_2 + \dots] * M_{n-2} + I_{n-2}] * M_{n-1}$$

$$+ I_{n-1}] * M_n + I_n] * \text{LENGTH}$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + [[[[\dots [I_1 - L_1] * M_2$$

$$+ \dots] * M_{n-2} + I_{n-2} - L_{n-2}] * M_{n-1}$$

$$+ I_{n-1} - L_{n-1}] * M_n + I_n - L_n] * \text{LENGTH}$$

The effective address, E, for element A(I₁, . . . , I_n) with FL_COLUMN set:

$$E = A_0 + [[[[\dots [I_n] * M_{n-1} + \dots] * M_3 + I_3] * M_2 + I_2] * M_1 + I_1] * \text{LENGTH}$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + [[[[\dots [I_n - L_n] * M_{n-1} + \dots] * M_3 + I_3$$

$$- L_3] * M_2 + I_2 - L_2] * M_1 + I_1 - L_1] * \text{LENGTH}$$

7.5 Procedure Argument Descriptor (CLASS_P)

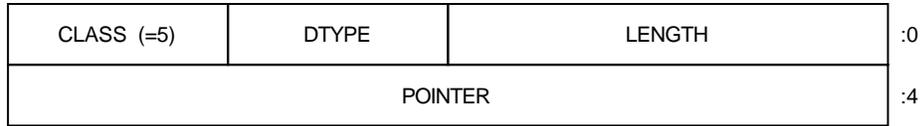
A descriptor for a procedure argument identifies a procedure and its result data type, if any.

On VAX processors, the descriptor for a procedure argument specifies its entry address and function value data type. On Alpha processors, the procedure argument descriptor is a pointer to the procedure descriptor, which is described in Section 3.4. Figure 7-5 shows the format of a procedure argument descriptor. Table 7-6 describes the fields of the descriptor.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors 7.5 Procedure Argument Descriptor (CLASS_P)

Figure 7-5 Procedure Argument Descriptor Format

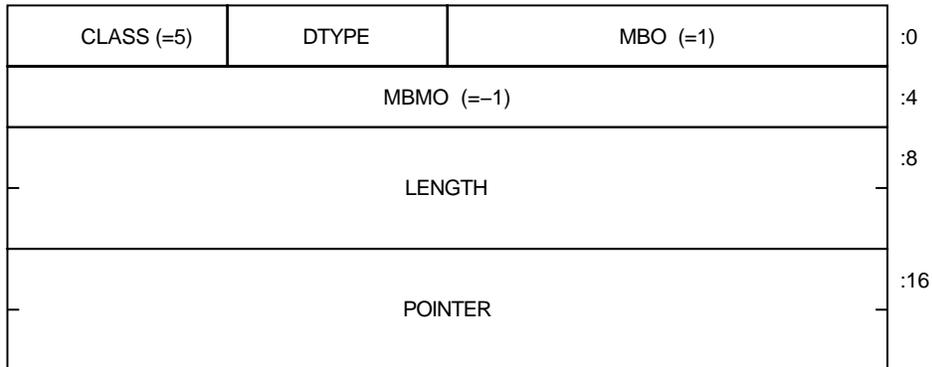
32-Bit Form (DSC)



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64-Bit Form (DSC64)

quadword aligned



ZK-7660A-GE

Table 7-6 Contents of the CLASS_P Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length associated with the function value, or 0 if no function value is returned.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	Function value data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 5 for CLASS_P.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of entry mask to the procedure for VAX environments. Address of the procedure descriptor of the procedure for Alpha environments.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.

Procedures return a function value as described in Section 2.5 for VAX or Section 3.7.7 for Alpha.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.6 Decimal String Descriptor (CLASS_SD)

7.6 Decimal String Descriptor (CLASS_SD)

Figure 7-6 shows the format of a decimal string descriptor. Decimal size and scaling information for both scalar data and simple strings is given in this descriptor form. Table 7-7 describes the fields of the descriptor.

Figure 7-6 Decimal String Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)

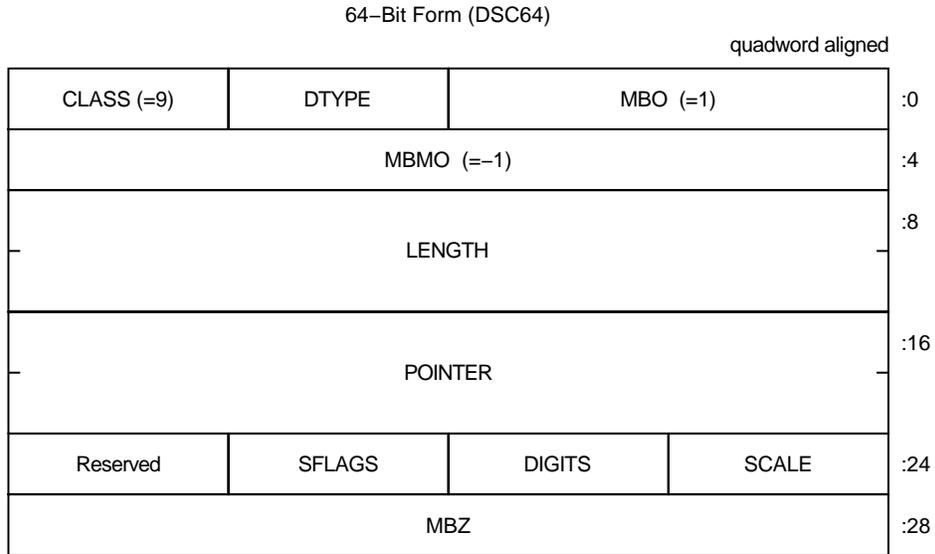
CLASS (=9)	DTYPE	LENGTH		:0
POINTER				:4
Reserved	SFLAGS	DIGITS	SCALE	:8

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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors 7.6 Decimal String Descriptor (CLASS_SD)

Figure 7–6 (Cont.) Decimal String Descriptor Format



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Table 7–7 Contents of the CLASS_SD Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of the data item in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 1 (aligned bit string) or 21 (packed-decimal string). Length of the data item is in bits for the bit string. Length of the data item is the number of 4-bit digits (not including the sign) for packed-decimal string.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 9 for CLASS_SD.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of the first byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_SCALE DSC64\$B_SCALE	Signed power-of-two or power-of-ten multiplier, as specified by FL_BINSCALE, to convert the internal form to external form. (See examples in Table 7–8.)

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.6 Decimal String Descriptor (CLASS_SD)

Table 7-7 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_SD Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$B_DIGITS DSC64\$B_DIGITS	If nonzero, the unsigned number of decimal digits in the internal representation. If 0, the number of digits can be computed based on LENGTH. This field should be 0 unless the TYPE field specifies a string data type that could contain numeric values.
DSC\$B_SFLAGS DSC64\$B_SFLAGS	Scalar flag bits <23:16>: Bits <18:16> Reserved and must be 0.
DSC\$V_FL_BINSCALE DSC64\$V_FL_BINSCALE	If set, the scale factor specified by SCALE is a signed power-of-two multiplier to convert the internal form to external form. If not set, SCALE specifies a signed power-of-ten multiplier. (See examples in Table 7-8.)
	Bit <23:20> Reserved and must be 0.

Examples of SCALE and FL_BINSCALE interpretation are presented in Table 7-8.

Table 7-8 Internal-to-External BINSCALE Conversion Examples

Internal Value	SCALE	FL_BINSCALE	External Value
123	+1	0	1230
123	+1	1	246
200	-2	0	2
200	-2	1	50

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

The noncontiguous array descriptor describes an array in which the storage of the array elements can be allocated with a fixed, nonzero number of bytes separating logically adjacent elements. Two elements are said to be logically adjacent if their subscripts differ by 1 in the most rapidly varying dimension only. The difference between the addresses of two adjacent elements is termed the **stride**. You can align elements by row or column, because the accessing algorithm in the called procedure handles both alignments.

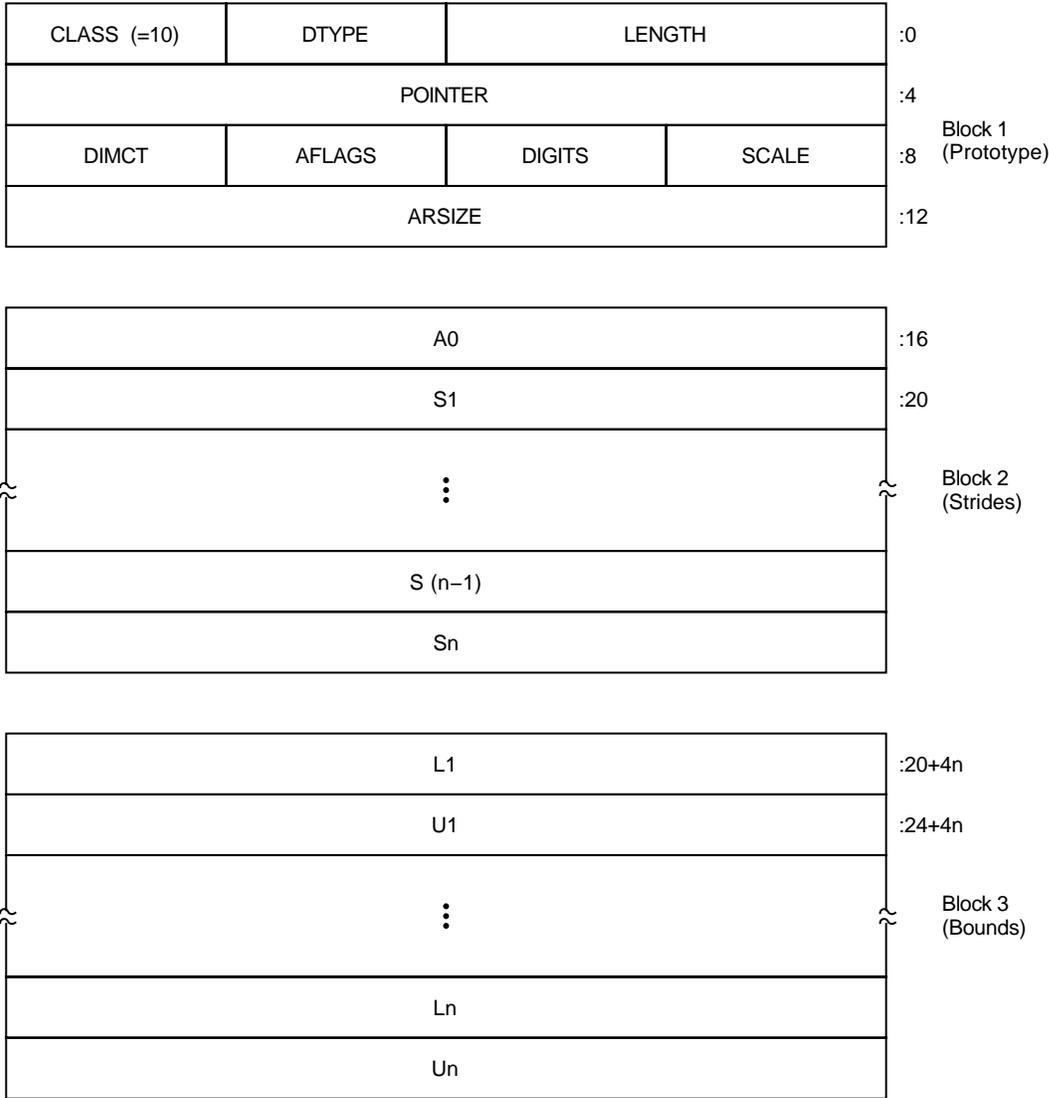
This array descriptor is to be used where the calling program, at its option, can pass a slice of an array that contains noncontiguous allocations. This standard indicates no preference between the noncontiguous array descriptor (NCA) and the contiguous array descriptor (A), as described in Section 7.4, for language processors that always allocate contiguous arrays. Figure 7-7 shows the format of a noncontiguous array descriptor, which consists of three contiguous blocks. Table 7-9 describes the fields of the descriptor.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

Figure 7-7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)



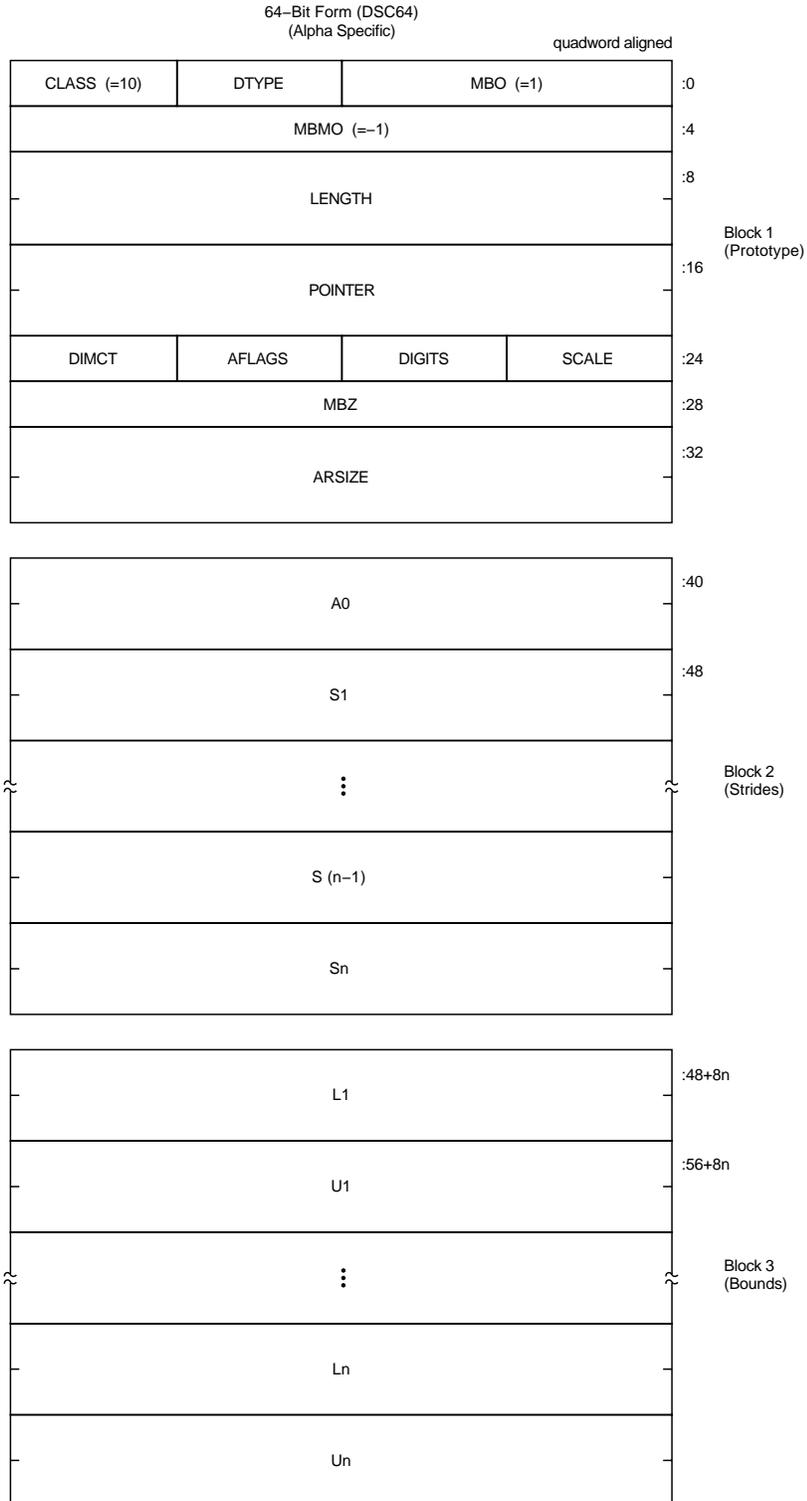
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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

Figure 7-7 (Cont.) Noncontiguous Array Descriptor Format



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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

Table 7–9 Contents of the CLASS_NCA Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of an array element in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 1 (aligned bit string) or 21 (packed-decimal string). Length of an array element is in bits for the bit string. Length of an array element is the number of 4-bit digits (not including the sign) for a packed-decimal string.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code. Data-type codes are listed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
DSC\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 10 for CLASS_NCA.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_SCALE DSC64\$B_SCALE	Signed power-of-two or power-of-ten multiplier, as specified by FL_BINSCALE, to convert the internal form to external form. (See Section 7.6.)
DSC\$B_DIGITS DSC64\$B_DIGITS	If nonzero, the unsigned number of decimal digits in the internal representation. If 0, the number of digits can be computed based on LENGTH. This field should be 0 unless the TYPE field specifies a string data type that could contain numeric values.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

Table 7–9 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_NCA Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$B_AFLAGS DSC64\$B_AFLAGS	Array flag bits <23:16>: Bits <18:16>
	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Must be 0.
DSC\$V_FL_BINSCALE DSC64\$V_FL_BINSCALE	
	If set, the scale factor specified by SCALE is a signed power-of-two multiplier to convert the internal form to external form. If not set, SCALE specifies a signed power-of-ten multiplier. (See Section 7.6.)
DSC\$V_FL_REDIM DSC64\$V_FL_REDIM	
	Must be 0.
DSC\$V_FL_UNALLOC DSC64\$V_FL_UNALLOC	
	If set, the storage for the array described by this descriptor has not been allocated; the POINTER field must contain 0. If not set, storage for the array described by this descriptor has been allocated; the POINTER field may or may not be 0, depending on the bounds of the array. (If the POINTER field contains a nonzero value, then this flag must not be set.)
DSC\$V_FL_NODEALLOC	
	If set, the storage for the array described by this descriptor must not be deallocated. (The POINTER and other fields of this descriptor may be cleared or otherwise set to eliminate access to the described storage, but the storage itself belongs to some other descriptor which must be used to deallocate that storage.)
	Bit <23:23>
	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Must be 0.
DSC\$B_DIMCT DSC64\$B_DIMCT	Number of dimensions, <i>n</i> .
DSC\$L_ARSIZE DSC64\$Q_ARSIZE	
	If the elements are contiguous, ARSIZE is the total size of the array (in bytes, unless the DTYPE field contains the value 21; see the description of LENGTH). If the elements are not allocated contiguously or if the program unit allocating the descriptor is uncertain whether the array is actually contiguous, the value placed in ARSIZE might be meaningless.
	For data type 1 (aligned bit string), LENGTH is in bits while ARSIZE is in bytes because the unit of length is in bits while the unit of allocation is in bytes.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.7 Noncontiguous Array Descriptor (CLASS_NCA)

Table 7–9 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_NCA Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSCSA_A0 DSC64\$PQ_A0	Address of element A(0,0, . . . ,0). This need not be within the actual array. It is the same as POINTER for zero-origin arrays. $A0 = \text{POINTER} - (S_1 * L_1 + S_2 * L_2 + \dots + S_n * L_n)$
DSCSL_Si DSC64\$Q_Si	Stride of the <i>i</i> th dimension. The difference between the addresses of successive elements of the <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSCSL_Li DSC64\$Q_Li	Lower bound (signed) of the <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSCSL_Ui DSC64\$Q_Ui	Upper bound (signed) of the <i>i</i> th dimension.

The following formulas specify the effective address, E, of an array element.

Caution

Modification of the following formulas is required if DTYPE equals 1 or 21 because LENGTH is given in bits or 4-bit digits rather than bytes.

The effective address, E, of A(I):

$$E = A_0 + S_1 * I$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + S_1 * [I - L_1]$$

The effective address, E, of A(I₁, I₂):

$$E = A_0 + S_1 * I_1 + S_2 * I_2$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + S_1 * [I_1 - L_1] + S_2 * [I_2 - L_2]$$

The effective address, E, of A(I₁, . . . , I_n):

$$E = A_0 + S_1 * I_1 + \dots + S_n * I_n$$

$$= \text{POINTER} + S_1 * [I_1 - L_1] + \dots + S_n * [I_n - L_n]$$

7.8 Varying String Descriptor (CLASS_VS)

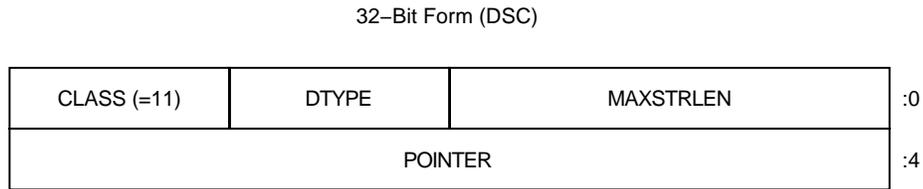
A class VS descriptor is used for varying string data types (see Section 6.5).

As an input parameter, this format is not interchangeable with class 1 (CLASS_S) or with class 2 (CLASS_D). When a called procedure modifies a varying string passed by reference or by descriptor, it writes the new length, *n*, into CURLEN and can modify all bytes of BODY. Figure 7–8 shows the format of a varying string descriptor. Table 7–10 describes the fields of the descriptor.

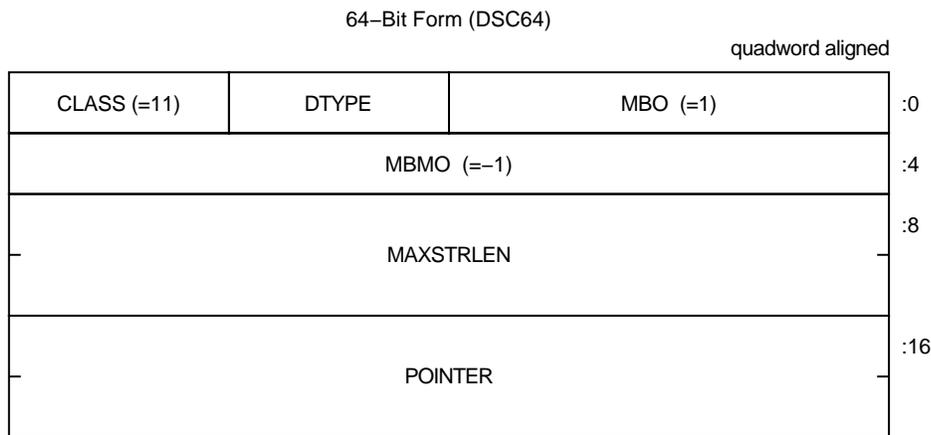
OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.8 Varying String Descriptor (CLASS_VS)

Figure 7–8 Varying String Descriptor Format



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Table 7–10 Contents of the CLASS_VS Descriptor

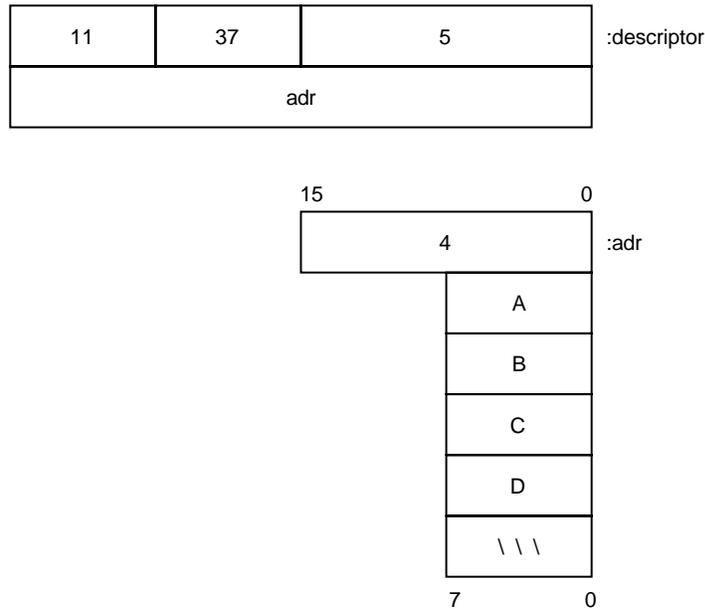
Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_MAXSTRLEN DSC64\$Q_MAXSTRLEN	Maximum length of the BODY field of the varying string in bytes in the range 0 to $2^{16} - 1$.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data type code that has the value 37, which specifies the varying character string data type (see Sections 6.2 and 6.5). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 11 for CLASS_VS.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of the first field (CURLen) of the varying string.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.

Figure 7–9 illustrates the use of a 32-bit varying string descriptor to present a variable that is capable of holding a string value of up to five characters in length and that is currently holding the string value ABCD. As shown in the figure, MAXSTRLEN contains five, CURLen contains four, string is currently ABCD, and the remaining byte is currently undefined.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.9 Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)

Figure 7–9 Varying String Descriptor with Character String Data Type



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7.9 Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)

A variant of the noncontiguous array descriptor is used to specify an array of varying strings where each varying string has the same maximum length. Each array element is of the varying string data type (see Section 6.5).

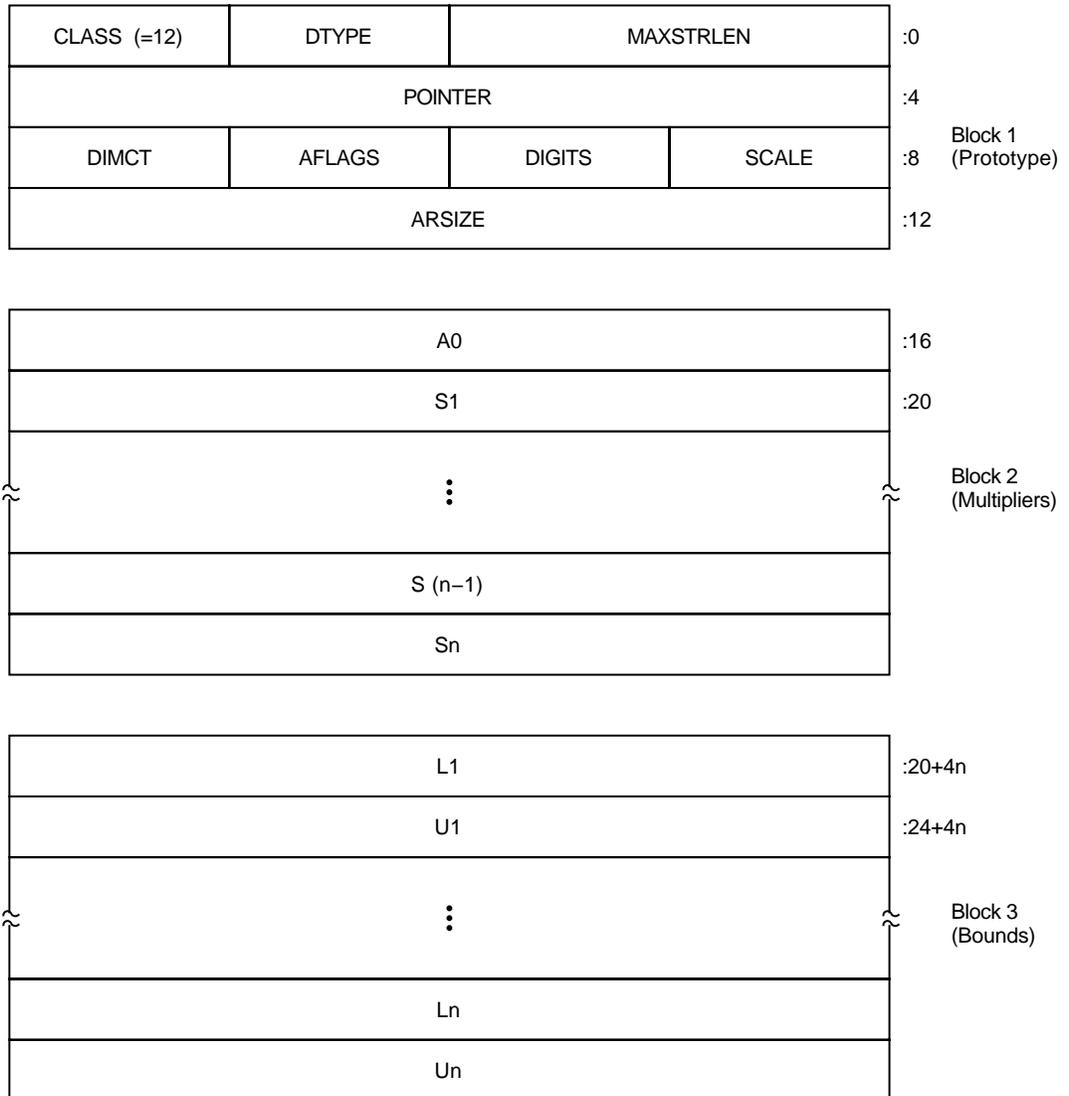
When a called procedure modifies a varying string in an array of varying strings passed to it by reference or by descriptor, it writes the new length, *n*, into `CURLEN` and can modify all bytes of `BODY`. The format of this descriptor is the same as the noncontiguous array descriptor except for the first two longwords. Figure 7–10 shows the format of a varying string array descriptor. Table 7–11 describes the fields of the descriptor.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.9 Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)

Figure 7-10 Varying String Array Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)



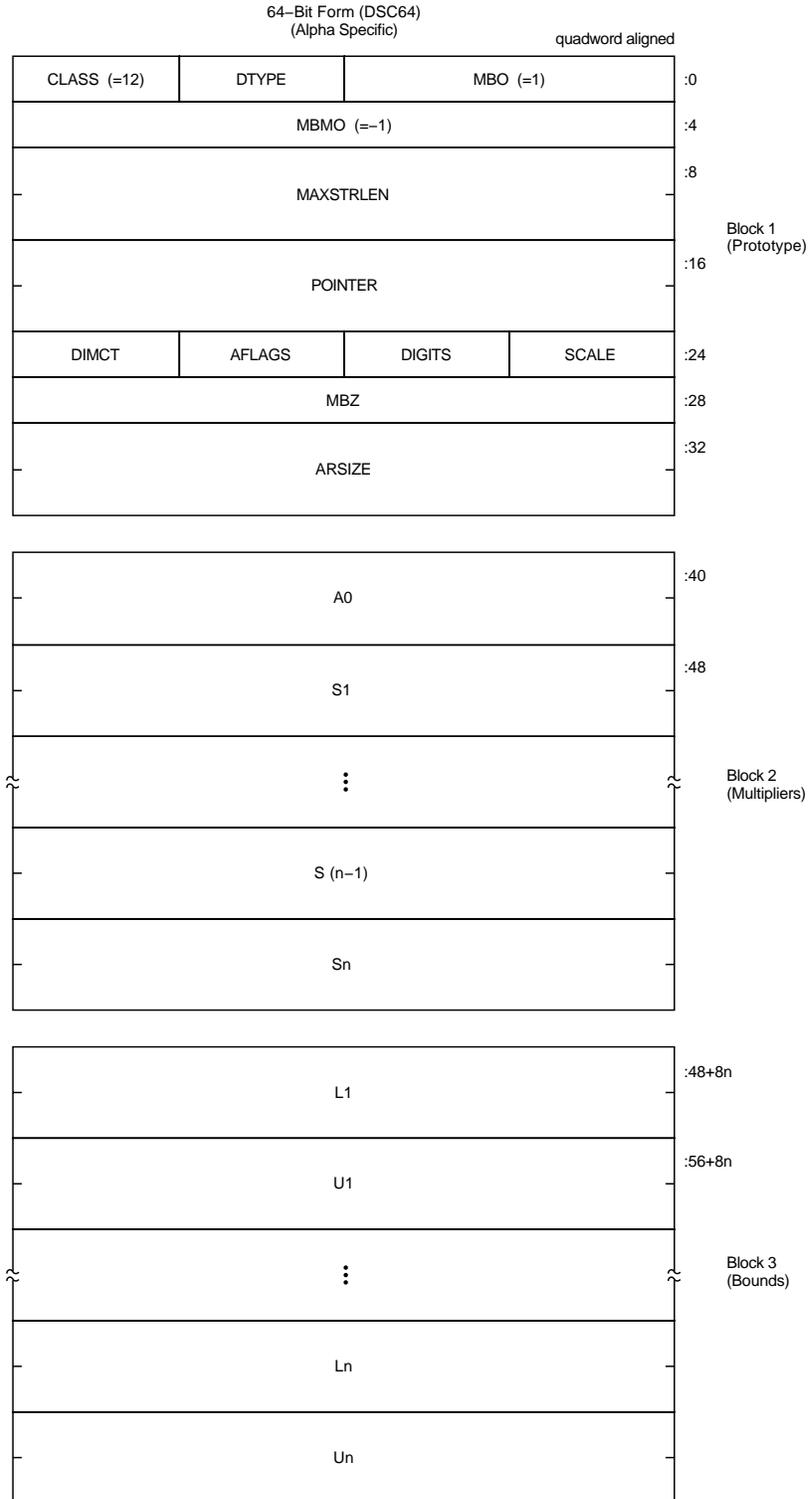
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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.9 Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)

Figure 7–10 (Cont.) Varying String Array Descriptor Format



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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.9 Varying String Array Descriptor (CLASS_VSA)

Table 7–11 Contents of the CLASS_VSA Descriptor

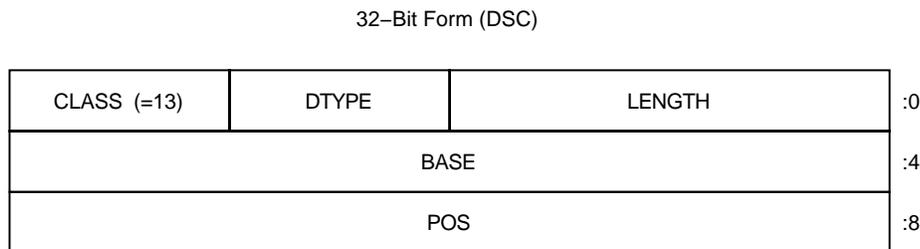
Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_MAXSTRLEN DSC64\$Q_MAXSTRLEN	Maximum length of the BODY field of an array element in bytes in the range 0 to $2^{16} - 1$.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code that has the value 37, which specifies the varying character string data type (see Sections 6.2 and 6.5). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 12 for CLASS_VSA.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of the first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.

The remaining fields in the descriptor are identical to those in the noncontiguous array descriptor (NCA). The effective address computation of an array element produces the address of CURLEN of the desired element.

7.10 Unaligned Bit String Descriptor (CLASS_UBS)

A descriptor is used to pass an unaligned bit string (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VU) that starts and ends on an arbitrary bit boundary. The descriptor provides two components: a base address and a signed relative bit position. Figure 7–11 shows the format of an unaligned bit string descriptor. Table 7–12 describes the fields of the descriptor.

Figure 7–11 Unaligned Bit String Descriptor Format

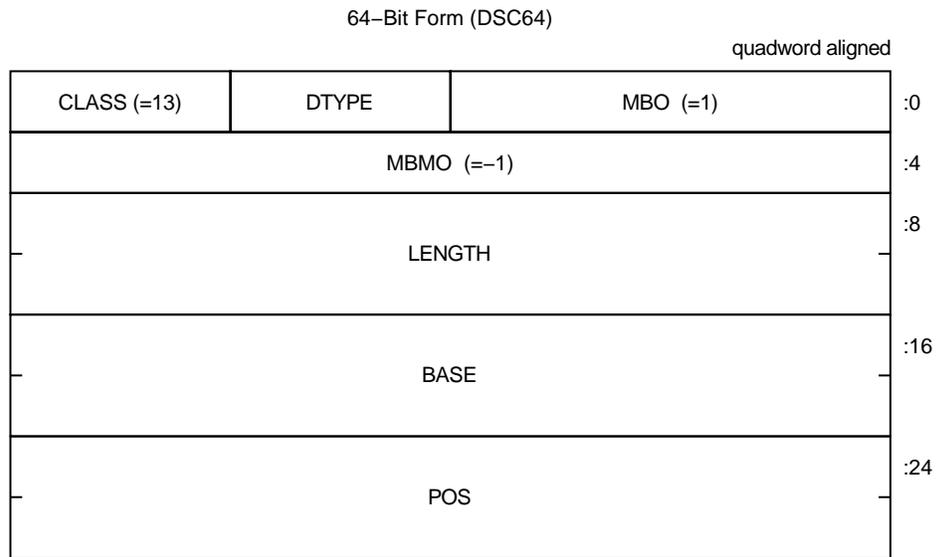


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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors 7.10 Unaligned Bit String Descriptor (CLASS_UBS)

Figure 7–11 (Cont.) Unaligned Bit String Descriptor Format



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Table 7–12 Contents of the CLASS_UBS Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of data item in bits.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code that has the value 34, which specifies the unaligned bit string data type (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 13 for CLASS_UBS.
DSC\$A_BASE DSC64\$PQ_BASE	Base of the address relative to which the signed relative bit position, POS, is used to locate the bit string. The base address need not be the first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$L_POS DSC64\$Q_POS	Relative bit position with respect to BASE of the first bit of unaligned bit string.

7.11 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)

A variant of the noncontiguous array descriptor is used to specify an array of unaligned bit strings. Each array element is an unaligned bit string data type (DSC\$K_DTYPE_VU) that starts and ends on an arbitrary bit boundary. The length of each element is the same and is 0 to $2^{16} - 1$ bits. You can access elements of the array directly by using the VAX variable bit field instructions. Therefore, the descriptor provides two components: a byte address, BASE, and

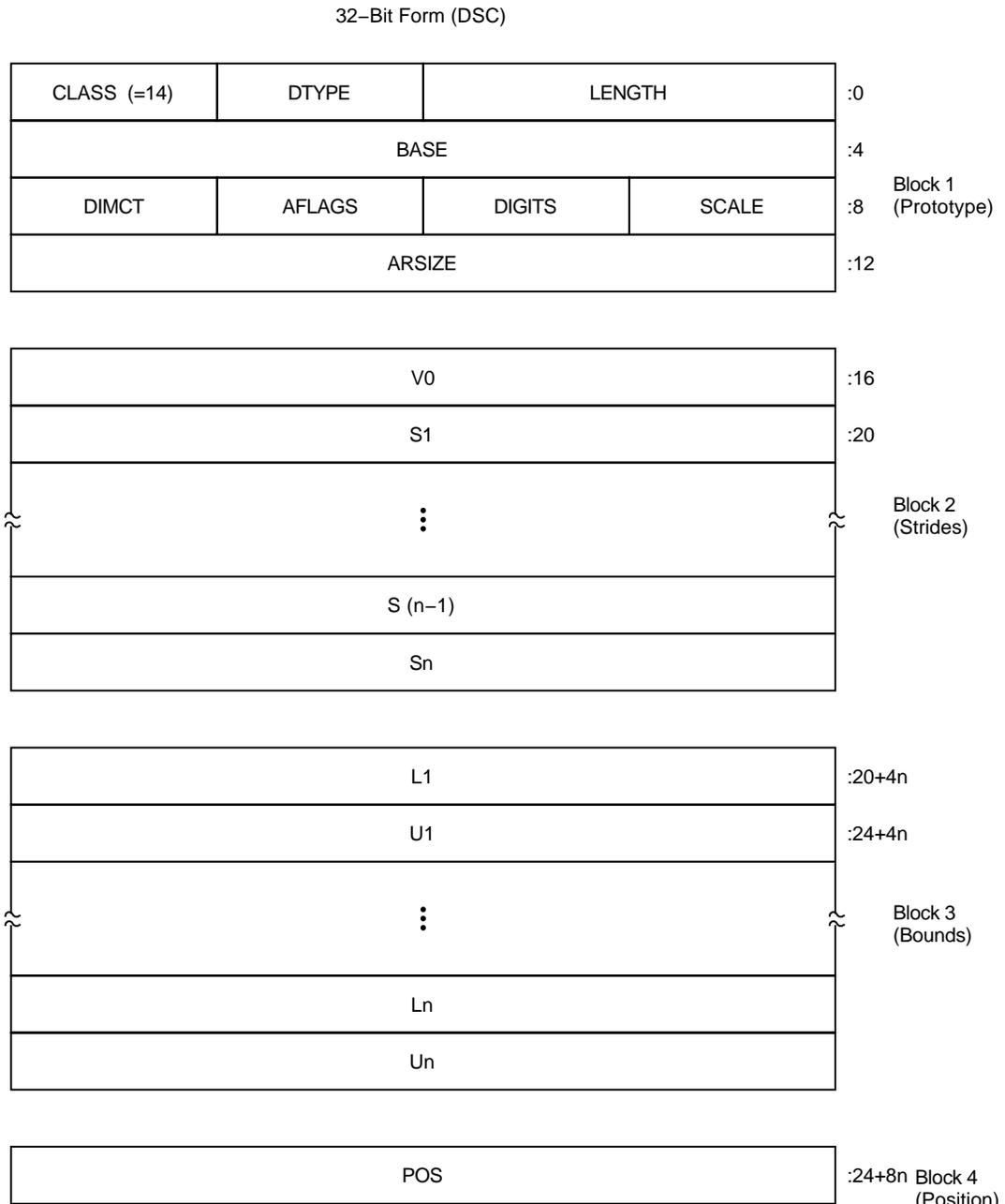
OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.11 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)

a means to compute the signed bit offset, EB, with respect to BASE of an array element.

The unaligned bit array descriptor consists of four contiguous blocks that are always present. The first block contains the descriptor prototype information. Figure 7-12 shows the format of an unaligned bit array descriptor. Table 7-13 describes the fields of the descriptor.

Figure 7-12 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor Format



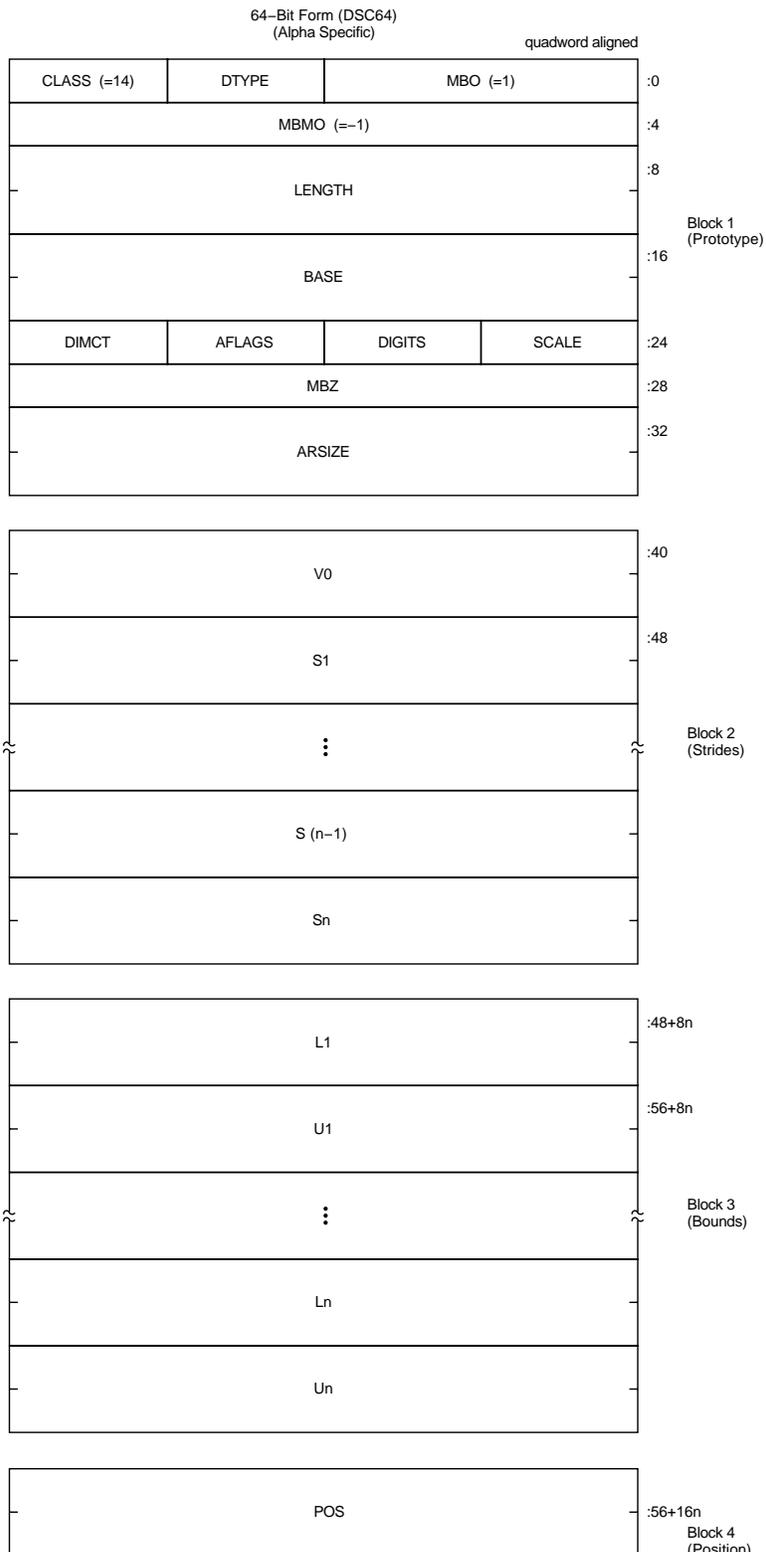
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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.11 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)

Figure 7-12 (Cont.) Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor Format



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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.11 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)

Table 7–13 Contents of the CLASS_UBA Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of an array element in bits.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code that must have the value 34, which specifies the unaligned bit string data type (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 14 for CLASS_UBA.
DSC\$A_BASE DSC64\$PQ_BASE	Base address relative to the effective bit offset, EB, that is used to locate elements of the array. The base address need not be the first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_SCALE DSC64\$B_SCALE	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Must be 0.
DSC\$B_DIGITS DSC64\$B_DIGITS	If nonzero, the unsigned number of decimal digits in the internal representation. If 0, the number of digits can be computed based on LENGTH. This field should be 0 unless the TYPE field specifies a string data type that could contain numeric values.
DSC\$B_AFLAGS DSC64\$B_AFLAGS	Array flag bits <23:16>: <div style="margin-left: 2em;"> Bits <18:16> Reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Must be 0. DSC\$V_FL_BINSCALE Must be 0. DSC64\$V_FL_BINSCALE DSC\$V_FL_REDIM Must be 0. DSC64\$V_FL_REDIM Bits <23:21> Reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Must be 0. </div>
DSC\$B_DIMCT DSC64\$B_DIMCT	Number of dimensions, <i>n</i> .
DSC\$L_ARSIZE DSC64\$Q_ARSIZE	If the elements are contiguous, ARSIZE is the total size of the array in bits. If the elements are not allocated contiguously or if the program unit allocating the descriptor is uncertain whether the array is actually contiguous, the value placed in ARSIZE might be meaningless.
DSC\$L_V0 DSC64\$Q_V0	Signed bit offset of element A(0, . . . ,0) with respect to BASE. $V_0 = \text{POS} - [S_1 * L_1 + \dots + S_n * L_n]$.
DSC\$L_Si DSC64\$Q_Si	Stride of the <i>i</i> th dimension. The difference between the bit (not byte) addresses of successive elements of the <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSC\$L_Li DSC64\$Q_Li	Lower bound (signed) of the <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSC\$L_Ui DSC64\$Q_Ui	Upper bound (signed) of the <i>i</i> th dimension.
DSC\$L_POS DSC64\$Q_POS	Relative bit position with respect to BASE of the first actual bit of the array, that is, element A(L ₁ , . . . ,L _n).

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.11 Unaligned Bit Array Descriptor (CLASS_UBA)

The following formulas specify the signed effective bit offset, EB, of an array element:

The signed effective bit offset, EB, of A(I₁):

$$\begin{aligned} EB &= V_0 + S_1 * I_1 \\ &= POS + S_1 * [I_1 - L_1] \end{aligned}$$

The signed effective bit offset, EB, of A(I₁, I₂):

$$\begin{aligned} EB &= V_0 + S_1 * I_1 + S_2 * I_2 \\ &= POS + S_1 * [I_1 - L_1] + S_2 * [I_2 - L_2] \end{aligned}$$

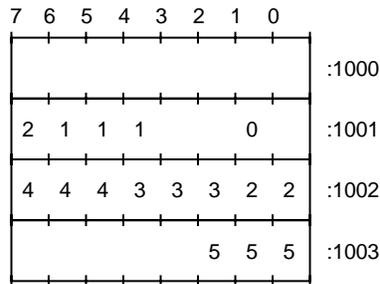
The signed effective bit offset, EB, of A(I₁, . . . , I_n):

$$\begin{aligned} EB &= V_0 + S_1 * I_1 + \dots + S_n * I_n \\ &= POS + S_1 * [I_1 - L_1] + \dots + S_n * [I_n - L_n] \end{aligned}$$

Note that EB is computed ignoring integer overflow.

On VAX systems, EB is used as the position operand, and the content of BASE is used as the base address operand in the VAX variable-length bit field instructions. Therefore, BASE must specify a byte within 2²⁸ bytes of all bytes of storage in the bit array.

For example, consider a single-origin, one-dimensional, five-element array consisting of 3-bit elements allocated adjacently (therefore, S₁ = 3). Assume BASE is byte 1000 and the first actual element, A(1), starts at bit <4> of byte 1001.



ZK-1901-GE

The following dependent field values occur in the descriptor:

$$\begin{aligned} POS &= 12 \\ V_0 &= 12 - 3 * 1 = 9 \end{aligned}$$

7.12 String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_SB)

A variant of the fixed-length string descriptor is used to specify strings where the string is viewed as a one-dimensional array with user-specified bounds. Figure 7-13 shows the format of a string with bounds descriptor. Table 7-14 describes the fields of the descriptor.

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.12 String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_SB)

Figure 7-13 String with Bounds Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)

CLASS (=15)	DTYPE	LENGTH	:0
POINTER			:4
SB_L1			:8
SB_U1			:12

ZK-4674A-GE

64-Bit Form (DSC64)

quadword aligned

CLASS (=15)	DTYPE	MBO (=1)	:0
MBMO (=-1)			:4
LENGTH			:8
POINTER			:16
SB_L1			:24
SB_U1			:32

ZK-7666A-GE

Table 7-14 Contents of the CLASS_SB Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of the string in bytes.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code that must have the value 14, which specifies the character string data type (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.

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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.12 String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_SB)

Table 7-14 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_SB Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 15 for CLASS_SB.
DSC\$A_POINTER DSC64\$PQ_POINTER	Address of the first byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$L_SB_L1 DSC64\$Q_SB_L1	Lower bound (signed) of the first (and only) dimension.
DSC\$L_SB_U1 DSC64\$Q_SB_U1	Upper bound (signed) of the first (and only) dimension.

The following formula specifies the effective address, E, of a string element A(I):

$$E = \text{POINTER} + [I - \text{SB_L1}]$$

If the string must be extended in a string comparison or assignment, the space character (hexadecimal 20 if ASCII) is used as the fill character.

7.13 Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_UBSB)

A variant of the unaligned bit string descriptor is used to specify bit strings where the string is viewed as a one-dimensional bit array with user-specified bounds. Figure 7-14 shows the format of an unaligned bit string with bounds descriptor. Table 7-15 describes the fields of the descriptor.

Figure 7-14 Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor Format

32-Bit Form (DSC)

CLASS (=16)	DTYPE	LENGTH	:0
BASE			:4
POS			:8
UBSB_L1			:12
UBSB_U1			:16

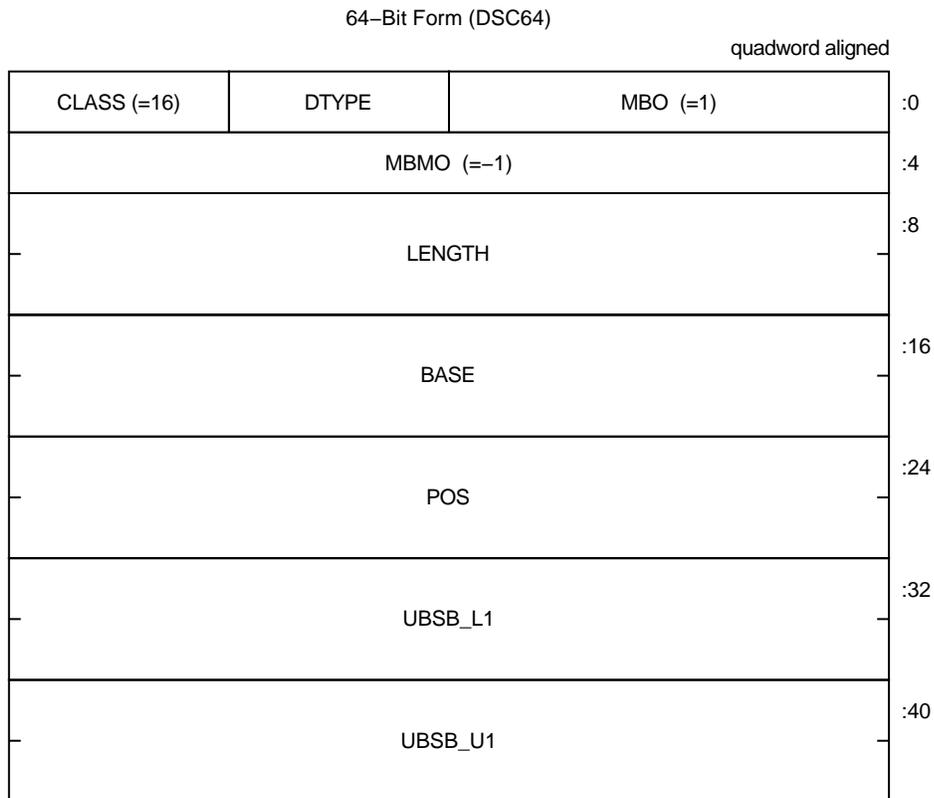
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OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.13 Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_UBSB)

Figure 7-14 (Cont.) Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor Format



ZK-7667A-GE

Table 7-15 Contents of the CLASS_UBSB Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$W_LENGTH DSC64\$Q_LENGTH	Length of the data item in bits.
DSC64\$W_MBO	Must be 1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$B_DTYPE DSC64\$B_DTYPE	A data-type code that must have the value 34, which specifies the unaligned bit string data type (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2). The use of other data types is reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
DSC\$B_CLASS DSC64\$B_CLASS	Defines the descriptor class code that must be equal to 16 for CLASS_UBSB.
DSC\$A_BASE DSC64\$PQ_BASE	Base address relative to the signed relative bit position, POS, used to locate the bit string. The base address need not be the first actual byte of data storage.
DSC64\$L_MBMO	Must be -1. See Section 7.1.
DSC\$L_POS DSC64\$Q_POS	Signed longword that defines the relative bit position of the first bit of the unaligned bit string to the BASE address.

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Argument Descriptors

7.13 Unaligned Bit String with Bounds Descriptor (CLASS_UBSB)

Table 7–15 (Cont.) Contents of the CLASS_UBSB Descriptor

Symbol	Description
DSC\$L_UBSB_L1 DSC64\$Q_UBSB_L1	Lower bound (signed) of the first (and only) dimension.
DSC\$L_UBSB_U1 DSC64\$Q_UBSB_U1	Upper bound (signed) of the first (and only) dimension.

The following formula specifies the effective bit offset, EB, of a bit element A(I):

$$EB = POS + [I - UBSB_L1]$$

7.14 Reserved Descriptor Class Codes

All descriptor class codes from 0 through 191 not otherwise defined in this standard are reserved to Hewlett-Packard. Classes 192 through 255 are reserved for Hewlett-Packard custom systems and for customers for their own use.

Table 7–16 lists some specific descriptor classes and codes that are obsolete or reserved to Hewlett-Packard.

Table 7–16 Specific OpenVMS VAX Descriptors Reserved to Hewlett-Packard

Descriptor	Code	Class
DSC\$K_CLASS_V	3	Obsolete (variable buffer)
DSC\$K_CLASS_PI	6	Obsolete (procedure incarnation)
DSC\$K_CLASS_J	7	Reserved to DEBUG (label)
DSC\$K_CLASS_JI	8	Obsolete (label incarnation)
DSC\$K_CLASS_CT	17	Reserved to ACMS (compressed text)
DSC\$K_CLASS_BFA	191	Reserved to BASIC (file array)

7.14.1 Facility-Specific Descriptor Class Codes

Descriptor class codes 160 through 191 are reserved for Hewlett-Packard for facility-specific purposes. These codes must not be passed between facilities, because different facilities might use the same code for different purposes. These codes can be used by compiler-generated code to pass parameters to the language-specific, run-time support procedures associated with that language or to the OpenVMS Debugger.

OpenVMS Conditions

An OpenVMS condition is a hardware-generated synchronous exception or a software event that is to be processed in a manner similar to a hardware exception.

Floating-point overflow exception, memory access violation exception, and reserved operation exception are examples of hardware-generated conditions. An output conversion error, an end of file, and the filling of an output buffer are examples of software events that might be treated as conditions.

Depending on the condition and on the program, you can exercise any of four types of action when a condition occurs:

- Ignore the condition.
For example, if an underflow occurs in a floating-point operation, continuing from the point of the exception with a zero result might be sufficient.
- Take some special action and continue from the point at which the condition occurred.
For example, if the end of a buffer is reached while a series of data items are being written, the special action is to start a new buffer.
- End the operation and branch from the sequential flow of control.
For example, if the end of an input file is reached, the branch exits from a loop that is processing the input data.
- Treat the condition as an unrecoverable error.
For example, when the floating divide-by-zero exception condition occurs, the program exits after writing (optionally) an appropriate error message.

When an unusual event or error occurs in a called procedure, the procedure can return a condition value to the caller indicating what has happened (see Section 8.1). The caller tests the condition value and takes the appropriate action.

When an exception is generated by the hardware, a branch out of the program's flow of control occurs automatically. In this case, and for certain software-generated events, it is more convenient to handle the condition as soon as it is detected rather than to program explicit tests.

8.1 Condition Values

Condition values are used in the OpenVMS operating system to provide the following functions:

- Indicate the success or failure of a called procedure as a function value.
- Describe an exception condition when an exception is signaled.
- Identify system messages.

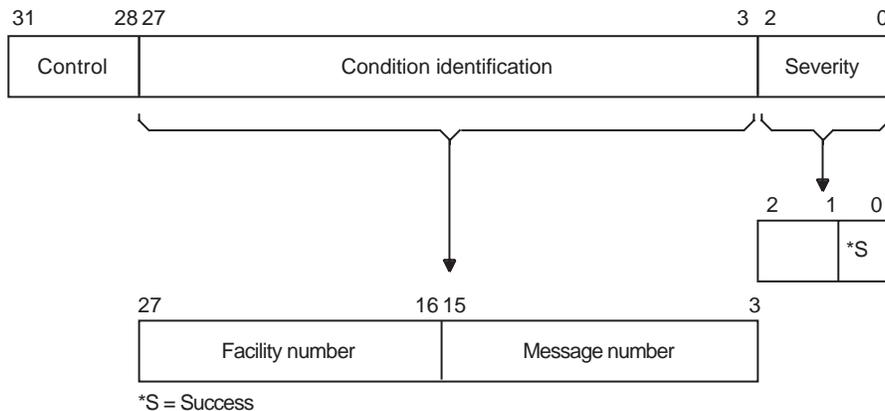
OpenVMS Conditions

8.1 Condition Values

- Report program success or failure to the command language level.

A **condition value** is a longword that includes fields to describe the software component that generates the value, the reason the value was generated, and severity status of the condition value. Figure 8–1 shows the format of a condition value. Table 8–1 describes the fields of a condition value.

Figure 8–1 Format of a Condition Value



ZK-1795-GE

Table 8–1 Contents of the Condition Value

Symbol	Description																											
Severity	Indicates success or failure. The severity code bit <0> is set for success (logical true) and is clear for failure (logical false); bits <1> and <2> distinguish degrees of success or failure. Bits <2:0>, when taken as an unsigned integer, are interpreted as shown in the following table:																											
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Symbol</th> <th>Value</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>STSSK_WARNING</td> <td>0</td> <td>Warning</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STSSK_SUCCESS</td> <td>1</td> <td>Success</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STSSK_ERROR</td> <td>2</td> <td>Error</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STSSK_INFO</td> <td>3</td> <td>Information</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STSSK_SEVERE</td> <td>4</td> <td>Severe error</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>5</td> <td>Reserved to Hewlett-Packard</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>6</td> <td>Reserved to Hewlett-Packard</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>7</td> <td>Reserved to Hewlett-Packard</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Symbol	Value	Description	STSSK_WARNING	0	Warning	STSSK_SUCCESS	1	Success	STSSK_ERROR	2	Error	STSSK_INFO	3	Information	STSSK_SEVERE	4	Severe error		5	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard		6	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard		7	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard
Symbol	Value	Description																										
STSSK_WARNING	0	Warning																										
STSSK_SUCCESS	1	Success																										
STSSK_ERROR	2	Error																										
STSSK_INFO	3	Information																										
STSSK_SEVERE	4	Severe error																										
	5	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard																										
	6	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard																										
	7	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard																										

Section 8.1.1 more fully describes severity codes.

Condition identification Identifies the condition uniquely on a systemwide basis.

(continued on next page)

Table 8–1 (Cont.) Contents of the Condition Value

Symbol	Description
Message number	Describes the status, which can be a hardware exception that occurred or a software-defined value. Message numbers with bit <15> set are specific to a single facility. Message numbers with bit <15> clear are systemwide status codes.
Facility number	Identifies the software component generating the condition value. Bit <27> is set for customer facilities and is clear for Hewlett-Packard facilities.
Control	Controls the printing of the message associated with the condition value. Bit <28> inhibits the message associated with the condition value from being printed by the SYSSEXIT system service. This bit is set by the system default handler after it has output an error message using the SYSPUTMSG system service. It should also be set in the condition value returned by a procedure as a function value, if the procedure has also signaled the condition (so the condition has been printed or suppressed). Bits <31:29> must be 0; they are reserved to Hewlett-Packard for future use. Table 8–2 lists the possible software symbols that are defined for the various fields of the condition-value longword.

Table 8–2 Value Symbols for the Condition Value Longword

Symbol	Value	Meaning	Field
STSSV_COND_ID	3	Position of 27:3	Condition identification
STSSS_COND_ID	25	Size of 27:3	Condition identification
STSSM_COND_ID	Mask	Mask for 27:3	Condition identification
STSSV_INHIB_MSG	1@28	Position for 28	Inhibit message on image exit
STSSS_INHIB_MSG	1	Size for 28	Inhibit message on image exit
STSSM_INHIB_MSG	Mask	Mask for 28	Inhibit message on image exit
STSSV_FAC_NO	16	Position of 27:16	Facility number
STSSS_FAC_NO	12	Size of 27:16	Facility number
STSSM_FAC_NO	Mask	Mask for 27:16	Facility number
STSSV_CUST_DEF	27	Position for 27	Customer facility
STSSS_CUST_DEF	1	Size for 27	Customer facility
STSSM_CUST_DEF	1@27	Mask for 27	Customer facility
STSSV_MSG_NO	3	Position of 15:3	Message number
STSSS_MSG_NO	13	Size of 15:3	Message number
STSSM_MSG_NO	Mask	Mask for 15:3	Message number
STSSV_FAC_SP	15	Position of 15	Facility-specific
STSSS_FAC_SP	1	Size for 15	Facility-specific
STSSM_FAC_SP	1@15	Mask for 15	Facility-specific
STSSV_CODE	3	Position of 14:3	Message code
STSSS_CODE	12	Size of 14:3	Message code

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Conditions

8.1 Condition Values

Table 8–2 (Cont.) Value Symbols for the Condition Value Longword

Symbol	Value	Meaning	Field
STSSM_CODE	Mask	Mask for 14:3	Message code
STSSV_SEVERITY	0	Position of 2:0	Severity
STSSS_SEVERITY	3	Size of 2:0	Severity
STSSM_SEVERITY	7	Mask for 2:0	Severity
STSSV_SUCCESS	0	Position of 0	Success
STSSS_SUCCESS	1	Size of 0	Success
STSSM_SUCCESS	1	Mask for 0	Success

8.1.1 Interpretation of Severity Codes

A standard procedure must consider all possible severity codes (0–4) of a condition value. Table 8–3 lists the interpretation of severity codes 0 through 4.

Table 8–3 Interpretation of Severity Codes

Severity Code	Meaning
0	Indicates a warning. This code is used whenever a procedure produces output, but the output produced might not be what the user expected (for example, a compiler modification of a source program).
1	Indicates that the procedure generating the condition value completed successfully, as expected.
2	Indicates that an error has occurred but the procedure did produce output. Execution can continue, but the results produced by the component generating the condition value are not all correct.
3	Indicates that the procedure generating the condition value completed successfully but has some parenthetical information to be included in a message if the condition is signaled.
4	Indicates that a severe error occurred and the component generating the condition value was unable to produce output.

When designing a procedure, you should base the choice of severity code for its condition values on the following default interpretations:

- The calling program typically performs a low-bit test, so it treats warnings, errors, and severe errors as failures, and treats success and information as successes.
- If the condition value is signaled (see Section 8.4.3), the default handler treats severe errors as reason to terminate and treats all the others as the basis for continuation.
- When the program image exits, the command interpreter by default treats errors and severe errors as the basis for stopping the job, and treats warnings, information, and successes as the basis for continuation.

The following table summarizes the action default decisions of the severity conditions:

Severity	Routine	Signal	Default at Program Exit
Success	Normal	Continue	Continue
Information	Normal	Continue	Continue
Warning	Failure	Continue	Continue
Error	Failure	Continue	Stop job
Severe error	Failure	Exit	Stop job

The default for signaled messages is to output a message with the SYSSOUTPUT system service. In addition, for severities other than success (STSSK_SUCCESS), a copy of the message is made on SYSSERROR. At program exit, success and information completion values do not generate messages; however, warning, error, and severe error condition values do generate messages to SYSSOUTPUT and SYSSERROR unless bit <28> (STSSV_INHIB_MSG) is set.

Unless there is a good basis for another choice, a procedure should use success or severe error as its severity code for each condition value.

8.1.2 Use of Condition Values

OpenVMS software components return condition values when they complete execution. When a severity code in the range of 0 through 4 is generated, the status code describes the nature of the problem. This value can be tested to change the flow of control of a procedure, can be used to generate a message, or both.

User procedures can also generate condition values to be examined by other procedures and by the command interpreter. User-generated condition values should have bits <27> and <15> set so they do not conflict with values generated by Hewlett-Packard.

8.2 Condition Handlers

To handle hardware- or software-detected exceptions, the OpenVMS Condition Handling Facility (CHF) allows you to specify a condition handler procedure to be called when an exception condition occurs.

An active procedure can establish a condition handler to be associated with it. When an event occurs that is to be treated using the Condition Handling Facility, the procedure detecting the event signals the event by calling the facility and passing a condition value that describes the condition. This condition value has the format and interpretation described in Section 8.1. All hardware exceptions are signaled.

When a condition is signaled, the Condition Handling Facility looks for a condition handler associated with the current procedure's stack frame. If a handler is found, it is entered. If a handler is not associated with the current procedure, the immediately preceding stack frame is examined. Again, if a handler is found, it is entered. If a handler is not found, the search of previous stack frames continues until the default condition handler established by the system is reached or until the stack runs out.

The default condition handler prints messages, indicated by the signal argument list, by calling the put message (SYSSPUTMSG) system service, followed by an optional symbolic stack traceback. Success conditions with STSSK_SUCCESS result in messages to SYSSOUTPUT only. All other conditions, including

OpenVMS Conditions

8.2 Condition Handlers

informational messages (STSSK_INFO), produce messages on SYSS\$OUTPUT and SYSS\$ERROR.

For example, if a procedure needs to keep track of the occurrence of the floating-point underflow exception, it can establish a condition handler to examine the condition value passed when the handler is invoked. Then, when the floating-point underflow exception occurs, the condition handler is entered and logs the condition. The handler returns to the instruction immediately following the instruction that was executing when the condition was reported by the hardware. On a VAX or Intel Itanium processor, this instruction is the one immediately following the instruction that caused the underflow; on an Alpha processor, this instruction might occur later.

If floating-point operations occur in many procedures of a program, the condition handler can be associated with the program's main procedure. When the condition is signaled, successive stack frames are searched until the stack frame for the main procedure is found, at which time the handler is entered. If a user program has not associated a condition handler with any of the procedures that are active at the time of the signal, successive stack frames are searched until the frame for the system program invoking the user program is reached. A default condition handler that prints an error message is then entered.

8.3 Condition Handler Options

Each procedure activation potentially has a single condition handler associated with it. This condition handler is entered whenever any condition is signaled within that procedure. (It can also be entered as a result of signals within active procedures called by the procedure.) Each signal includes a condition value (see Section 8.1) that describes the condition that caused the signal. When the condition handler is entered, examine the condition value to determine the cause of the signal. After the handler either processes the condition or ignores it, it can take one of the following actions:

- Return to the instruction immediately following the signal. Note that such a return is not always possible.
- Resignal the same or a modified condition value. A new search for a condition handler begins with the immediately preceding stack frame.
- Signal a different condition.
- Unwind the stack.
- On OpenVMS Alpha or I64, perform a nonlocal GOTO operation (see Section 8.4) that transfers control from one procedure invocation and continues execution in a prior one.

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

The OpenVMS Condition Handling Facility (CHF) provides functions to perform the following operations:

- Establish a condition handler.
A condition handler is associated with a procedure in various ways, depending on the language in which the procedure is written. Some languages provide specific syntax for defining a handler and its possible actions; others allow dynamic specification of a routine to act as a handler.
- On VAX systems, revert to the caller's handling.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

If a condition handler has been established on a VAX system, you can remove it.

- Enable or disable certain arithmetic exceptions.

The software can enable or disable the following hardware exceptions: floating-point underflow, integer overflow, and decimal overflow. No signal occurs when the exception is disabled.

On VAX systems, exceptions are enabled or disabled dynamically at every procedure entry or by directly manipulating the processor status longword.

On Alpha or Itanium systems, exceptions are enabled or disabled statically during compilation; this is reflected in the code that is compiled.

- Signal a condition.

Signaling a condition initiates the search for an established condition handler.

- Unwind the stack.

Upon exiting from a condition handler, it is possible to remove one or more frames that occur before the signal from the stack. During the unwinding operation, the stack is scanned; if a condition handler is associated with a frame, the handler is entered before the frame is removed. Unwinding the stack allows a procedure to perform application-specific cleanup operations before exiting.

- On Alpha or I64 systems, perform a nonlocal **GOTO unwind**.

A GOTO unwind operation is a transfer of control that leaves one procedure invocation and continues execution in a prior (currently active) procedure. This unified GOTO operation gives unterminated procedure invocations the opportunity to clean up in an orderly way.

8.4.1 Establishing a Condition Handler

On VAX systems, the association of a handler with a procedure invocation is dynamic and can be changed or reverted to the caller's handler during execution, but this is not supported for languages that implicitly provide their own handlers.

Each procedure activation can have an associated condition handler, using the first longword in its stack frame. Initially, the first longword (longword 0) contains the value 0, indicating no handler. You establish a handler by moving the address of the handler's procedure entry point mask to the establisher's stack frame.

On VAX systems, the following code establishes a condition handler:

```
MOVAB handler_entry_point,0(FP)
```

On Alpha or I64 systems, the association of a handler with a procedure is static and must be specified at the time a procedure is compiled (or assembled). However, some languages that lack their own exception-handling syntax can support emulation of dynamically specified handlers by means of built-in routines.

Each procedure, other than a null frame procedure, can have a condition handler potentially associated with it, which is identified by the HANDLER_VALID, STACK_HANDLER, or REG_HANDLER fields of the associated procedure descriptor on an Alpha system, or the handler field in the associated unwind information block on an I64 system. You establish a handler by including the procedure value of the handler procedure in that field. (See Sections 3.4.1, 3.4.4, and A.4.1.)

OpenVMS Conditions

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

In addition, the OpenVMS operating system on all processors provides three statically allocated exception vectors for each access mode of a process. These vectors are available to declare condition handlers that take precedence over any handlers declared at the procedure level. For example, the vectors are used to allow a debugger to monitor all exceptions and for the system to establish a last-chance handler. Because these handlers do not obey the procedure nesting rules, do not use them with modular code. Instead, use frame-based handlers.

8.4.2 Reverting to the Caller's Handling

On VAX systems, reverting to the caller's handling deletes the condition handler associated with the current procedure activation. You do this by clearing the handler address in the stack frame.

On VAX systems, the code to revert to the caller's handling is as follows:

```
CLRL 0(FP)
```

On Alpha and I64 systems, there is no means to revert to a caller's handler (unless a language provides emulation of dynamically specified handlers).

8.4.3 Signaling a Condition

The signal operation is the method for indicating the occurrence of an exception condition. To initiate a signal and allow execution to continue after handling the condition, a program calls the LIB\$SIGNAL procedure. To initiate a signal but not allow execution to continue at the point of initiation, a program calls the LIB\$STOP procedure. The format of the LIB\$SIGNAL and LIB\$STOP calls are defined as follows:

```
LIB$SIGNAL(condition-value, argn...)
```

```
LIB$STOP(condition-value, argn...)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
condition-value	condition	longword	read	by value
argn	integer	quadword	read	by value

Arguments:

condition-value

An OpenVMS condition value.

argn

Zero or more integer arguments that become the additional arguments of a signal argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.1)

Function Value Returned:

None.

In both cases, the **condition-value** argument indicates the condition that is signaled. However, LIB\$STOP sets the severity of the **condition-value** argument to be a severe error. The remaining arguments describe the details of the exception. These are the same arguments used to issue a system message.

Unlike most calls, LIB\$SIGNAL and LIB\$STOP preserve all registers. Therefore, a debugger can insert a call to LIB\$SIGNAL to display the entire state of the process at the time of the exception. Use of LIB\$ routines also allows signals to be coded in an assembler language without changing the register usage. This feature of preserving all registers is useful for debugging checks and for

gathering statistics. Hardware and system service exceptions behave like calls to LIB\$SIGNAL.

8.4.4 Signaling a Condition Using GENTRAP (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

Alpha and I64 systems each have a special instruction that provides an efficient means to raise a hardware-like exception. These are intended for use especially in low levels of the operating system or in the bootpath sequence when only a limited execution environment is available. Compiled code can also use these instructions to raise common generic exceptions more simply and compactly than by executing a complete LIB\$SIGNAL procedure call.

In each case, the special instruction takes an exception code (**excp_code**) parameter that is passed in a general register; that parameter specifies the particular exception to be raised.

On Alpha systems, the GENTRAP PALcall instruction is used. The **excp_code** parameter is passed in R16. Interpretation of that parameter is described below.

On I64 systems, the BREAK instruction with an immediate operand of 100001 (hex) is used to implement a GENTRAP operation. The **excp_code** parameter is passed in R17. Interpretation of that parameter is described below.

If the **excp_code** value is one of the small integers shown in the first column of Table 8–4, then that value is mapped to a corresponding OpenVMS condition code as shown in the third (Symbol) column of the Table. If the value is negative but not one of the values shown in Table 8–4, then SSS_GENTRAP is raised with the unmapped value included in the signal vector as the first and only qualifier value. Otherwise, a positive value is used directly to raise an exception using that value as the condition value. Note that there is no means to associate any parameters with an exception raised by GENTRAP.

For more information on the Alpha GENTRAP PALcall, see the *Alpha Architecture Reference Manual*. For more information on the BREAK instruction on the Intel Itanium processors, see the *Intel IA-64 Architecture Software Developer's Manual*. For more information on Itanium Conventions Defined Codes see Section 8.4.5.

Table 8–4 Exception Codes and Symbols for the GENTRAP Parameter

OpenVMS GENTRAP excp_code Parameter	Itanium Conventions Defined Codes (High Bits 000)	Symbol	Meaning
-1	2	SS\$_INTOVF	Integer overflow
-2	1	SS\$_INTDIV	Integer divide by zero
-3		SS\$_FLTTOVF	Floating overflow
-4		SS\$_FLTDIV	Floating divide by zero
-5		SS\$_FLTUND	Floating underflow
-6		SS\$_FLTINV	Floating invalid operand
-7		SS\$_FLTINE	Floating inexact result
-8	6	SS\$_DECOVF	Decimal overflow

(continued on next page)

OpenVMS Conditions

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

Table 8–4 (Cont.) Exception Codes and Symbols for the GENTRAP Parameter

OpenVMS GENTRAP excp_code Parameter	Itanium Conventions Defined Codes (High Bits 000)	Symbol	Meaning
-9	7	SS\$_DECDIV	Decimal divide by zero
-10	8, 9, 10	SS\$_DECINV	Decimal invalid operand
-11	0	SS\$_ROPRAND	Reserved operand
-12		SS\$_ASSERTERR	Assertion error
-13	4	SS\$_NULPTRERR	Null pointer error
-14	11	SS\$_STKOVF	Stack overflow
-15		SS\$_STRLENERR	String length error
-16		SS\$_SUBSTRERR	Substring error
-17		SS\$_RANGEERR	Range error
-18	3	SS\$_SUBRNG	Subscript range error
-19		SS\$_SUBRNG1	Subscript 1 range error
-20		SS\$_SUBRNG2	Subscript 2 range error
-21		SS\$_SUBRNG3	Subscript 3 range error
-22		SS\$_SUBRNG4	Subscript 4 range error
-23		SS\$_SUBRNG5	Subscript 5 range error
-24		SS\$_SUBRNG6	Subscript 6 range error
-25		SS\$_SUBRNG7	Subscript 7 range error
	5	SS\$_UNALIGNED	Unaligned parameter

8.4.5 Signaling a Condition Using BREAK (I64 Only)

In accordance with the Itanium software conventions, OpenVMS I64 partitions the 21-bit immediate operand values that can occur in a BREAK instruction into the following groups:

- Immediate operands whose three highest-order bits are 000, which is the range 000000 through 03FFFFFF (hex). These values are reserved for architected software interrupt codes. The defined software interrupt codes are listed in the second column of Table 8–4. Immediate operands in this range, but not listed in the table, are reserved for future use.

A code shown in the second column of Table 8–4 is mapped to a corresponding OpenVMS condition code as shown in the third (Symbol) column, which is then raised. (This handling is similar to the handling of a negative **excp_code** parameter for GENTRAP as described in Section 8.4.4.)

- Immediate operands whose three highest-order bits are 001, which is the range 040000 (hex) through 07FFFFFF (hex).
Operands in this range are reserved for use by applications. If one of these occurs, then SS\$_BREAK_APPL is raised with the operand value included as the first (and only) additional argument in the signal argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.1).
- Immediate operands whose two highest-order bits are 01, which is the range 080000 (hex) through 0FFFFFFF (hex).

OpenVMS Conditions

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

Operands in this range are reserved for use by debuggers. OpenVMS debugger software uses only immediate operands in the range 080000 (hex) through 0BFFFF (hex). Other debugger software is encouraged, but not required, to use immediate operands in the range 0C0000 (hex) through 0FFFFFF (hex).

- Immediate operands whose highest-order bit is 1, which is the range 100000 (hex) through 1FFFFFF (hex).

Operands in this range are reserved for use within OpenVMS. The value 100001, however, is used to implement an Alpha-compatible GENTRAP operation as described in Section 8.4.4.

For more information on the Itanium software conventions, see the *Itanium® Software Conventions and Runtime Architecture Guide*.

8.4.6 Condition Handler Search

The signal procedure examines the two exception vectors first, then examines a system-defined maximum number of previous stack frames, and, if necessary, examines the last-chance exception vector. The exception vectors have three address locations per access mode.

As part of image startup, the system declares a default last-chance handler. This handler is used as a last resort when the normal handlers are not performing correctly. The debugger can replace the default system last-chance handler with its own.

On Alpha and I64 systems, note that the default catchall handler in user mode can be a list of handlers and is not in conflict with this standard.

On OpenVMS systems, in some frame before the call to the main program, the system establishes a default catchall condition handler that issues system messages. In a subsequent frame before the call to the main program, the system usually establishes a traceback handler. These system-supplied condition handlers use the **condition-value** argument to get the message and then use the remainder of the argument list to format and output the message through the SYS\$PUTMSG system service.

If the severity field of the **condition-value** argument (bits <2:0>) does not indicate a severe error (that is, a value of 4), these default condition handlers return with SSS_CONTINUE. If the severity is a severe error, these default handlers exit the program image with the condition value as the final image status.

The stack search ends when the old frame address is 0 or is not accessible, or when a system-defined maximum number of frames have been examined. If a condition handler is not found, or if all handlers return with a SSS_RESIGNAL or SSS_RESIGNAL64, then the vectored last-chance handler is called.

If a handler returns SSS_CONTINUE or SSS_CONTINUE64, and LIB\$STOP was not called, control returns to the signaler. Otherwise, LIB\$STOP issues a message indicating that an attempt was made to continue from a noncontinuable exception and exits with the condition value as the final image status.

Figure 8-2 lists all combinations of interaction between condition handler actions, default condition handlers, types of signals, and calls to signal or stop. In this figure, “Cannot Continue” indicates an error that results in the following message:

```
IMPROPERLY HANDLED CONDITION, ATTEMPT TO CONTINUE FROM STOP.
```

OpenVMS Conditions

8.4 Operations Involving Condition Handlers

Figure 8–2 Interaction Between Handlers and Default Handlers

Call to:	Signaled Condition Severity <2:0>	Default Handler Gets Control	Handler Specifies Continue	Handler Specifies UNWIND	No Handler Is Found (Stack Bad)
LIB\$SIGNAL or Hardware Exception	<4	Condition Message RET	RET	UNWIND	Call Last-Chance Handler EXIT
	=4	Condition Message EXIT	RET	UNWIND	Call Last-Chance Handler EXIT
LIB\$STOP	Force (=4)	Condition Message EXIT	"Cannot Continue" EXIT	UNWIND	Call Last-Chance Handler EXIT

ZK-4247-GE

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

This section describes the properties of condition handlers for all OpenVMS environments.

8.5.1 Condition Handler Parameters and Invocation

If a condition handler is found on a software-detected exception, the handler is called as follows:

```
(*handler)(signal_args, mechanism_args)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
signal_args	signal vector	structure	modify	by reference
mechanism_args	mechanism	structure	modify	by reference

Arguments:

signal_args

A 32-bit signal argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.1)

mechanism_args

A mechanism argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.2)

Function Value Returned:

One of the following status codes: `SS$CONTINUE`, `SS$RESIGNAL`, `SS$CONTINUE64`, `SS$RESIGNAL64`. This value is used by the Condition Handling Facility to determine how to proceed next in processing the condition. (See Section 8.6.)

8.5.1.1 Signal Argument Vector

There are two forms of signal argument vector (or signal vector for short): one for use with 32-bit addresses and one for use with 64-bit addresses. The two forms are compatible in that the forms can be distinguished dynamically at run time and, except for the size and offset of fields, are identical in content and interpretation.

The 32-bit signal argument vectors are used on all OpenVMS systems. When used on Alpha or I64 systems, 32-bit signal argument vectors provide full compatibility with their use on VAX systems. The 64-bit signal argument vectors are used only on Alpha and I64 systems—they have no counterpart and are not recognized on VAX systems.

When a condition handler is called by the Condition Handling Facility (CHF) on Alpha or I64 systems, both forms of signal argument vector are available. The first argument is always a reference to a 32-bit form of signal argument vector. A handler that chooses to operate using the 64-bit form must obtain the address of the corresponding 64-bit signal argument vector from the CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG64_ADDR field of the mechanism argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.2.2 and Section 8.5.1.2.3).

Both forms of signal vector include a length field, a condition value, zero or more parameters that further qualify the condition value, and finally a processor program counter (PC) and program status (PS). For hardware-detected exceptions, the condition value indicates which exception was taken. The PC value gives the address of the instruction that caused the exception or the address of the next instruction, depending on whether the exception was a fault or a trap. For software-detected conditions, the condition value and any associated parameters are copies of the parameters to the call of LIB\$SIGNAL or LIB\$STOP that initiated exception handling, while the PC is the return address to the caller of that routine.

Note that bits <2:0> of a condition value indicate severity and not what condition is being signaled. Therefore, a handler should examine only the condition identification, that is, condition value bits <27:3>, to determine the cause of the exception. The setting of severity bits <2:0> may vary from time to time even for the same condition. In fact, some handlers might only change the severity of a condition in the signal vector and resignal.

Generally, a handler may validly modify any field of a signal argument vector except for the CHF\$SIGNAL_ARGS length field or, in the case of a 64-bit signal vector, the CHF64\$SIGNAL64 field. In particular, a modified signal vector is passed to a subsequent handler if the current handler completes by resignaling. (If the length is modified, the modification is ignored; CHF restores the original length.) It is invalid for a handler to modify both forms of signal argument vector—the effect of doing so is undefined.

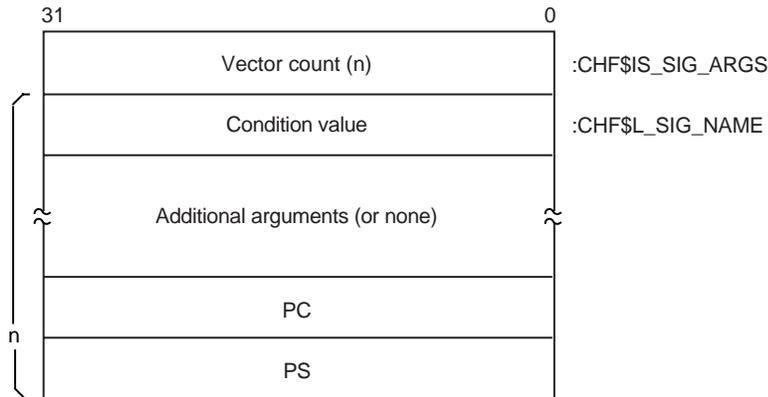
The remainder of this section is organized as follows. First, the 32-bit form of signal argument vector is described. Second, the 64-bit form of signal argument is described. Finally, the relationship between the two forms is discussed.

Figure 8–3 shows the format of the 32-bit form of signal argument vector. The CHF\$SIGNAL_ARGS longword contains the argument vector count, which is the number of remaining longwords in the vector. The CHF\$SIGNAL_NAME longword contains the condition value. Next are 0 or more longwords that contain additional parameters appropriate to the condition. The remaining two longwords contain the PC and PS values.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

Figure 8–3 Signal Argument Vector — 32-Bit Format



ZK-4643A-GE

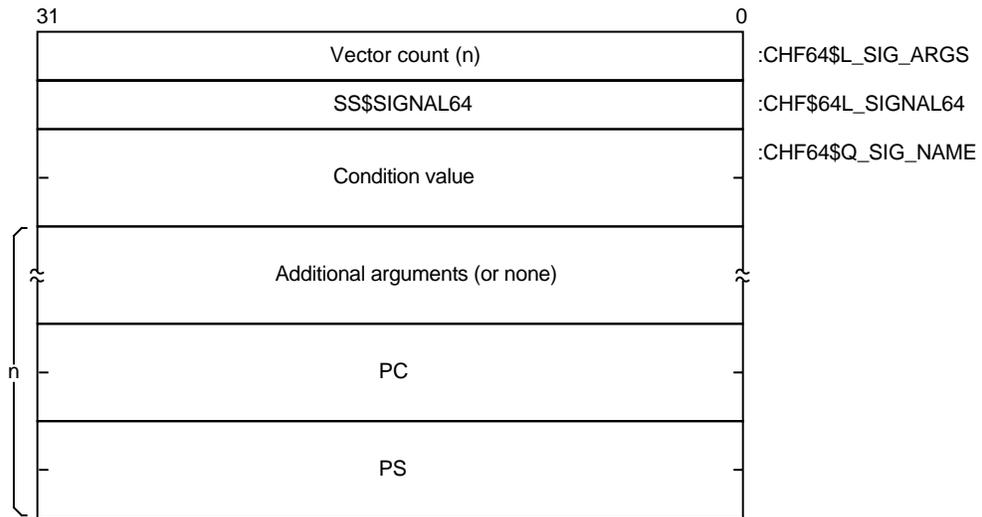
On VAX systems, the value used for the PS is the contents of the VAX processor status longword (PSL).

On Alpha systems, the value used for the PS is the low half of the Alpha processor status register. Furthermore, CHF\$IS_SIG_ARGS and CHF\$IS_SIG_NAME are aliases for CHF\$L_SIG_ARGS and CHF\$L_SIG_NAME, respectively.

On I64 systems, the value used for the PS is the low half of a fabricated Alpha-like processor status register that contains IPL, CM, CSW, and IP fields.

Figure 8–4 shows the format of the 64-bit form of signal argument vector. The address of this form of signal argument is available only from the CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG64_ADDR field of the mechanism argument vector (see Section 8.5.1.2.2 and Section 8.5.1.2.3). The CHF64\$L_SIG_ARGS field is a longword that contains the number of remaining quadwords in the vector (following the CHF64\$L_SIGNAL64 field). The CHF64\$L_SIGNAL64 longword contains a special code named SSS_SIGNAL64 whose value is key to distinguishing between a 32-bit and 64-bit form of signal argument vector. The CHF64\$Q_SIG_NAME quadword contains a sign-extended condition value. Next are zero or more quadwords that contain additional parameters appropriate to the condition. The remaining two quadwords contain the Alpha or I64 PC and PS values.

Figure 8–4 Signal Argument Vector — 64-Bit Format



ZK-7685A-GE

When a handler is called, the 32-bit and 64-bit signal argument vectors are closely related as follows:

- The value of the length field in the 64-bit form (the number of quadwords following the CHF64\$L_SIGNAL64 field) is equal to the value of the length field in the 32-bit form (the number of longwords following the CHF\$L_SIG_ARGS field).
- The condition value, any related arguments, and the PC and PS values in the 32-bit form are the same as the values in the 64-bit form truncated to 32 bits.

Note that given a 64-bit signal vector, it is possible to create the corresponding 32-bit signal vector by fetching the low-order longword of each quadword of the 64-bit vector and packing the results together contiguously into a 32-bit vector; other than using the length, no interpretation of the contents is required.

Given the address of a signal argument vector that might be either the 32-bit or 64-bit form, either of the following equivalent tests may be used to distinguish which one is present:

- Assuming a 32-bit form, compare the contents of the CHF\$L_SIG_NAME field (equivalently CHF64\$L_SIGNAL64) with the value SS\$_SIGNAL64. If equal, then the 64-bit form is present; otherwise, the 32-bit form is present.
- Assuming a 64-bit form, compare the contents of the CHF64\$L_SIGNAL64 field with the value SS\$_SIGNAL64. If equal, then the 64-bit form is present; otherwise, the 32-bit form is present.

8.5.1.2 Mechanism Argument Vector

The mechanism argument vector for the argument **mechanism_args** contains information about the machine state when an exception occurs or when a condition is signaled. Therefore, the mechanism argument vector is highly specific to the underlying machine architecture.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

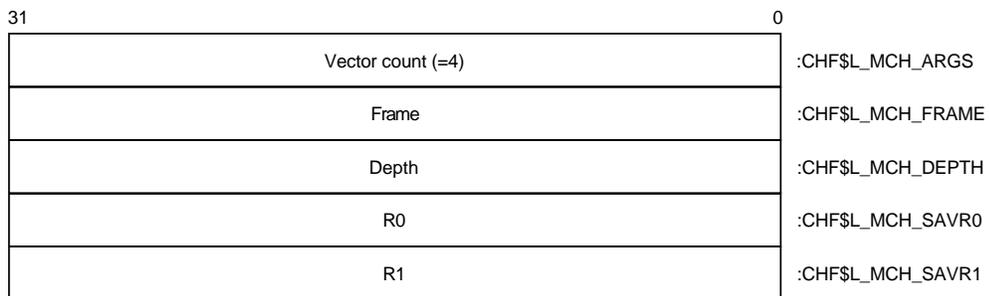
8.5.1.2.1 VAX Mechanism Vector Format On VAX systems, the mechanism format for the argument vectors is shown in Figure 8–5. The first longword contains the argument vector count, which is the number of remaining longwords in the vector. The frame longword contains the contents of the FP in the establisher’s context. If the restrictions described in Section 8.5.3.1 are met, the frame can be used as a base from which to access the local storage of the establisher.

The depth longword is a positive count of the number of procedure-activation stack frames between the frame in which the exception occurred and the frame depth that established the handler being called. (For more information about depth, see Section 8.5.1.3.)

The CHF\$L_MCH_SAVR0 and CHF\$L_MCH_SAVR1 longwords save the state of the R0 and R1 registers, respectively, at the time of the call to LIB\$SSIGNAL or LIB\$SSTOP. If not modified by a handler during CHF processing, these values will become the values of those registers after completion of CHF processing (either by continuation or by unwinding). These two fields may be modified by a handler to establish different values to be used at CHF completion. Note that the contents of other registers are not available in the mechanism vector and can only be accessed by analysis of the stack. (See Section 8.7.1.)

CHF\$L_MCH_SAVR0 and CHF\$L_MCH_SAVR1 are the only fields of a VAX mechanism vector that can be validly modified by a handler. The effect of any other modification is undefined.

Figure 8–5 VAX Mechanism Vector Format



ZK-7686A-GE

If the VAX vector hardware or emulator option is in use, then for hardware-detected exceptions, the vector state is implicitly saved before any condition handler is entered and restored after the condition handler returns. (Save and restore is not required for exceptions initiated by calls to LIB\$SSIGNAL or LIB\$SSTOP, because there can be no useful vector state at the time of such calls in accordance with the rules for vector register usage in Section 2.1.2.) Thus, a condition handler can make use of the system vector facilities in the same manner as mainline code.

The VAX saved vector state is not directly available to a condition handler. A condition handler that needs to manipulate the vector state to carry out agreements with its callers can call the SYS\$RESTORE_VP_STATE service. This service restores the saved state to the vector registers (whether hardware or emulated) and cancels any subsequent restore. The vector state can then be manipulated directly in the normal manner by means of vector instructions. (This service is normally of interest only during processing for an unwind condition.)

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

8.5.1.2.2 Alpha Mechanism Vector Format On Alpha systems, the 64-bit-wide mechanism array is the argument mechanism in the handler call. The array is shown in Figure 8–6. Table 8–5 lists and describes the fields.

Note

The following table lists variable name equivalence for hp OpenVMS Version I64-BL and earlier and hp OpenVMS Version I64-BL and later. Although hp OpenVMS Version I64-BL and later offer backward compatibility, we recommend that you use the new names for that version of the operating system.

hp OpenVMS Version I64-BL and earlier	hp OpenVMS Version I64-BL and later
MCH_SAVR0	MCH_RETVAL
MCH_SAVR1	MCH_RETVAL2
MCH_SAVF0	MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT
MCH_SAVF1	MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT

The CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL_x and CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_x_FLOAT quadwords save the state of the nonpreserved general and floating registers, respectively, at the time of the call to LIB\$SIGNAL or LIB\$STOP. If not modified by a handler during CHF processing, these values will become the values of those registers after completion of CHF processing (either by continuation or by unwinding). These fields may be modified by a handler to establish different values to be used at CHF completion.

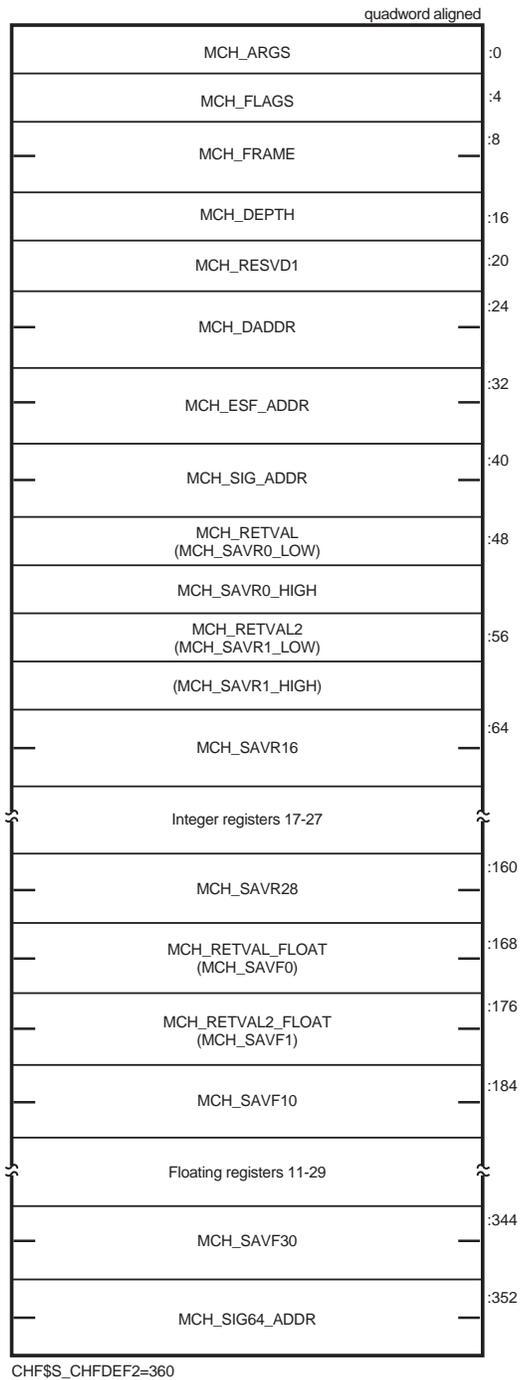
The CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL_x and CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_x_FLOAT fields are the only fields of an Alpha mechanism vector that can be validly modified by a handler. The effect of any other modification is undefined. (See also Section 8.7.2.) Note that the contents of the normally preserved registers are not available in the mechanism vector and can only be accessed by analysis of the stack. (See Section 8.7.1.)

The recommended method for modifying return values in a procedure's invocation context (CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL, CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL2, CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT, and CHF\$IH_RETVAL2_FLOAT) is by using routine SY\$SET_RETURN_VALUE (see Section 8.7.2). The recommended method for modifying all other registers in a procedure's invocation context is by using routine LIB\$PUT_INVO_REGISTERS (Section 3.5.3.6).

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

Figure 8–6 Alpha Mechanism Vector Format



OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

Table 8–5 Contents of the Alpha Argument Mechanism Array (MECH)

Field Name	Contents
CHFSIS_MCH_ARGS	Count of quadwords in this array starting from the next quadword, CHF\$PH_MCH_FRAME (not counting the first quadword that contains this longword). This value is always 44.
CHFSIS_MCH_FLAGS	Flag bits <31:0> for related argument-mechanism information defined as follows: CHF\$V_FPREGS_VALID Bit 0. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation and the floating-point registers stored in this structure are valid. If this bit is clear, the process has not yet performed any floating-point operations and the values in the floating-point register slots in this structure are unpredictable.
CHF\$PH_MCH_FRAME	Contains the frame pointer in the procedure context of the establisher.
CHFSIS_MCH_DEPTH	Positive count of the number of procedure activation stack frames between the frame in which the exception occurred and the frame depth that established the handler being called (see Section 8.5.1.3).
CHFSIS_MCH_RESVD1	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard.
CHF\$PH_MCH_DADDR	Address of the handler data quadword if the exception handler data field is present (as indicated by PDSCSV_HANDLER_DATA_VALID); otherwise, contains 0.
CHF\$PH_MCH_ESF_ADDR	Address of the exception stack frame (see the <i>Alpha Architecture Reference Manual</i>).
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG_ADDR	Address of the 32-bit form of signal array. This array is a 32-bit wide (longword) array. This is the same array that is passed to a handler as the signal argument vector.
CHFSIH_MCH_RETVAL	Contains a copy of R0 at the time of the exception.
CHFSIH_MCH_RETVAL2	Contains a copy of R1 at the time of the exception.
CHFSIH_MCH_SAVR nn	Contain copies of the saved integer registers at the time of the exception. The following registers are saved: R16 through R28. Registers R2 through R15 are implicitly saved in the call stack.
CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT	Contains a copy of F0 at the time of the exception, or is unpredictable as described for the field CHFSIS_MCH_FLAGS.
CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT	Contains a copy of F1 at the time of the exception, or is unpredictable as described for the field CHFSIS_MCH_FLAGS.
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF nn	Contain copies of the saved floating-point registers at the time of the exception, or are unpredictable as described at field CHFSIS_MCH_FLAGS. If the floating-point register fields are valid, the following registers are saved: F10 through F30. Registers F2 through F9 are implicitly saved in the call
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG64_ADDR	Address of the 64-bit form of signal array. This array is a 64-bit wide (quadword) array.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

8.5.1.2.3 I64 Mechanism Vector Format On I64 systems, the 64-bit-wide mechanism array is the argument mechanism in the handler call. The array is shown in Figure 8–7.

The CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL and CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL2 quadwords save the state of registers R8 and R9 at the time of the call to LIB\$SIGNAL or LIB\$STOP. The CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT, CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT, and CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF nn octawords save the state of the floating-point registers at the time of the call to LIB\$SIGNAL or LIB\$STOP. If not modified by a handler during CHF processing (as described below), these values will become the values of those registers after completion of CHF processing (either by continuation or by unwinding).

The only supported method for modifying return values in a procedure's invocation context (CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL, CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL2, CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT, CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT) is by using routine SYS\$SET_RETURN_VALUE (see Section 8.7.2). The only supported method for modifying all other registers in a procedure invocation context is by using routine LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS (Section 4.8.3.10).

Figure 8–7 I64 Mechanism Vector Format

octaword aligned

CHF\$IS_MCH_ARGS	:0
CHF\$IS_MCH_FLAGS	:4
CHF\$PH_MCH_FRAME	:8
CHF\$IS_MCH_DEPTH	:16
CHF\$IS_MCH_RESVD1	:20
CHF\$PH_MCH_DADDR	:24
CHF\$PH_MCH_ESF_ADDR	:32
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG_ADDR	:40
CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL	:48
CHF\$IH_MCH_RETVAL2	:56
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG64_ADDR	:64
CHF\$PH_MCH_SAVF32_SAVF127	:72
CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT	:80
CHF\$FH_MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT	:96
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF2	:112
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF5	:120
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF12	:176
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF31	:184
CHF\$IH_MCH_SAVB1	:496
CHF\$IH_MCH_SAVB5	:528
CHF\$IH_MCH_AR_LC	:536
CHF\$IH_MCH_AR_EC	:544
CHF\$PH_MCH_OSSD	:552
CHF\$PH_MCH_INVO_HANDLE	:560
CHF\$PH_MCH_UWR_START	:568

CHF\$\$_CHFDEF2=576

VM-1082A-AI

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

Table 8–6 Contents of the I64 Argument Mechanism Array (MECH)

Field Name	Contents				
CHF\$IS_MCH_ARGS	Count of quadwords in this array starting from the next quadword, CHF\$PH_MCH_FRAME (not counting the first quadword that contains this longword). This value is 71 if CHF\$V_FPREGS_VALID is clear, and 263 if CHF\$V_FPREGS_VALID is set.				
CHF\$IS_MCH_FLAGS	Flag bits <31:0> for related argument-mechanism information defined as follows: <table border="0" style="margin-left: 2em;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">CHF\$V_FREGS_VALID</td> <td>Bit 0. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F2-F31 and the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields of this structure are valid. When this bit is clear, the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields are undefined.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">CHF\$V_FPREGS2_VALID</td> <td>Bit 1. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F32-F127 and the floating-point registers stored in the extension to this structure are valid. If this bit is clear, the process has not yet performed any floating-point operations in registers F32-F127, and the pointer to the extension area (CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF32_SAVF127) will be zero.</td> </tr> </table>	CHF\$V_FREGS_VALID	Bit 0. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F2-F31 and the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields of this structure are valid. When this bit is clear, the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields are undefined.	CHF\$V_FPREGS2_VALID	Bit 1. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F32-F127 and the floating-point registers stored in the extension to this structure are valid. If this bit is clear, the process has not yet performed any floating-point operations in registers F32-F127, and the pointer to the extension area (CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF32_SAVF127) will be zero.
CHF\$V_FREGS_VALID	Bit 0. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F2-F31 and the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields of this structure are valid. When this bit is clear, the contents of the CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVFnn fields are undefined.				
CHF\$V_FPREGS2_VALID	Bit 1. When set, the process has already performed a floating-point operation in registers F32-F127 and the floating-point registers stored in the extension to this structure are valid. If this bit is clear, the process has not yet performed any floating-point operations in registers F32-F127, and the pointer to the extension area (CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF32_SAVF127) will be zero.				
CHF\$PH_MCH_FRAME	Contains the Previous Stack Pointer, PSP, (the value of the SP at procedure entry) for the procedure context of the establisher (see Section 4.5.1.)				
CHF\$IS_MCH_DEPTH	Positive count of the number of procedure activation stack frames between the frame in which the exception occurred and the frame depth that established the handler being called (see Section 8.5.1.3).				
CHF\$IS_MCH_RESVD1	Reserved to Hewlett-Packard.				
CHF\$PH_MCH_DADDR	Address of the handler data quadword (start of the Language Specific Data area, LSDA, see Section A.4.1 and Section A.4.4) if the exception handler data field is present in the unwind information block (as indicated by OSSD\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID); otherwise, contains 0.				
CHF\$PH_MCH_ESF_ADDR	Address of the exception stack frame.				
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG_ADDR	Address of the 32-bit form of signal array. This array is a 32-bit wide (longword) array. This is the same array that is passed to a handler as the signal argument vector.				
CHF\$IS_MCH_RETVAL	Contains a copy of R8 at the time of the exception.				
CHF\$IS_MCH_RETVAL2	Contains a copy of R9 at the time of the exception.				

(continued on next page)

Table 8–6 (Cont.) Contents of the I64 Argument Mechanism Array (MECH)

Field Name	Contents
CHF\$PH_MCH_SIG64_ADDR	Address of the 64-bit form of signal array. This array is a 64-bit wide (quadword) array.
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF32_SAVF127	Address of the extension to the mechanism array that contains copies of F32-F127 at the time of the exception.
CHF\$IS_MCH_RETVAL_FLOAT	Contains a copy of F8 at the time of the exception.
CHF\$IS_MCH_RETVAL2_FLOAT	Contains a copy of F9 at the time of the exception.
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVF nn	Contain copies of floating-point registers F2-F5 and F12-F31. Registers F6-F7 and F10-F11 are implicitly saved in the exception frame.
CHF\$FH_MCH_SAVB nn	Contains copies of branch registers B1-B5 at the time of the exception.
CHF\$FH_MCH_AR_LC	Contains a copy of the Loop Count Register (AR65) at the time of the exception.
CHF\$FH_MCH_AR_EC	Contains a copy of the Epilog Count Register (AR66) at the time of the exception.
CHF\$PH_MCH_OSSD	Address of the operating system-specific data area.
CHF\$PH_MCH_INVO_HANDLE	Contains the invocation handle of the procedure context of the establisher (see Section 4.8.2.2)
.	
CHF\$PH_MCH_UWR_START	Address of the unwind region.

8.5.1.3 Mechanism Depth

For all argument mechanisms, the depth field has the value 0 for an exception that is handled by the procedure activation invoking the exception. The exception procedure contains the instruction that either causes the hardware exception or calls LIB\$SIGNAL. The depth field of the argument mechanism has positive values for procedure activations calling the one having the exception, for example, 1 for the immediate caller.

If a system service gives an exception, the immediate caller of the service is notified at depth = 1. The depth field has a value of –2 when the condition handler is established by the primary exception vector, a value of –1 when it is established by the secondary vector, and a value of –3 when it is established by the last-chance vector.

Given the same circumstances, the mechanism depth on any given processor type is not necessarily the same as the depth on a different processor type (that is, the depth on a VAX processor may differ from that on an Alpha or Intel Itanium processor, and so on) if any of the following are present:

- Condition dispatcher in the call stack
- Jacket frames, if there are any translated routines in the call stack
- Multiple active signals
- Compiler use of no frame procedures or inline code expansion of calls

OpenVMS Conditions

8.5 Properties of Condition Handlers

8.5.2 System Default Condition Handlers

If one of the default condition handlers established by the system is entered, the handler calls the `SY$PUTMSG` system service to interpret the signal argument list and to output the indicated information or error message. See the description of `SY$PUTMSG` in the *HP OpenVMS System Services Reference Manual* for the format of the signal argument list.

8.5.3 Coordinating the Handler and Establisher

This section describes the requirements for use of memory, exception synchronization, and continuation of the handler.

8.5.3.1 Use of Memory

Exceptions can be raised and unwind operations (which cause exception handlers to be called) can occur when the current value of one or more variables is in registers rather than in memory. Because of this, a handler, and any descendant procedure called directly or indirectly by a handler, must not access any variables except those explicitly passed to the procedure as arguments or those that exist in the normal scope of the procedure.

This rule can be violated for specific memory locations only by agreement between the handler and all procedures that might access those memory locations. A handler that makes such agreements does not conform to this standard.

8.5.3.2 Exception Synchronization (Alpha Only)

The Alpha hardware architecture allows instructions to complete in a different order than that in which they were issued, and for exceptions caused by an instruction to be raised after subsequently issued instructions have been completed.

Because of this, the state of the machine when a hardware exception occurs cannot be assumed with the same precision as it can be assumed on VAX or Intel Itanium processors unless such precision has been guaranteed by bounding the exception range with the appropriate insertion of `TRAPB` instructions.

The rules for bounding the exception range follow:

- If a procedure has an exception handler that does not simply reraise all arithmetic traps caused by code that is not contained directly within that procedure, the procedure must issue a `TRAPB` instruction before it establishes itself as the current procedure.
- If a procedure has an exception handler that does not simply reraise all arithmetic traps caused either by code that is not contained directly within that procedure or by any procedure that might have been called while that procedure was current, the procedure must issue a `TRAPB` instruction in the procedure epilogue while it is still the current procedure.
- If a procedure has an exception handler that is sensitive to the invocation depth, the procedure must issue a `TRAPB` instruction immediately before and after any call. Furthermore, the handler must be able to recognize exception PC values that represent either epilogue code in called procedures or `TRAPB` instructions immediately after a call, and adjust the depth appropriately (see Section 3.6.5).

These rules ensure that exceptions are detected in the intended context of the exception handler.

These rules do *not* ensure that all exceptions are detected while the procedure within which the exception-causing instruction was issued is current. For example, if a procedure without an exception handler is called by a procedure that has an exception handler not sensitive to invocation depth, an exception detected while that called procedure is current may have been caused by an instruction issued while the caller was the current procedure. This means the frame, designated by the exception-handling information, is the frame that was current when the exception was detected, not necessarily the frame that was current when the exception-causing instruction was issued.

8.5.3.3 Continuation from Exceptions (Alpha Only)

The Alpha architecture guarantees neither that instructions are completed in the same order in which they were fetched from memory nor that instruction execution is strictly sequential. Continuation is possible after some exceptions, but certain restrictions apply.

By definition, software-raised general exceptions are synchronous with the instruction stream and can have a well-defined continuation point. Therefore, a handler can request continuation from a software-raised exception. However, since compiler-generated code typically relies on error-free execution of previously executed code, continuing from a software-raised exception might produce unpredictable results and unreliable behavior unless the handler has explicitly fixed the cause of the exception so that it is transparent to subsequent code.

Hardware faults on Alpha processors follow the same rules as the strict interpretation of the VAX or Itanium rules. Loosely paraphrased, these rules state that if the offending exception is fixed, reexecution of the instruction (as determined from the supplied PC) will yield correct results. This does *not* imply that instructions following the faulting instruction have not been executed. Therefore, hardware faults can be viewed as similar to software-raised exceptions and can have well-defined continuation points.

Arithmetic traps cannot be restarted because all the information required for a restart is not available. The most straightforward and reliable way in which software can guarantee the ability to continue from this type of exception is by placing appropriate TRAPB instructions in the code stream. Although this technique does allow continuation, it must be used with extreme caution because of the negative effect on application performance.

8.6 Returning from a Condition Handler

Condition handlers are invoked by the OpenVMS Condition Handling Facility (CHF). Therefore, the return from the condition handler is to the CHF.

To continue from the instruction following the signal, the handler must return with a function value of either `SS$_CONTINUE` or `SS$_CONTINUE64` (both of which have bit <0> set). If, however, the condition is signaled with a call to `LIB$STOP`, the image exits. To resignal the condition, the condition handler returns with a function value of either `SS$_RESIGNAL` or `SS$_RESIGNAL64` (both of which have the bit <0> clear).

The difference between `SS$_CONTINUE` and `SS$_CONTINUE64`, and similarly between `SS$_RESIGNAL` and `SS$_RESIGNAL64`, is of significance only if the handler has made an alteration to the signal vector that is intended to be taken into account by the CHF. When `SS$_CONTINUE` or `SS$_RESIGNAL` is returned, then any modification to the 32-bit signal vector is propagated (in sign-extended form) to the corresponding position in the 64-bit vector. When `SS$_CONTINUE64`

OpenVMS Conditions

8.6 Returning from a Condition Handler

or `SS$_RESIGNAL64` is returned, any modification in the 64-bit signal vector is propagated (in truncated form) to the corresponding position in the 32-bit vector. If no modification has been made, then the two forms of continuation or resignal are equivalent.

The algorithm for detecting change is as follows:

- For `SS$_CONTINUE64` and `SS$_RESIGNAL64`, the 32-bit signal vector is simply derived again from the 64-bit signal vector. In particular, no hidden copy of the 64-bit signal vector is kept. It is not necessary to determine if there was a change or not—if there was, it is properly reflected in the 32-bit vector.
- For `SS$_CONTINUE` and `SS$_RESIGNAL`, let `SIGVEC32[I]` and `SIGVEC64[I]` be corresponding entries in the two vectors, for `I` from 1 to length. (Recall that the length[s] cannot be changed.) For each entry, do the following:

```
if SIGVEC32[I] /= SIGVEC64[I]<0,32>
then
    SIGVEC64[I] = sign-extend(SIGVEC32[I])
```

That is, if the 32-bit entry is still the same as the low-order 32 bits of the 64-bit entry, then it did not change and thus the 64-bit entry is not changed. Otherwise, update the 64-bit entry with the sign-extended contents of the 32-bit entry.

To alter the severity of the signal, the handler modifies the low-order three bits of the condition value longword in the **signal_args** vector and resignals. If the condition handler wants to alter the defined control bits of the signal, the handler modifies bits <31:28> of the condition value and resignals. To unwind, the handler calls `SY$$UNWIND` and then returns. In this case, the handler function value is ignored.

8.7 Request to Unwind from a Signal

To unwind, the handler or any procedure that it calls can make a call to `SY$$UNWIND`. The format is as follows:

```
SY$$UNWIND(depadr, new_PC)
```

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
depadr	integer	longword	read	by reference
new_PC	address	longword	read	by reference

Arguments:

depadr

Optional number of presignal frames (depth) to be removed.

new_PC

Optional address of the location to receive control after the unwind operation is completed.

Function Value Returned:

Success or failure status (see text that follows).

OpenVMS Conditions

8.7 Request to Unwind from a Signal

The **depadr** argument specifies the address of the longword that contains the number of presignal frames (depth) to be removed. The deepest procedure invocation whose frame is not removed is called the **target invocation** of the unwind. If that number is less than or equal to 0, nothing is to be unwound. The default (address = 0) is to return to the caller of the procedure that established the handler that issued the \$UNWIND service. To unwind to the establisher, specify the depth from the call to the handler, which can be found in the CHF\$IS_MCH_DEPTH field of the Mechanism Array. When the handler is at depth 0, it can achieve the equivalent of an unwind operation to an arbitrary place in its establisher by altering the PC in its **signal_args** vector and returning with SSS_CONTINUE, or SSS_CONTINUE64 if the 64-bit signal vector is altered, instead of performing an unwind.

The **new_PC** argument specifies the location to receive control when the unwinding operation is complete. The default is to continue at the instruction following the call to the last procedure activation that is removed from the stack.

The function value **success** either is a standard success code (SSS_NORMAL) or it indicates failure with one of the following return status condition values:

- No signal active (SSS_NOSIGNAL)
- Already unwinding (SSS_UNWINDING)
- Insufficient frames for depth (SSS_INSFRAME)

If SYS\$UNWIND is invoked by a handler that has already invoked SYS\$UNWIND, then the effect of the second invocation is undefined.

The unwinding operation occurs when the handler returns to the CHF. Unwinding is done by scanning back through the stack and calling each handler associated with a frame. The handler is called with the exception SSS_UNWIND to perform any application-specific cleanup. If the depth specified includes unwinding the establisher's frame, the current handler is recalled with this unwind exception.

When the target invocation is reached on Alpha or I64 systems, unwind completion depends on the PDSC\$V_TARGET_INVO flag of the associated procedure descriptor or unwind information, respectively. If that flag is set to 1, then the handler for that procedure invocation is called; otherwise, no handler is called. Control then resumes in the target invocation.

The call to the handler takes the same form as described in Section 8.5.1 with the following values:

- **signal_args**: for a handler for a procedure other than the target invocation of the unwind—an argument count (CHF\$L_SIG_ARGS) of 1 and a condition value (CHF\$L_SIG_NAME) of SSS_UNWIND.

For a handler on Alpha or I64 systems for a procedure that is the target invocation of the unwind—an argument count (CHF\$L_SIG_ARGS) of 2 and two condition values consisting of SSS_UNWIND followed by SSS_TARGET_UNWIND.

- **mechanism_args**: same as for the original call except for a depth of 0 (that is, unwinding self) and any other changes made by prior handlers.

After each handler is called, the stack is logically cut back to the previous frame.

On Alpha or I64 systems, the stack is not actually cut back until after the last handler is called.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.7 Request to Unwind from a Signal

The exception vectors are not checked because they are not being removed. Any function value from the handler is ignored.

To specify the value of the top-level function being unwound, the handler should modify the appropriate saved register locations in the **mechanism_args** vector. They are restored from the **mechanism_args** vector at the end of the unwind.

Depending on the arguments to SYSSUNWIND, the unwinding operation is terminated as follows:

SYSSUNWIND(0,0)	Unwind to the establisher's caller.
SYSSUNWIND(<i>depth</i> ,0)	Unwind to the establisher at the point of the call that resulted in the exception.
SYSSUNWIND(<i>depth</i> , <i>location</i>)	Unwind to the specified procedure activation and transfer to a specified location.

The only recommended values for *depth* are the default (address of 0), which unwinds to the caller of the establisher, and the value of *depth* taken from the mechanism vector, which unwinds to the establisher. Other values depend on implementation details that can change at any time.

You can call SYSSUNWIND whether the condition was a software exception signaled by calling LIBSSIGNAL or LIBSSTOP or was a hardware exception. Calling SYSSUNWIND is the only way to continue execution after a call to LIBSSTOP.

8.7.1 Signaler's Registers

Because the handler is called and can in turn call routines, the actual register values in use at the time of the signal or exception can be scattered on the stack.

On VAX systems, to find registers R2 through FP, a scan of stack frames must be performed starting with the current frame and ending with the call to the handler. During the scan, the last frame found to save a register contains that register's contents at the time of the exception. If no frame saved the register, the register is still active in the current procedure. The frame of the call to the handler can be identified by the return address of SYSSCALL_HANDL+4. In this case, the registers are in the following states:

R0, R1	In mechanism_args
R2-11	Last frame saving it
AP	Old AP of SYSSCALL_HANDL+4 frame
FP	Old FP of SYSSCALL_HANDL+4 frame
SP	Equal to end of signal_args vector+4
PC, PSL	At end of signal_args vector

On Alpha or I64 systems, to find the contents of the registers, use the invocation context routines described in Sections 3.5.3 or 4.8.3, respectively.

8.7.2 Unwind Completion

On VAX systems, the values that exist in R0 and R1 when the unwind completes are the values passed implicitly to the unwinder in the mechanism array (see Section 8.5.1.2.1). If desired, these values can be modified by an exception handler before the unwind is initiated.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.7 Request to Unwind from a Signal

On Alpha systems, the values that exist in R0, R1, F0, and F1 when the unwind completes are the values passed implicitly to the unwinder in the mechanism array (see Section 8.5.1.2.2). If desired, these values can be modified by an exception handler using `SY$$SET_RETURN_VALUE` before the unwind is initiated. Note that, unlike VAX systems, an Alpha system does not use R1 for returning any type of return values.

On I64 systems, the values that exist in R8, R9, F8, and F9 when the unwind completes are the values passed implicitly to the unwinder in the mechanism array (see Section 8.5.1.2.3). If desired, these values can be modified by an exception handler using `SY$$SET_RETURN_VALUE` before the unwind is initiated.

The effect of handler modification of any mechanism vector field other than described above is undefined.

SY\$\$SET_RETURN_VALUE (Alpha and I64 systems only)

`SY$$SET_RETURN_VALUE(mechanism_arg, return_type, return_value)`

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
<code>mechanism_arg</code>	mechanism vector address	quadword (unsigned)	read	by value
<code>return_type</code>	integer	longword (unsigned)	read	by reference
<code>return_value</code>	buffer	scalar	read	by reference

Arguments:

mechanism_arg

Address of mechanism vector. If zero, the mechanism vector for the currently active signal will be used.¹

return_type

Address of a longword that contains one of the function return signature codes found in Table 5-4.¹

return_value

Address of a value of the appropriate type. The referenced value will be read as a longword, quadword, or octaword, depending on the `return_type`.¹

¹If the address of the `return_type` argument is zero, then the `return_value` argument is fetched by value and is treated as return-type `PSIG$K_FR_U32`. This combination of arguments can be used to set a condition code such as `SS$ACCVIO` as a return value.

Function Value Returned:

status

(Success or failure) The given return value is placed in the appropriate fields of the specified mechanism vector, according to the return type.

8.8 GOTO Unwind Operations (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

A **GOTO unwind** is a transfer of control that leaves one procedure invocation and continues execution in a prior, currently active procedure invocation. Modular and reliable support of the nonlocal GOTO requires procedure invocations that are terminated to have an opportunity to clean up in an orderly way (just like a procedure that is terminated as a result of an unwind from a condition handler).

OpenVMS Conditions

8.8 GOTO Unwind Operations (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

Performing a GOTO unwind operation in a thread causes a transfer of control from the location at which the GOTO unwind operation is initiated to a target location in a target invocation. This transfer of control also results in the termination of all procedure invocations, including the invocation in which the unwind request was initiated, up to the target procedure invocation. Thread execution then continues at the target location.

Before control is transferred to the unwind target location, the unwind support code invokes all frame-based handlers that were established by procedure invocations being terminated. These handlers are invoked with an indication of an unwind in progress. This gives each procedure invocation being terminated the chance to perform cleanup processing before its context is lost.

When the target invocation is reached, unwind completion depends on the PDSCSV_TARGET_INVO flag of the associated procedure descriptor (Alpha) or OSSDSV_TARGET_INVO flag of the associated unwind information block (I64). If that flag is set to 1, then the handler for that procedure invocation is called; otherwise, no handler is called.

After all the relevant frame-based handlers have been called and the appropriate frames have been removed from existence, the target invocation's saved context is restored and execution is resumed at the specified location.

A GOTO unwind procedure can be initiated while an exception is active (from within a condition handler) or while no exception is active. If the GOTO unwind transfers control out of an exception handler (resulting in the termination of current handler invocation), it also terminates handling of the corresponding condition (like SYSSUNWIND).

Note

OpenVMS Alpha uses different registers than OpenVMS I64 systems. This section uses the terms RetVal, RetVal2, NewRetVal, and NewRetVal2 to describe the generic unwind operation. The following table translates these terms for each system:

Symbol	Alpha Systems	I64 Systems
RetVal	R0	R8
RetVal2	R1	R9
NewRetVal	New_R0	New_R8
NewRetVal2	New_R1	New_R9

A thread can initiate a GOTO unwind operation by calling SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64, defined as:

```
SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64(target_invo, target_pc, NewRetVal, NewRetVal2)
```

On Alpha systems, the following backward compatible form is also provided:

```
SYSSGOTO_UNWIND(target_invo, target_pc, New_R0, New_R1)
```

OpenVMS Conditions

8.8 GOTO Unwind Operations (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
target_invo	invo_handle	longword or quadword (unsigned) ¹	read	by reference
target_pc	address	longword or quadword (unsigned) ¹	read	by reference
NewRetVal	quadword_unsigned	quadword (unsigned)	read	by reference
NewRetVal2	quadword_unsigned	quadword (unsigned)	read	by reference

¹Type is longword (unsigned) for SYSSGOTO_UNWIND; quadword (unsigned) for SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64

Arguments:

target_invo

Address of a location that contains a handle for the target invocation.

If omitted or the address of the handle is zero, then the effect of the call is undefined.

target_pc

Address of a location that contains the address at which execution should continue in the target invocation.

If omitted or if the address is 0, then execution resumes at the location specified by the return address for the call frame of the target procedure invocation.

If the **target_invo** argument is omitted or is 0, then this argument is ignored. In this case, a system-defined target PC is assumed.

NewRetVal

Address of a location that contains the value to place in the saved RetVal location of the mechanism argument vector. The contents of this location are then loaded into RetVal at the time that execution continues in the target invocation.

If this argument is omitted, then the contents of RetVal at the time of the call to SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64 are used.

This argument is called New_R0 in SYSSGOTO_UNWIND for compatibility with Alpha.

NewRetVal2

Address of a location that contains the value to place in the saved RetVal2 location of the mechanism argument vector. The contents of this location are then loaded into RetVal2 at the time that execution continues in the target invocation.

If this argument is omitted, then the contents of RetVal2 at the time of the call to SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64 are used.

This argument is called New_R1 in SYSSGOTO_UNWIND for compatibility with Alpha.

Condition Value Returned:

SS\$ACCVIO

An invalid address was given.

When a GOTO unwind is initiated, control almost never returns to the point at which the unwind was initiated. Control returns with an error status only if a GOTO unwind cannot be started. If SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64 (or SYSSGOTO_UNWIND) is invoked by a handler that has already invoked SYSSUNWIND, then the effect of calling SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64 (or SYSSGOTO_UNWIND) is undefined.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.8 GOTO Unwind Operations (Alpha and I64 Systems Only)

8.8.1 Handler Invocation During a GOTO Unwind

When an unwind operation takes place, all frame-based exception handlers are invoked that were established by any procedure invocation being terminated. In addition, the handler for the target procedure invocation is called if the PDSC\$V_TARGET_INVO flag is set in the corresponding procedure descriptor or unwind information (see Sections 3.4.2, 3.4.5 and A.4.3.) These handlers are invoked in the reverse order from which they were established.

Because primary, last-chance handlers, and the system catchall handler are not associated with a normal procedure invocation, these handlers are never invoked during an unwind (but they are invoked if an exception is raised during the unwind operation).

For a GOTO unwind procedure, each handler that is invoked is called with two arguments as follows:

(* handler) (signal_args, mechanism_args)

Argument	OpenVMS Usage	Type	Access	Mechanism
signal_args	signal vector	structure	modify	by reference
mechanism_args	mechanism vector	structure	modify	by reference

Arguments:

signal_args

Argument count of 2, followed by a condition value of SSS_UNWIND, followed by:

- SSS_GOTO_UNWIND when a target invocation is specified but not for that target invocation
- SSS_TARGET_GOTO_UNWIND when a target invocation is specified and the handler for that target invocation is called

mechanism_args

Mechanism argument corresponding to the frame being unwound, as defined in Section 8.5.1.2.

For information about signal argument and mechanism argument vectors, see Sections 8.5.1.1 and 8.5.1.2.

8.8.2 Unwind Completion

When an unwind completes, the following conditions are true:

- The target procedure invocation is the most current invocation in the procedure invocation chain.
- The environment of the target invocation is restored to the state when that invocation was last current, except for the contents of all scratch registers.
- RET0 and RET1 contain the respective values (if any) that were passed by the routine that invoked the unwind.
- Execution continues at the target location.

8.9 Multiple Active Signals

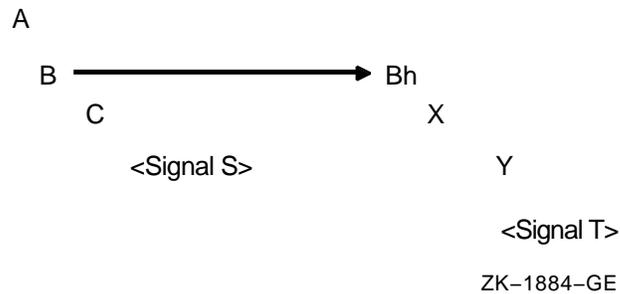
A signal is said to be active until the signaler gets control again or is unwound. A signal can occur while a condition handler or a procedure it has called is executing in response to a previous signal. For example, procedures A, B, and C establish condition handlers Ah, Bh, and Ch. If A calls B and B calls C, which signals S, and Ch resignals, then Bh gets control.

If Bh calls procedure X, and X calls procedure Y, and Y signals T, the stack is as follows:

```

<Signal T>
  Y
  X
  Bh
<Signal S>
  C
  B
  A
  
```

Which was programmed:



The handlers are searched for in the following order: Yh, Xh, Bhh, Ah. Bh is not called again because it is not appropriate to assume that a routine is able to be its own handler. However, Bh can establish itself or another procedure as its handler (Bhh).

On VAX systems, Ch is not checked or called because it is a structural descendant of B.

On Alpha or I64 systems, the search does check handlers Ch and Bh between calling Bhh and Ah. These handlers will be reinvoked only if enabled by the HANDLER_REINVOCABLE flag of the establisher's procedure descriptor (see Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.4) or unwind information (see Section A.4.3).

For all systems, the following algorithm is used on the second and subsequent signals that occur before the handler for the original signal returns to the Condition Handling Facility. The primary and secondary exception vectors are checked. However, the search backward in the process stack is then modified. On a VAX processor, the stack frames traversed in the first search are skipped, in effect, during the second search, while on an Alpha or I64 system, the stack frames are skipped unless they explicitly enable handler reinvocation. Therefore, the stack frame preceding the first condition handler, up to and including the frame of the procedure that has established the handler, is skipped. In the VAX environment, frames that are skipped are not counted in the depth. In the Alpha or I64 environment, all frames are counted in the depth.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.9 Multiple Active Signals

For example, the stack frames traversed in the first and second searches are skipped in a third search. Note that if a condition handler signals, it is not automatically invoked recursively. However, if a handler itself establishes a handler, the second handler is invoked. Therefore, a recursive condition handler should start by establishing itself. Any procedures invoked by the handler are treated in the normal way; that is, exception signaling follows the stack up to the condition handler.

If an unwind operation is requested while multiple signals are active, all the intermediate handlers are called for the operation. For example, in the preceding diagram, if Ah specifies unwinding to A, the following handlers are called for the unwind: Yh, Xh, Bhh, Ch, and Bh.

For proper hierarchical operation, an exception that occurs during execution of a condition handler established in an exception vector should be handled by that handler rather than propagating up the activation stack. To prevent such propagation, the vectored condition handler should establish a handler in its stack frame to handle all exceptions.

8.10 Multiple Active Unwind Operations

During an unwind operation (resulting from a call of SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64, SYSSGOTO_UNWIND, or SYSSUNWIND), another unwind operation can be initiated (using SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64, SYSSGOTO_UNWIND, or SYSSUNWIND). This can occur, for example, if a handler that is invoked for the original unwind initiates another unwind, or if an exception is raised in the context of such a handler and a handler invoked for that exception initiates another unwind operation. However, SYSSUNWIND cannot be called from a handler that is invoked as part of an unwind (see Section 8.7), but it can be called from a handler for a nested exception.

An unwind that is initiated while a previous unwind is active is either a nested unwind or an overlapping unwind.

A **nested unwind** is an unwind that is initiated while a previous unwind is active and whose target invocation in the procedure invocation chain is not a predecessor of the most current active unwind handler. A nested unwind does not terminate any procedure invocation that would have been terminated by the previously active unwind.

When a nested unwind is initiated, no special rules apply. The nested unwind operation proceeds as a normal unwind operation, and when execution resumes at the target location of the nested unwind, the nested unwind is complete and the previous unwind is once again the most current unwind operation.

An **overlapping unwind** is an unwind that is initiated while a previous unwind is active and whose target invocation in the procedure invocation chain is a predecessor of the most current active unwind handler. An overlapping unwind terminates one or more procedure invocations that would have been terminated by the previously active unwind.

An overlapping unwind is detected when the most current active unwind handler is terminated. This detection of an overlapping unwind is termed an **unwind collision**.

When a GOTO unwind collides with a GOTO unwind, the later unwind supersedes the earlier unwind, which is abandoned. The later unwind then continues from the point of the collision.

OpenVMS Conditions

8.10 Multiple Active Unwind Operations

The result of any other collision is undefined.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

Note

This appendix is completely new and therefore contains no change bars (|).

Stack unwinding is the process of tracing backwards through the stack of invocation contexts of a thread. Every active procedure has one invocation context. An invocation context has memory (a **frame**) on the register stack, the memory stack, or both. To trace backwards through the stack of invocation contexts, it must be possible to identify each invocation context and its associated frames. Exception handling often requires the ability to trace backwards through a number of invocation contexts and then to transfer control to an exception handling routine.

For the register stack, the state of the current register stack frame together with the AR.PFS register provides sufficient information to identify the previous frame. However, this works for only one level of nesting, because there is no hardware stack of AR.PFS registers. To make it possible to unwind the register stack, this calling standard defines a convention for saving and recovering the AR.PFS register in each frame.

For the memory stack, it is expected that most procedures will allocate a frame that does not change in size while the procedure is active. For these procedures, the fixed frame size is recorded in a static unwind table, and the instruction pointer (PC) is used as a key into this table.

To make it possible to unwind frames that vary in size, this calling standard defines a convention for saving and recovering the SP value for the previous frame on the stack.

As the register and memory stacks are unwound, it is also necessary to recover the values of preserved registers that were saved by each procedure for the following uses:

- So that debuggers have access to correct values of local variables
- So that exception handlers can operate correctly
- To provide values needed for further unwinding

This calling standard defines a convention for saving and recovering the values of these preserved registers. This convention uses the PC as a key for locating a static unwind table entry that contains everything necessary for locating the following values:

- The previous register stack frame

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

- The memory stack frames
- The previous PC

Unwinding the stack is done using system routines (see Section 4.8.3) that can be called from the thread itself, from a debugger, or for exception handling. Stack unwinding operates on context records; the primary routine reconstructs the context for a previous frame given the context for its descendent frame.

This appendix describes the following topics:

- The framework for unwinding the stack and for processing exceptions
- The format of the static unwind tables
- The code generation conventions required to perform the above tasks

A.1 Unwinding the Stack

The process of unwinding the stack begins with an initial context record that describes the process state in the most recent procedure invocation at the point of interruption. From this initial state, the stack is unwound one invocation context at a time, using static information generated by the compilers about each procedure to reconstruct a context record that describes the previous procedure (which is suspended at a point just after the procedure call or an asynchronous interruption).

A.1.1 Initial Context

There is only one way to get an initial context: call `LIB$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT` (see Section 4.8.3.4).

A.1.2 Step to Previous Frame

The unwind routines build a context record that corresponds to the next older frame on the stack. This context record can then be used to unwind to the previous frame on the stack. The following steps reconstruct the context for the previous frame using information in the unwind tables for the current frame:

1. Find the return link in the current context, and set PC in the previous context to that address.
2. Find the previous frame marker in the current context (for example, in the AR.PFS register), and copy it to the current frame marker (CFM) in the previous context.
3. Determine the value of GP for the new PC, and set GP in the previous context to that value.
4. Set SP in the previous context to SP from current context plus the current size of the memory frame.
5. Set AR.BSP in the previous context to AR.BSP from the current context minus the size of the input/local region of the frame (taking into account NaT collections that may have been saved to the backing store). The frame size can be calculated from the frame marker.
6. Find the saved copies of the preserved registers in the current context, and copy them to the previous context.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.1 Unwinding the Stack

7. Find any VMS-specific Caller Spill Register information (see Section A.4.3.2) in the unwind information associated with the PC that was determined in Step 1 and restore any applicable registers saved in the previous frame.

The bottom of the call stack is identified by a `BOTTOM_OF_STACK` flag in the context block.

The information needed to execute these steps correctly is recorded in static unwind information that is associated with each code segment of the program itself. The structure of this information is described in Section A.4. Each code segment has an associated table of static unwind information, and the operating system provides an API for finding the unwind table, given a known PC (see Section A.6).

When a thread receives an asynchronous interruption, the thread context is saved so that the thread can continue executing correctly once the interruption has been handled. This context is saved on the memory stack, and a new procedure frame is constructed for the interruption handler. The first procedure frame in the interruption handler is marked in such a way that the unwind routine can recognize that unwinding past the point of interruption requires a restoration of the full context.

A.2 Exception Handling Framework

The exception handling model for OpenVMS is partitioned into a language-independent component and a language-dependent component. The language-independent component is responsible for fielding an exception, searching for and dispatching to a condition handler and unwinding the stack. The run-time library of each source language that supports exception handling must provide a **condition handler** that implements the language-dependent component of this model.

Note

For compatibility with the OpenVMS VAX and Alpha calling standards, this document uses the term **condition handler**, rather than the term **personality routine**.

The exception handling model is oriented around procedure invocation contexts. Each invocation context corresponds to an activation of a procedure, which may or may not have associated exception handling requirements. A language typically uses a single condition handler for all procedures, but this is not a requirement.

Exceptions are signalled by invoking a routine in the language-independent component called the **exception dispatcher**, which initiates the process of handling the exception. Synchronous exceptions can be signalled directly by the application through a language-specific construct; asynchronous exceptions can be signalled in response to hardware-detected traps or faults.

The exception dispatcher walks the stack of invocation contexts non-destructively beginning with the most recent invocation, searching for the first invocation context with a condition handler. When a condition handler is found, the exception dispatcher invokes the condition handler.

A condition handler may perform the following actions:

- Ignore the condition.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.2 Exception Handling Framework

- Take some special action and continue from the point at which the condition occurred.
- End the operation and branch from the sequential flow of control.
- Treat the condition as an unrecoverable error.
- Resignal the exception to the next condition handler.
- Invoke a user-written condition handler.
- Perform language-specific exception handling actions (for example, C++ try region processing).

If the condition handling facility finds a handler for the exception that requests an unwind, it invokes the dispatcher to walk the stack a second time. During the second walk, the dispatcher invokes the condition handler for each frame again to execute cleanup actions as necessary. When the dispatcher reaches the frame that contains the condition handler, control is transferred to the condition handler.

For more details about OpenVMS condition handling, see Chapter 8.

A.3 Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding

This section describes the coding conventions that must be observed to guarantee that the stacks can be unwound from every point in the program. For the purposes of unwinding, this calling standard divides every procedure into one or more regions, which are classified as either prologue or body regions.

A **prologue region** is one where the register stack and memory stack frames are established and where key registers are saved. To unwind correctly when the PC is one of these regions, the unwinder must have a detailed description of the order of operations within the region, so that it knows what state has changed, and which registers have been saved at any given point in that region.

A **body region** is one for which the register stack and the memory stack are fully formed and initialized. Although a body region can change the state of the stack frame and save and restore preserved registers (for example, to **shrink-wrap** the save and restore of a register), the unwind data structures are tuned for body regions that have few such operations.

A.3.1 Requirements for Unwinding the Stack

Certain constraints must be met in order to unwind the stack successfully at any time, both by standard procedure calls as described in Chapter 4, and by special-purpose calling conventions. Appendix B describes the format of the unwind data structures. To meet the needs of the stack unwind mechanism, the following rules must be followed at all times:

- The previous function state register (AR.PFS) must be preserved prior to any call. The compiler must record, in the unwind data structures, where this register is stored, and over what range of code the saved value is valid.
- For special calls using a return branch register other than B0, the compiler must record the branch register number used for the return link.
- The return branch register must be preserved prior to any call involving the same branch register. The compiler must record where the return branch register is stored and over what range of code the saved value is valid.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.3 Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding

- If a preserved register is saved, the compiler must record where the preserved register is stored and over what range of code the saved value is valid.
- If a procedure has a memory stack frame, the compiler must record either: (1) how large the frame is, or (2) that a previous frame pointer is stored on the stack or in a general register.
- The return branch register must contain an address that can be used to determine the unwind state of the calling procedure. For example, a compiler may choose to optimize calls to procedures that do not return. If it does so, however, it must ensure that the unwind information for the procedure properly describes the unwind state at the return point, even though the return pointer will never be used. This may require the insertion of an otherwise unnecessary NOP or BREAK instruction.

The following sections provide detailed conventions for satisfying these requirements.

A.3.2 Conventions for Prologue Regions

A typical prologue region performs some or all of the following steps:

- Allocate a new register stack frame. The order of this step is not important to the unwind process (although it must precede any other operations in the prologue that require the use of local stack registers).
- Allocate a new memory stack frame. For fixed-size frames, the stack pointer (SP) must be modified in a single instruction (either with a single add immediate, or by performing intermediate calculations in a scratch register before modifying SP). The location of this instruction and the size of the fixed-frame must be recorded in the unwind descriptor (see Section A.4.1.1).

For variable-size frames, the stack pointer must be saved in a general register that is kept valid throughout the remainder of the prologue region and the following body regions. This copy of the previous stack pointer is called PSP. The location of the copy instruction and the general register number must be recorded in the unwind descriptor.

- Save the previous function state (AR.PFS), either in a general register or on the memory stack. The location of this instruction and the general register number (or stack offset) must be recorded in the unwind descriptor. Normally, the previous function state is copied to a general register by the ALLOC instruction that allocates a new register stack frame. However, if the previous function state is to be stored in the memory stack, the location of the instruction that stores the general register to the memory stack must be recorded, and the original PFS must not be modified until after the store.
- Save the return pointer (RP), either in a general register or on the memory stack. The location of this instruction and the general register number (or stack offset) must be recorded in the unwind descriptor. Saving RP to the memory stack requires the following steps:
 1. Copy it to a general register.
 2. Store it (the location of this store is the one to record). The original RP must not be modified before the store.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.3 Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding

- Save the preserved registers, either on the memory stack or in local registers in the current register stack frame. In general, the location of each instruction used to save a preserved register and the general register number (or stack offset) must be recorded. There are five groups of registers:
 - General registers
 - Floating-point registers
 - Branch registers
 - Predicate registers
 - Application registers

The predicate registers must be copied as a whole to a general register with a single Move from Predicates instruction; if they are to be stored on the memory stack, the Store instruction is the one to record. Any arbitrary subset of preserved general registers, floating-point registers, and branch registers can be saved in a prologue, but they must be saved in ascending order by register number within each group (saves from different register groups may be interleaved). Saving a branch register to memory (other than RP) requires the following steps:

1. Move to general register.
2. Store it (the location of this store is the one to record). The value of the branch register must not be modified until the store is completed.

The unwinder must also know where preserved registers are saved in the memory stack frame, because it must reconstruct the values of these registers as it unwinds the stack. The conventions for the spill area are discussed in Section A.3.5.

A prologue region can contain code that is irrelevant to the unwind process. However, for efficiency during the unwind process, observe the following guidelines:

- Keep the size of the prologue region as small as possible.
- End the prologue immediately after allocating stack frames and saving registers.

When OpenVMS semantics apply (see Section A.4.1), a condition handler will not be called for an exception that occurs in a prologue or epilogue because the procedure is not current (see Section 4.8.1), but a condition handler of the caller will be considered. Therefore, a prologue region can not occur in the interior of a procedure, except for a zero-length prologue that describes the initial state for noncontiguous code segments. General unwind descriptors must be used in the interior of a procedure instead of prologue descriptors (see Section A.4.1.3) to describe needed changes in unwind state.

For a routine that has no condition handler, there is no restriction on the use of prologue descriptors, even interior to the body.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.3 Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding

A.3.3 Conventions for Body Regions

Body regions can do anything that does not invalidate the state of the stack frames and preserved registers as recorded for that region. A body region must obey the following restrictions:

- If its memory stack frame is fixed in size, a body region must not modify the SP register.
- If its memory stack frame is variable in size, a body region can modify SP at any point, but the unwind descriptors must indicate where a valid PSP value can be found at any point while the body region is executing.
- The unwind descriptors must indicate where a valid copy of the previous frame marker can be found at any point while the body region is executing. The body region code must not make a procedure call while the previous frame marker remains only in AR.PFS.
- The unwind descriptors must indicate where a valid copy of the return PC can be found at any point while the body region is executing. The body region code must not make a procedure call while the saved return PC remains only in B0.
- The unwind descriptors must indicate where a valid copy of each preserved register can be found at any point while the body region is executing.

At every point in a body region, the unwind descriptors identify a single location where a valid value for SP, PSP, AR.PFS, PC, and each preserved register can be found. The body region must not modify a register or memory location while the unwind descriptors indicate that one of these items (SP, PSP, AR.PFS, PC, preserved register) is stored there.

The locations of these saved values (SP, PSP, AR.PFS, PC, preserved registers) generally remain constant throughout the body region in locations specified in the prologue descriptor records. However, when this is not the case, the unwind descriptors described in Table A-14 can be used to mark changes in the unwind state within a body region. A body region can restore AR.PFS, RP, and any preserved registers.

A.3.4 Conventions for Epilogues

The memory stack pointer (SP) is typically restored just before executing a return branch. In a normal epilogue at the end of a body region, the instruction that restores the previous SP value can be anywhere within a few instructions of the end of the region; the unwind descriptor format provides a place to record the exact location of this instruction. If the procedure has a memory stack frame and has return instructions in the middle of the body, the procedure must be divided into separate body regions, each ending at the point of each return instruction.

The unwinder does not need a specific epilogue region that is distinct from the body region.

A.3.5 Conventions for the Spill Area in the Memory Stack Frame

The spill area for preserved general, floating-point, and branch registers is near the base of the stack frame, in a continuous range ending (by default) at the base of the stack frame plus 16 bytes (PSP+16). In other words, the 16-byte scratch area in the caller's stack frame is normally included in the spill area. If the scratch area is needed to save register parameters for a variable-argument list procedure, the spill area can be moved so that it ends at a lower address, but the ending address must be a fixed location relative to the base of the frame (PSP).

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.3 Coding Conventions for Reliable Unwinding

Locations in the spill area are reserved for each preserved general, floating-point, and branch register that is saved anywhere within the procedure (including shrink-wrapped regions). Locations are allocated, from low address to high, for (in order) general registers, then branch registers, and then floating-point registers. Registers are saved in numerical order, lower-numbered registers at lower addresses. The spill area must end at a 16-byte boundary, so that all the floating-point spill locations are 16-byte aligned.

It is not required that all registers preserved in the spill area be consecutive from each register file. If, for example, R4 and R7 are preserved, but R5 and R6 are not, space is allocated only for R4 and R7.

Code may need to spill scratch registers in addition to preserved registers. There are no conventions for spilling scratch registers, because they do not need to be recovered during a stack unwind. To make the best use of the User NaT collection register, general register spills should be adjacent to the preserved general register spill area.

Normally, the unwinder expects to find the NaT bits for the preserved registers in the User NaT collection register, AR.UNAT. If the total spill area for general registers (scratch and preserved registers combined) exceeds 64 quadwords, it is necessary to save the User NaT collection register in order to spill up to an additional 64 general registers. In this overflow situation, two or more NaT collections are managed by swapping them in and out of the single collection register. The NaT collection that contains the NaT bits for the preserved registers is called the **primary UNaT collection**, and the unwinder must know where to find these bits. In procedures where the NaT collection register is multiplexed, the location of the primary UNaT collection is recorded in the unwind information.

If the primary UNaT collection is saved, then the location of the primary UNaT value must be recorded, as well as when that value is restored. The only way to do the latter is by using one of the general unwind descriptors found in Section A.4.1.1.

The unwinder must take special note of the time at which the primary UNaT is restored. In the case of an unwind after the primary UNaT restore, the unwinder must not attempt to redundantly reperform any fills that preceded that restore because the applicable UNaT state will have been lost.

Note

In this regard, the UNaT restore operation is analogous to a stack restore operation. It forms a barrier after which saved state has been lost. As a result, some or all of the state restoration cannot be reperformed.

A.4 Data Structures

The condition handling mechanism uses the following data structures:

- A master unwind table, which allows the unwinder and dispatcher to associate a PC value with an image
- An unwind table for each image, which allows the dispatcher and unwinder to associate a PC value with a procedure and its unwind and exception handling information

Every procedure (except some leaf procedures) has one entry in this table. (If the compiler has generated more than one noncontiguous region of code for a procedure, there is one entry in this table for each region.) Each unwind table entry points to an information block that contains the following data structures:

- A set of unwind descriptors
- (Optional) A pointer to a condition handler
- (Optional) An operating system-specific data area
- (Optional) A language-specific data area for each procedure

Given a PC value, the dispatcher and unwinder both use the unwind table to locate an unwind entry for a procedure. The unwinder also uses the unwind descriptor list to unwind the stack from any point in the procedure.

The operating system-specific data area contains information about a routine as a whole that is not otherwise expressible using the unwind descriptors, independent of whether the routine has a condition handler.

The language-specific data area contains information specific to the condition handler that uses it. The address of the language-specific data area is passed to the condition handler whenever the condition handler is invoked by the dispatcher.

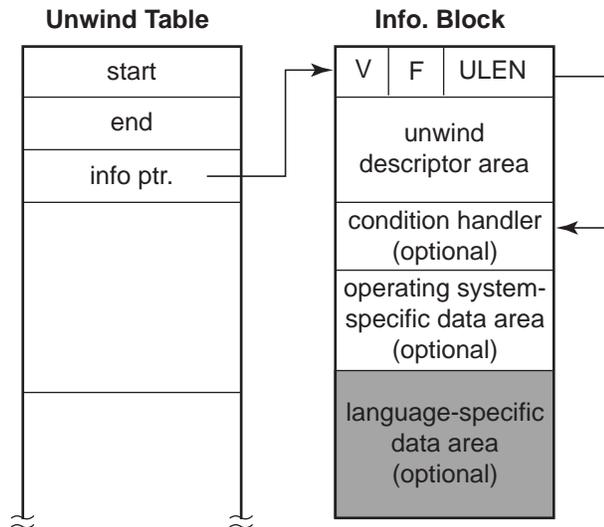
A.4.1 Unwind Table and Unwind Information Block

The **unwind table** is a sequence of sorted unwind table entries. Unwind table entries contain three fields, as illustrated in Figure A-1; each field is a 64-bit quadword. The first two fields define the starting and ending addresses of the region, respectively. The third field points to a variable-size information block that contains the unwind descriptor list and language-specific data area. The ending address is the address of the first bundle beyond the end of the procedure. Because these values are all segment-relative offsets rather than absolute addresses, they do not require run-time relocations. The unwind table entries are sorted by the region start address. The shaded area in the figure represents the language-specific data area.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Figure A-1 Unwind Table and Unwind Information Block



VM-1026A-AI

Note that a leaf procedure may have no unwind table entry (see Section A.5).

The unwind table and the unwind information block must each be aligned at an 8-byte boundary. Within the information block, the condition handler pointer must also be aligned at an 8-byte boundary.

The first quadword of the information block consists of the following fields:

- ULEN, a 32-bit longword field that contains the length in quadwords of the unwind descriptor area (zero is a legitimate value).
- F, a 16-bit flag field (see Table A-1). Four bits are set aside for operating system-specific use. Two of these bits are defined by the Itanium software conventions, and the remaining bits are reserved.

In this version, OpenVMS uses only the two low-order bits of the four bits available for operating system-specific use. These OpenVMS-specific bits can be accessed using the following:

```
#define UNW_IVMS_MODE(x)      (((x) >> 44) & 0x3L)
```

These two bits form an enumeration code, which is interpreted as shown in Table A-1.

Note

For OpenVMS I64, the value of UNW_IVMS_MODE field must be 2 or 3. Otherwise, exception handling behaviour is undefined.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

The EHANDLER flag is set if the condition handler must be called during search for an exception handler. The UHANDLER flag is set if this routine must be called during the second unwind. (Note that for OpenVMS I64, the EHANDLER and UHANDLER flags are both set or both not set.) If neither bit is set, there is no frame handler for this procedure, and the condition handler identifier must be omitted along with the entire language-specific data area.

- V, a 16-bit version number that identifies the version of the unwind descriptor format. For this specification, the version number is 1.

These fields may be accessed with the following macros:

```
#define UNW_LENGTH(x)          ((x) & 0x00000000ffffffffL)
#define UNW_FLAG_UHANDLER(x)  ((x) & 0x0000000200000000L)
#define UNW_FLAG_EHANDLER(x) ((x) & 0x0000000100000000L)
#define UNW_FLAG_OSMASK      0x0000f00000000000L
#define UNW_FLAG_MASK        0x0000ffff00000000L
#define UNW_VER(x)           ((x) >> 48)
```

Table A–1 F (Flags) Field of the Information Block

Field	Bit Position	Description										
EHANDLER	<0>	Set if there is an exception-processing handler established (for this region). (Note that for OpenVMS I64, the EHANDLER and UHANDLER flags are both set or both not set.)										
UHANDLER	<1>	Set if there is an exception cleanup (second/unwind pass) handler established. (Note that for OpenVMS I64, the EHANDLER and UHANDLER flags are both set or both not set.)										
UNUSED	<11:2>	Reserved										
UNW_IVMS_MODE	<13:12>											
		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Value</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>Reserved. ¹</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Reserved. ¹</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>OpenVMS handler semantics.²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Both OpenVMS handler semantics² and OpenVMS-specific data area are present.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Description	0	Reserved. ¹	1	Reserved. ¹	2	OpenVMS handler semantics. ²	3	Both OpenVMS handler semantics ² and OpenVMS-specific data area are present.
Value	Description											
0	Reserved. ¹											
1	Reserved. ¹											
2	OpenVMS handler semantics. ²											
3	Both OpenVMS handler semantics ² and OpenVMS-specific data area are present.											
OS_SPECIFIC_FLAGS	<15:14>	Reserved; must be zero.										

¹Must not be used - exception handling behavior is undefined.

²OpenVMS handler semantics means that handlers are not called in prologue or epilogue regions.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

A.4.1.1 Unwind Descriptor Area

The unwind descriptor area contains a contiguous sequence of records describing the unwind regions in the procedure. Each group of records begins with a region header record that identifies the type and length of the region. The region header record is followed by any number of descriptor records that supply additional unwind information about the region.

Unwind descriptor records are divided into three categories:

- Region header records
- Descriptor records for prologue regions
- Descriptor records for body regions

This section describes the record types in each of these categories, lists rules for using unwind descriptor records, and explains how the records must be processed.

The information is encoded in variable-length records with a record type and one or more additional fields. The length of each record is implicit from the record type and its fields. All records are an integral number of bytes in length. In the descriptor record tables in the next three sections, the third column lists the format of each record type. These record formats are described in Appendix B.

Because the unwind descriptor area must be a multiple of 8 bytes, the last unwind descriptor must be followed by zero bytes as necessary to pad the area to an 8-byte boundary. These zero bytes will be interpreted as prologue region header records, specifying a zero-length prologue region, and serve as no-ops.

A.4.1.2 Region Header Records

The region header records are listed in Table A-2.

Table A-2 Region Header Records

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
BODY	RLEN	R1/R3	Defines a body region.
PROLOGUE	RLEN	R1/R3	Defines a general prologue region.
PROLOGUE_GR	RLEN, MASK, GRSAVE	R2	Defines a prologue region with a mask of saved registers, and a set of general registers used for saving preserved registers.

The fields in these records are used as follows:

- RLEN—Contains the length of the region, measured in instruction slots (three slots per bundle, counting X-unit instructions as two slots).
- MASK—Indicates which registers are saved in the prologue. The PROLOGUE_GR region type is used for entry prologues that save one or more preserved registers in the local register area of the register stack frame. This field defines what combination of RP, AR.PFS, PSP, and the predicate registers are preserved in standard general registers in the local area of the register stack frame. This mask is four bits; see Appendix B for the allocation of these bits. Other registers may be preserved in the prologue, but additional descriptor records are required for registers other than these four.

- **GRSAVE**—Identifies the first general register used to save the preserved registers identified in the mask field. Normally, this identifies a register in the procedure's local stack frame (that is, it should be greater than or equal to 32). However, leaf procedures can choose to use any consecutive sequence of scratch registers.

The entry state for a region matches the exit state of the preceding region, except for body regions that contain a `COPY_STATE` descriptor record, which is described in Table A-13.

The exit state of a region is determined as follows:

- For prologue regions, and body regions with no epilogue code, the exit state is the logical combination of the entry state with the modifications described by the descriptor records for the region.
- For body regions with epilogue code, the exit state is the same as the entry state of the corresponding prologue region whose effect is being undone. When shrink-wrap regions are nested, it is possible to reverse the effects of multiple prologues at once.

A.4.1.3 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

This section lists the descriptor records that can be used to describe prologue regions. In the absence of any descriptor records or information in the region header record, a prologue region is assumed to create no memory stack frame and save no registers. Descriptors need be supplied only to override these defaults.

Table A-3 describes the descriptor records that are used to record information about the stack frame and the state of the previous stack pointer (PSP).

Table A-3 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Stack Frame

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
MEM_STACK_F	T, SIZE	P7	Specifies a fixed-size memory stack frame, when SP is modified, and size of frame.
MEM_STACK_V	T	P7	Specifies a variable-size memory stack frame, and when PSP is saved.
PSP_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where PSP is saved.
PSP_SPREL	SPOFF	P7	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where PSP is saved.

The fields in these records are used as follows:

- **T**—Describes a time, T, when a particular action occurs within the prologue. The time is specified as an instruction slot number, counting three slots per bundle. The first instruction slot in the prologue is numbered zero.
For procedures with a memory stack frame, the instruction that modifies SP (fixed-size frame) or that saves PSP (variable-size frame) must be identified with either a `MEM_STACK_F` or a `MEM_STACK_V` record.
In all other cases, if the time is not specified, the unwinder can assume that both of the following are true:
 - The original contents of the register is valid through the end of the prologue region.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

- The saved copy of the register is valid by the end of the prologue region. In a zero-length prologue region, the time parameter is irrelevant, and must be specified as zero.
- **SIZE**—Contains the fixed size of the memory stack frame, measured in 16-byte units.
- **GR**—Identifies a general register, or the first in a consecutive group of general registers, that is used for preserving the value of another register (as implied by the record type). Typically, this field identifies a general register in the procedure's local stack frame. A leaf procedure, however, can choose to use scratch registers. (A non-leaf procedure can also use scratch registers through a body region that makes no calls, but then it must move any values saved in scratch registers to a more permanent save location prior to making any calls, and needs a second prologue region to describe this process.)
- **SPOFF**—Identifies a location in the memory stack where a register or group of registers are spilled to memory. This location is specified relative to the current stack pointer. See Appendix B for the encoding of this field.

Table A-4 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the return pointer (RP).

Table A-4 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Return Pointer

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
RP_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when RP is saved.
RP_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where RP is saved.
RP_BR	BR	P3	Specifies the alternate branch register used as return pointer.
RP_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where RP is saved.
RP_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where RP is saved.

The fields in these records are used as follows:

- **BR**—Identifies a branch register that contains the return link, when the return link is not either in B0 or saved to another location.
- **PSPOFF**—Identifies a location in the memory stack where a register or group of registers is spilled to memory. The location is specified relative to the previous stack pointer (which is equal to the current stack pointer plus the frame size). See Appendix B for the encoding of this field.

Table A-5 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the previous function state register (AR.PFS).

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Table A–5 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Previous Function State

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
PFS_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when AR.PFS is saved.
PFS_GR	GR	P3	Specifies general register where AR.PFS is saved.
PFS_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.PFS is saved.
PFS_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.PFS is saved.

Table A–6 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the preserved predicate registers.

Table A–6 Prologue Descriptor Records for Predicate Registers

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
PREDS_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when the predicate registers are saved.
PREDS_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where predicate registers are saved.
PREDS_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) memory location where predicate registers are saved.
PREDS_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) memory location where predicate registers are saved.

Table A–7 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the preserved general registers, floating-point registers, and branch registers.

Table A–7 Prologue Descriptor Records for General, Floating-Point, and Branch Registers

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
FR_MEM	RMASK	P6	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved floating-point registers are spilled to memory by this prologue.
FRGR_MEM	GRMASK, FRMASK	P5	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved general and floating-point registers are spilled to memory by this prologue.
GR_GR	GRMASK, GR	P9	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved general registers are saved in other general registers, and the general register where first preserved general register is saved.
GR_MEM	RMASK	P6	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved general registers are spilled to memory by this prologue.
BR_MEM	BRMASK	P1	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved branch registers are spilled to memory by this prologue.

(continued on next page)

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Table A–7 (Cont.) Prologue Descriptor Records for General, Floating-Point, and Branch Registers

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
BR_GR	BRMASK, GR	P2	Specifies (as a bit mask) which preserved branch registers are saved in general registers by this prologue, and the general register where first branch register is saved.
SPILL_BASE	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) end of (first byte following the) spill area in memory stack frame.
SPILL_MASK	IMASK	P4	Specifies (as a bit mask) when preserved registers are spilled.

The fields in these records are used as follows:

- **RMASK, FRMASK, GRMASK, BRMASK**—Identify which preserved floating-point registers, general registers, and branch registers are saved by the prologue region. The `fr_mem` record uses a short `RMASK` field, which can be used when a subset of floating-point registers from the range F2-F5 is saved. The `FRGR_MEM` record can be used for any number of saved floating-point and general registers. The `GR_MEM` record can be used when only general registers (R4-R7) are saved.
- **IMASK**—Identifies when each preserved floating-point, general, and branch register is saved. It contains a two-bit field for each instruction slot in the prologue, that indicates whether the instruction in that slot saves one of these preserved registers. The length of this field is implied by the size of the prologue region as given in the region header record. It contains two bits for each instruction slot in the region, and the length of the field is rounded up to the next whole byte boundary.

If a prologue saves one or more preserved floating-point, general, or branch registers, and the `SPILL_MASK` record is omitted, the unwinder can assume that both of the following are true:

- The original contents of these preserved registers are valid through the end of the prologue region.
- The saved copies of the registers are valid by the end of the prologue region.

There can be only one `SPILL_BASE` and one `SPILL_MASK` record per prologue region. Each `GR_GR` and `BR_GR` record describes a set of registers that is saved to a consecutive set of general registers (typically in the local register stack frame). To represent registers saved to nonconsecutive general registers, two or more of each of these records can be used.

Table A–8 describes the descriptor records used to record the state of the User NaT Collection register (`AR.UNAT`).

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Table A–8 Prologue Descriptor Records for the User NaT Collection Register

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
UNAT_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when AR.UNAT is saved.
UNAT_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where AR.UNAT is saved.
UNAT_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.UNAT is saved.
UNAT_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.UNAT is saved.

Table A–9 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the loop counter register (AR.LC).

Table A–9 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Loop Counter Register

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
LC_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when AR.LC is saved.
LC_GR	GR	P3	Specifies general register where AR.LC is saved.
LC_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.LC is saved.
LC_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.LC is saved.

Table A–10 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the floating-point status register (AR.FPSR).

Table A–10 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Floating-Point Status Register

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
FPSR_WHEN	T	P7	Specifies when the floating-point status register is saved.
FPSR_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where the floating-point status register is saved.
FPSR_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P7	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where the floating-point status register is saved.
FPSR_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where the floating-point status register is saved.

Table A–11 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the primary UNaT collection.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Table A–11 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Primary UNaT Collection

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
PRIUNAT_WHEN_GR	T	P8	Specifies when the primary UNaT collection is copied to a general register.
PRIUNAT_WHEN_MEM	T	P8	Specifies when the primary UNaT collection is saved in memory.
PRIUNAT_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where the primary UNaT collection is copied.
PRIUNAT_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P8	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where the primary UNaT collection is saved.
PRIUNAT_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where the primary UNaT collection is saved.

Table A–12 describes the descriptor records that are used to record the state of the backing store, when it is necessary to record a discontinuity.

Table A–12 Prologue Descriptor Records for the Backing Store

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
BSP_WHEN	T	P8	Specifies when AR.BSP is saved. The backing store pointer can be saved, along with the AR.BSPSTORE pointer and the AR.RNAT register, to indicate a discontinuity in the backing store.
BSP_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where AR.BSP is saved.
BSP_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P8	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.BSP is saved.
BSP_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.BSP is saved.
BSPSTORE_WHEN	T	P8	Specifies when AR.BSPSTORE is saved.
BSPSTORE_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where AR.BSPSTORE is saved.
BSPSTORE_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P8	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.BSPSTORE is saved.
BSPSTORE_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.BSPSTORE is saved.
RNAT_WHEN	T	P8	Specifies when AR.RNAT is saved.
RNAT_GR	GR	P3	Specifies the general register where AR.RNAT is saved.
RNAT_PSPREL	PSPOFF	P8	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.RNAT is saved.
RNAT_SPREL	SPOFF	P8	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) the memory location where AR.RNAT is saved.

A.4.1.4 Descriptor Records for Body Regions

Table A–13 lists the optional descriptor records that may be used to describe body regions. In the absence of these descriptors, a body region is assumed to inherit its entry state from the previous region.

Table A–13 Body Region Descriptor Records

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
EPILOGUE	T, ECOUNT	B2/B3	Body region contains epilogue code for one or more prologues.
LABEL_STATE	LABEL	B1/B4	Labels the entry state for future reference.
COPY_STATE	LABEL	B1/B4	Use the labeled entry state as entry state for this region.

- T—Indicates the location (relative to the end of the region) of the instruction that restores the previous SP value. The number is a count of the remaining instruction slots to the end of the region (thus, a value of zero indicates the final slot in the region).
- ECOUNT—Indicates how many additional levels of nested shrink-wrap regions are being popped at the end of a body region with epilogue code. A value of zero indicates that one level must be popped. When OpenVMS handler semantics apply, this value must be zero.
- LABEL—Identifies a previously-specified body region, whose entry state must be copied for this body region.

Prologue regions nest within other prologue regions, and are balanced by body regions with an epilogue descriptor. An epilogue descriptor with an ECOUNT of n serves to balance $(n+1)$ earlier prologue regions. When OpenVMS handler semantics apply, prologue nesting is not allowed.

When the LABEL_STATE descriptor is used to label an entry state, it must appear prior to any general unwind descriptors in the same body region.

A COPY_STATE descriptor must appear prior to any general unwind descriptors in the same body region.

A labelled entry state includes not only the record of where current valid copies of all preserved values can be found, but also references the states that are currently on the stack of nested prologues. For example, consider the following sequence of regions:

- Prologue region A
- Body region B (no epilogue)
- Prologue region C
- Body region C (label_state 1, epilogue count 2)
- Body region D (copy_state 1, epilogue count 2)

The effect of the COPY_STATE in body region D restores the entry state of body region C, as well as the two prologue regions within which the body region is nested.

The scope of a label is restricted to a single unwind descriptor area.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

A.4.1.5 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions

This section lists the descriptor records that can be used to describe either prologue or body regions. These descriptors provide complete generality for compilers to perform register spills and restores anywhere in the procedure, without creating an arbitrary boundary between prologue and body.

Table A–14 General Unwind Descriptors

Record Type	Fields	Format	Description
SPILL_PSPREL	T, REG, PSPOFF	X1	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) when and where REG is saved.
SPILL_SPREL	T, REG, SPOFF	X1	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) when and where REG is saved.
SPILL_REG	T, REG, TREG	X2	Specifies when and where REG is saved in another register, TREG, or restored.
SPILL_PSPREL_P	QP, T, REG, PSPOFF	X3	Specifies (as a PSP-relative offset) when and where REG is saved, under predicate QP.
SPILL_SPREL_P	QP, T, REG, SPOFF	X3	Specifies (as an SP-relative offset) when and where REG is saved, under predicate QP.
SPILL_REG_P	QP, T, REG, TREG	X4	Specifies when and where REG is saved in another register, TREG, or restored, under predicate QP.

- **T**—Describes a time, T, when a particular action occurs within the prologue or body. The time is specified as an instruction slot number, counting three slots per bundle. The first slot in the containing prologue or body is numbered zero.
- **REG**—Identifies the register being spilled or restored at the given point in the code. This field may indicate any of the preserved general registers, floating-point registers, branch registers, application registers, predicate registers, previous SP, primary UNaT collection, or return pointer. See Appendix B for the encoding of this field.
- **TREG**—Identifies a target register to which the value being spilled is copied. This field may indicate any general register, floating-point register, or branch register; it may also contain the special Restore target, indicating the point at which a register is restored. See Appendix B for the encoding of this field.
- **QP**—Identifies a qualifying predicate register, which determines whether the indicated spill or restore instruction executes. The qualifying predicate register must be a preserved predicate if there are any procedure calls in the range between the spill and restore, and it must remain live throughout the range.

If a body region contains any general descriptors and an epilogue descriptor, the effects of the general descriptors are undone when the unwind state is restored by popping one or more prologues. By the end of the body region, the code must have restored any preserved registers that the new unwind state indicates are restored. It is not necessary, however, to record the points at which registers are restored unless the locations used to save the values are modified before the end of the region.

A.4.1.6 Rules for Using Unwind Descriptors

Preserved registers that are saved in the prologue region must be specified with one or more of the following descriptor records:

- PROLOGUE_GR (RP, AR.PFS, PSP, and the predicate registers)
- MEM_STACK_V (PSP is saved in a general register)
- RP_WHEN, RP_GR, RP_PSPREL, or RP_SPREL (RP)
- PFS_WHEN, PFS_GR, PFS_PSPREL, or (AR.PFS)
- UNAT_WHEN, UNAT_GR, UNAT_PSPREL, or UNAT_SPREL (AR.UNAT)
- LC_WHEN, LC_GR, LC_PSPREL, or LC_SPREL (AR.LC)
- FPSR_WHEN, FPSR_GR, FPSR_PSPREL, or FPSR_SPREL (AR.FPSR)
- FR_MEM, FRGR_MEM, or GR_MEM (floating-point registers and general registers)
- BR_MEM or BR_GR (branch registers)
- SPILL_PSPREL, SPILL_SPREL, SPILL_REG, SPILL_PSPREL_P, SPILL_SPREL_P, SPILL_REG_P (any register)

If a preserved register is not named by one or more of these records, it is assumed that the prologue does not save or modify that register. The locations where preserved registers are saved are determined according to the following rules:

1. Certain descriptor records explicitly name a save location for a register (records whose names end with _GR, PSPREL, or _SPREL). If a register is described by one of these records, the unwinder uses the named location.
2. Some descriptor records specify that registers are saved to the spill area (FR_MEM, FRGR_MEM, GR_MEM, BR_MEM). These locations are determined by the conventions for the spill area.
3. Any remaining registers that are named as saved but do not have an explicit save location are assigned consecutive general registers, beginning with the general register identified by the PROLOGUE_GR region header record. If the prologue region uses a prologue header record, the first general register is assumed to be R32. The registers are saved as needed in the following order:
 - a. Return pointer, RP
 - b. Previous function state, AR.PFS
 - c. Previous stack pointer, PSP
 - d. Predicate registers
 - e. User NaT collection register, AR.UNAT
 - f. Loop counter, AR.LC
 - g. Floating-point status register, AR.FPSR
 - h. Primary UNaT collection

Note

Without explicitly specifying a save location, the only way to indicate that any of the last four groups of registers (e. through h., above) is saved is to use one of the corresponding _WHEN descriptor records.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

A.4.1.7 Processing Unwind Descriptors

The unwind process for a frame begins by locating the unwind table entry for a given PC. (A leaf procedure may have no unwind table entry; see Section A.4.)

If there is an unwind table entry, the unwinder then locates the unwind information block and checks the size of the unwind descriptor area. If this area is zero length, the unwinder must use the default conditions as above.

In preparation for reading the unwind descriptor records, the unwinder must start with an initial current state record, and an empty stack of state records. A state record describes the locations of all preserved registers at entry to a region. The initial value of the current state record must describe the frame in its default condition.

The unwind descriptor records must be read and processed sequentially, beginning with the first descriptor record for a procedure, continuing until the PC is contained within the current region. For each prologue region header, the current state record must be pushed on the stack, and the descriptor records for the prologue region must be applied to the current state record. When a body region with epilogue code is seen, one or more states must be popped from the stack, and the entry state for the next region is taken as the last state popped. This restores the current state to the entry state of the matching prologue.

When a body region contains a LABEL_STATE descriptor, the unwind processor must replicate the current unwind state, including the current stack of prologues. When a body region contains a COPY_STATE descriptor, the unwind processor must discard the current state and stack, and restore the replicated state and stack that corresponds with the label.

When the current PC is within a body region, the unwinder can generate the context of the previous frame by restoring registers as indicated by the current state record. If the body region has epilogue code and the PC is beyond the indicated point where SP is restored, the unwinder must assume that SP has already been restored, and that all registers spilled to the memory stack frame (except those between PSP and PSP+16) have also been restored. Registers spilled to the scratch area in the caller's frame may not have been restored at that point, and the unwinder must use the values in memory.

When the current PC is within a prologue region, the unwinder must look for descriptor records that specify a time parameter that is at or beyond the current PC. The unwinder must ignore these state modifications when applying descriptor records to the current state. If a register is saved but does not have a specified time, the unwinder can assume that the original value is not modified within the prologue and can ignore it.

The layout and size of the preserved register spill area cannot be determined without reading all the prologue region descriptor records in the procedure, and merging the save masks for the general, floating-point, and branch registers.

A.4.2 Condition Handler

The condition handler identifier is accessed by adding the size of the unwind descriptor area (ULEN, which is the count of quadwords), plus the size of the header quadword, to the information block pointer. The value in that location is the GP-relative offset for the global offset table entry that contains the function pointer (address of a function descriptor) for the condition handler. The dispatcher calls this routine during the first unwind only if the EHANDLER bit is set, and during the second unwind only if the UHANDLER bit is set.

Because the operating system-specific data area immediately follows the condition handler identifier, the address of this area must be made available to the condition handler.

A.4.3 Operating System-Specific Data Area

If an operating system-specific data area is present, it is located immediately following the condition handler (if any) and before the language-specific data area (if any). If there is no condition handler, the operating system-specific data area is located immediately following the unwind descriptors (where the condition handler would have been). The operating system-specific data area must be aligned at a quadword boundary.

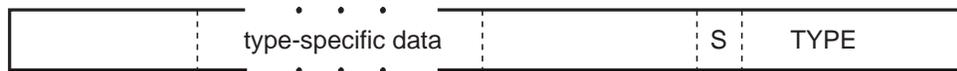
The following field of the mechanism vector passed to a condition handler (see Sections 8.5.1 and 8.5.1.2.3) may be helpful in interpreting the contents of operating system-specific data:

CHF\$PH_MCH_OSSD The virtual address of the operating system-specific data area.

The OpenVMS-specific data area is present if the UNW_IVMS_MODE field in the unwind information block has the value 3 (see Table A-1).

An OpenVMS-specific data area consists of one or more segments, where each segment begins with a 15-bit TYPE code field followed by a 1-bit SUCCESSOR flag as shown in Figure A-2.

Figure A-2 OpenVMS Operating System-Specific Data Area Segment



VM-1085A-AI

The segment types defined for OpenVMS are described in the following sections. They are identified by the codes shown in the following table:

Name	Value	Use
OSSD\$K_GENERAL_INFO	1	General information
OSSD\$K_CALL_SPILL_INFO	2	Caller spill register information

Unless otherwise stated, each kind of segment data can occur at most once in any given data area.

A.4.3.1 General Information Segment

The OpenVMS general information segment contains various flags and general exception handling information, and is described in Table A-15.

A general information segment may be omitted if all of its fields would have their default values.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

If a general information segment is present, it must be the first segment in the operating system-specific data area.

Table A–15 Operating System-Specific Data Area

Field	Bit Position	Description																		
OSSD\$V_TYPE	<14:0>	A 15-bit type field that identifies the segment as a general information segment. The value of this field is OSSD\$K_GENERAL_INFO (=1).																		
OSSD\$V_S	<15>	If set to 1, another segment immediately follows this one. If set to 0, there are no further segments in this area.																		
OSSD\$V_EXCEPTION_MODE	<18:16>	A 3-bit field that encodes the caller's desired exception-reporting behavior when calling certain mathematically oriented library routines, as in the following table:																		
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Value</th> <th>Name</th> <th>Meaning</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL</td> <td>Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT</td> <td>Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE</td> <td>Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER</td> <td>Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Value	Name	Meaning	0	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.	1	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).	2	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT	Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.	3	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE	Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.	4	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.
Value	Name	Meaning																		
0	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions except for underflows producing a 0 result. This is the default mode.																		
1	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_ALL	Raise exceptions for all error conditions (including underflows).																		
2	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_SIGNAL_SILENT	Raise no exceptions. Create only finite values (no infinities, denormals, or NaNs). In this mode, either the function result or the C language <code>errno</code> variable must be examined for any error indication.																		
3	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_FULL_IEEE	Raise no exceptions except as controlled by separate IEEE exception enable bits. Create infinities, denormals, or NaN values according to the IEEE floating-point standard.																		
4	OSSD\$K_EXC_MODE_CALLER	Perform the exception-mode behavior specified by this procedure's caller.																		
OSSD\$V_TARGET_INVO	<19>	If set to 1, the exception handler for this procedure is invoked when this procedure is the target invocation of an unwind. Note that a procedure is the target invocation of an unwind if it is the procedure in which execution resumes following completion of the unwind. The default value is 0.																		

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Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.4 Data Structures

Table A–15 (Cont.) Operating System-Specific Data Area

Field	Bit Position	Description
OSSD\$V_BASE_FRAME	<20>	This bit must be zero except in operating system routines whose documented purpose is to provide the base frame marker. If set to 1, this bit indicates the logical base frame of a stack that precedes all frames corresponding to user code. The interpretation and use of this frame and whether there are any predecessor frames is system software defined (and subject to change). The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_HANDLER_REINVOKABLE	<21>	If set to 1, the handler can be reinvoked, allowing an occurrence of another exception while the handler is already active. If this bit is set to 0, the exception handler cannot be reinvoked. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_AST_FRAME	<22>	If set to 1, then this is an AST dispatch frame. The interrupted procedure is the predecessor frame on the stack and much of its context is saved in this procedure's memory stack frame. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_EXCEPTION_FRAME	<23>	If set to 1, then this is an exception dispatch frame. The excepting procedure is the predecessor frame on the stack and much of its context is saved in this procedure's memory stack frame. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_TIE_FRAME	<24>	If set to 1, this is a frame created by the Translated Image Executive for use during the execution of translated images. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_BOTTOM_OF_STACK	<25>	A value of 1 indicates that this frame has no predecessor frames (that is, this frame is the end of the invocation call chain). The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_HANDLER_DATA_VALID	<26>	A value of 1 indicates that an exception handler data field is present in the unwind information block. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_SS_DISPATCH_FRAME	<27>	If set to 1, then this is the System Service dispatch frame. Much of the context for a procedure calling a system service is saved on an inner mode stack. The default value is 0.
OSSD\$V_KP_START_FRAME	<28>	Internal use only.
RESERVED	<63:29>	Reserved; must be zero.

A.4.3.2 Caller Spill Register Information

The OpenVMS caller spill register information segment encodes information to emulate the effects of callee register saving conventions even when caller save/restore conventions are in use. The key difference between this and the more general unwind information described in other parts of Section A.4 is that the information described here must be applied in the frame with which it is associated in order to complete that frame whereas other information is applied in order to unwind to the previous frame.

The caller spill register segment is described in Table A–16.

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

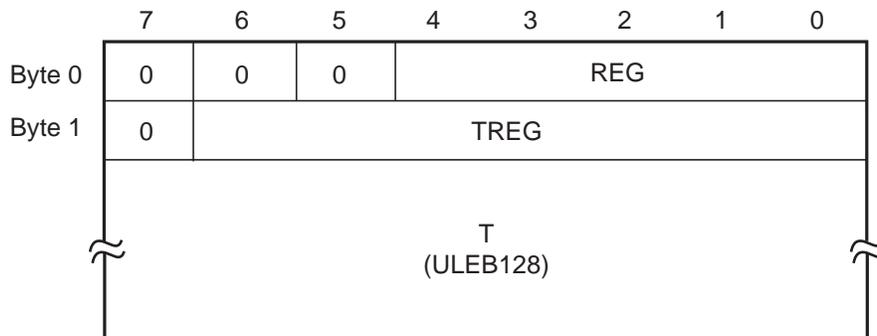
A.4 Data Structures

Table A-16 OpenVMS OSSD Caller Spill Register Information

Field	Bit Position	Description
OSSD\$V_TYPE	<14:0>	A 15-bit type field that identifies the segment as a caller spill register information segment. The value of this field is OSSD\$K_CALLER_SPILL_INFO (=2).
OSSD\$V_S	<15>	If set to 1, another segment immediately follows this one. If set to 0, there are no further segments in this area.
OSSD\$W_LENGTH	<31:16>	A two-byte field that specifies the number of quadwords in this segment (including OSSD\$V_TYPE, OSSD\$V_S and OSSD\$W_LENGTH itself).
OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA	<...>	See below.

The OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA field in a spill register segment consists of a sequence of triples encoded as shown in Figure A-3.

Figure A-3 Format of OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA



VM-1084A-AI

Table A-17 describes the fields in the OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA segment.

Table A-17 Description of OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA Segment

OSSD\$V_REG	A 5-bit field that identifies the saved static general register. Bits <7:5> of byte 0 are reserved and must be zero. A REG value of zero indicates that there is no more spill data; one or more zero bytes are used to pad the end of the spill data if needed to fill out the specified length.
OSSD\$V_TREG	A 7-bit field that identifies one of the general registers. Bit <7> of byte 1 is reserved and must be zero. A TREG value other than zero indicates that the contents of register REG is saved in register TREG. A TREG value of zero indicates that register REG is restored, that is, is no longer saved elsewhere.

(continued on next page)

Table A-17 (Cont.) Description of OSSD\$T_SPILL_DATA Segment

OSSD\$T_T	<p>A ULEB128 slot offset from the start address given in the corresponding unwind table (see Section A.4.1) to the instruction that performs the save or restore.</p> <p>It is valid for save actions to occur in a prologue and restore events to occur in an epilogue. (Save actions events will never occur in an epilogue and restore events will never occur in a prologue because these would require a call to occur in either the prologue or epilogue, which is forbidden.)</p>
-----------	--

It is valid for two or more save actions for the same register REG to occur without an intervening restore of that register. In this case, the later save register location TREG supercedes the earlier one as the save location for register REG beginning at the specified offset T.

When unwinding to a frame, the unwind information of the called frame is first used to construct the frame of the caller; the unwind operation must then be completed by using any spill register information for that caller.

A.4.4 Language-Specific Data Area

The language-specific data area contains information whose format and interpretation need be known only by the condition handler that uses it. As such, this area is not described in this document.

To preserve sharability of the image of which language-specific data is a part, that data should be read-only and position-independent. For example, an address within the associated procedure might be represented as an offset relative to the starting address given in the unwind table for the routine.

The following fields, which are found in the mechanism vector passed to a condition handler (see Sections 8.5.1 and 8.5.1.2.3), may be helpful in interpreting the contents of language-specific data:

CHF\$PH_MCH_UWR_START	The virtual address of an unwind region. May be used together with an offset in the language specific data to encode an address within a procedure.
CHF\$PH_MCH_DADDR	The virtual address of the language-specific data area.

A.5 Default Unwind Information

A null frame procedure may have no corresponding unwind table entry, hence no unwind information block, if all of the following apply:

- It has no memory stack, no register stack and preserves no context of its caller (these are properties of all null frame procedures), hence requires no unwind descriptors. Note in particular that this means that B0 and AR.PFS are unchanged throughout the execution of the procedure. (See Sections A.4 and A.4.4.)
- It has no condition handler, hence also no language-specific data area. (See Sections 4.4 and A.4.4.)
- It has no operating-specific data area. (See Section A.4.3.)

Such a procedure is necessarily a leaf procedure, that is, a procedure that makes no calls, either explicitly or implicitly. (To make a call, a procedure must preserve at least B0 and AR.PFS.)

Stack Unwinding and Exception Handling on OpenVMS I64

A.5 Default Unwind Information

Conversely, if the dispatcher or unwinder encounters a PC for the top-most procedure on the call stack that is not represented in the unwind tables, it assumes that the PC corresponds to a null frame leaf procedure that satisfies the properties described above.

A.6 System Unwind Routines

The following pages describe the routines used to manipulate the unwind tables (UT) and interrogate the unwind information block (UIB).

- SYSS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE
- SYSS\$CLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE
- SYSS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO
- LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE

Unwind Routine

Register or extend an unwind table (UT) information.

Format

SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE code_base_va, code_size, ut_base_va, ut_size,
gp_value, unwind_info_base, name

C Prototype

```
ind SYS$SET_UNWIND_TABLE (unsigned __int64 code_base_va, unsigned
                           __int64 code_size, unsigned __int64 ut_base_va,
                           unsigned __int64 ut_size, unsigned __int64
                           gp_value, unsigned __int64 unwind_info_base,
                           void *name);
```

Arguments

code_base_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

With **code_size**, defines the potential code range. **code_base_va** is required for both creation and extension calls. **code_base_va** is the process virtual address of the start of the code region. **code_size** is the size of the code region in bytes. An error is returned if this overlaps any existing range.

code_size

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

With **code_base_va**, defines the potential code range. **code_base_va** is required for both creation and extension calls. **code_base_va** is the process virtual address of the start of the code region. **code_size** is the size of the code region in bytes. An error is returned if this overlaps any existing range.

ut_base_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

With **ut_size**, describes the unwind table (UT). **ut_base_va** is the process virtual address of the UT and must be quadword aligned. **ut_size** is the size of the UT in bytes and must be a multiple of the size (24 bytes: 3 quadwords) of an unwind table entry (UTE). The UTEs must describe nonoverlapping code subregions within the overall code region.

Unwind Routines

SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE

ut_size

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

With **ut_base_va**, describes the unwind table (UT). **ut_base_va** is the process virtual address of the UT and must be quadword aligned. **ut_size** is the size of the UT in bytes and must be a multiple of the size (24 bytes: 3 quadwords) of an unwind table entry (UTE). The UTEs must describe nonoverlapping code sub regions within the overall code region.

gp_value

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

Ignored on extension calls, required on create calls. The Global Data Pointer (GP) value for the routines described by these unwind tables.

unwind_info_base

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

Ignored on extension calls; required on create calls. The **unwind_info_base** plus a particular UTE UIB offset must add up to the process virtual address of that UIB. Typically for static code (activated images from disk), this specifies the process virtual base address of the segment containing the UIBs. However, dynamically generated code, for example, can pass a zero for the **unwind_info_base** and have the full process virtual addresses of the UIBs in their UTEs.

name

OpenVMS usage: pseudo-image-name
type: character-code-text-string
access: read only
mechanism: by descriptor-fixed-length string descriptor

Passed by descriptor (ignored on extension calls). May be used for traceback. Need not be unique. Should be less than 255 characters (will be truncated, otherwise).

Description

This interface can be used to register or extend unwind information. It is expected, for example, that applications that dynamically create code will also need to dynamically create unwind tables (UTs) and unwind information blocks (UIBs) for that code. This interface registers such information with the operating system.

The image activator also uses this interface to register unwind information for shareable and main images. Note that the code region, though fully specified in terms of its potential size, need not be full of actual code at its initial registration. The unwind table, however, must describe all the code that could execute within that region and that needs unwind information, at any given time. Note also that

Unwind Routines SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE

the unwind table entries (UTES) within a registered unwind table must remain sorted (ascending order) at any given time.

To create a new registration, specify a new (not registered) code range. On a creation, all parameters (except **name**) must be specified.

To extend an existing registration, specify an existing (registered) **code_base_va**. On extension, only the identifying **code_base_va** and new UT range need be specified, that is, the other parameters may be zeros. An extension call can only alter that registration's **ut_base_va** and **ut_size**.

The creator caller's mode defines the mode from which the registration may be extended or removed.

Failure status is returned on creation if the input code range overlaps an already existing range.

Related Services

SYS\$CLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE, SYS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO, LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

Condition Values Returned

SS\$NORMAL	Routine completed successfully.
SS\$BADPARAM	Missing or illegal parameter.
SS\$VA_IN_USE	Overlap detected.
SS\$ACCVIO	Name descriptor cannot be read.

Unwind Routines

SYSCLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE

SYSCLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE

Unwind Routine

Clears unwind table (UT) information.

Format

SYSCLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE code_base_va

C Prototype

```
int SYSCLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE (unsigned __int64 code_base_va);
```

Arguments

code_base_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by value

Input by value. Must be the process virtual address of the start of a registered code range.

Description

Clears (removes) the indicated registration. Error status returned on bad **code_base_va** or insufficient access mode.

Related Services

SYSSSET_UNWIND_TABLE, SYSSGET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO, LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

Condition Values Returned

SS\$NORMAL	Routine completed successfully.
SS\$IVAADDR	code_base_va not registered.
SS\$IVACMODE	Insufficient access mode.

SYS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO

Unwind Routine

Get fixed-up unwind entry information.

Format

SYS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO pc, get_ue_block, name

C Prototype

```
int SYS$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO (unsigned __int64 pc, void *get_ue_block,
                                void *name);
```

Arguments

pc

OpenVMS usage: PC value
 type: quadword (unsigned)
 access: read only
 mechanism: by value

Input quadword, target PC (that is, the PC for a code region the user wants unwind information for).

get_ue_block

OpenVMS usage: unwind_entry_data_block
 type: quadword (unsigned)
 access: write
 mechanism: by reference

Address of a 4-quadword block to be filled in. That is, input the address of a 4 quadword block and, on successful returned status, that block will be updated with the following information:

- **code_start_va** - Output quadword, the process virtual starting code address of the unwind region containing the input IP.
- **code_end_va** - Output quadword, the process virtual ending code address of the unwind region containing the input IP.
- **uib_start_va** - Output quadword, the process virtual address of the UIB for the unwind region containing the input IP.
- **gp_value** - Output quadword, the GP value for this code region.

name

OpenVMS usage: pseudo-image-name
 type: character-code-text-string
 access: modify
 mechanism: by descriptor-fixed-length string descriptor

Optional, that is, may be zero. If the name parameter is specified and if a name was registered for the unwind region, then the descriptor pointer and length are updated to point to that stored name. Note that if the name parameter is specified but no name exists in the unwind tables, then the name descriptor is updated to zero length.

Unwind Routines

SYS\$GET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO

Description

Get *fixed up* unwind entry information relevant to the input instruction pointer (IP).

Related Services

SYS\$SET_UNWIND_TABLE, SYSS\$CLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE, LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

Condition Values Returned

SS\$NORMAL	Routine completed successfully.
SS\$IVADDR	Invalid PC.
SS\$NODATA	No unwind information found.

LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

Unwind Routine

Returns information from the unwind information block (UIB).

Format

```
LIB$GET_UIB_INFO uib_va [,gp_value] [,uw_desc_va] [,uw_desc_len] [,handler_fv]
                [,ossd_va] [,lsda_va]
```

Arguments

uib_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword that contains the virtual address of an unwind information block (UIB).

gp_value

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: read only
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword that contains the GP value that must be added to the UIB condition handler value. Must be specified if **handler_fv** is specified.

uw_desc_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: write
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword to store the virtual address of the unwind descriptor area. If none is present, then zero is returned. This is an optional argument.

un_desc_len

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: write
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword to store the length (in bytes) of the unwind descriptor area. If none are present, then zero is returned. This is an optional argument.

handler_fv

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: write
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword to store the function value of the condition handler. If none is present, then zero is returned. This is an optional argument.

Unwind Routines

LIB\$GET_UIB_INFO

ossd_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: write
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword to store the address of the operating system-specific data area. If none is present, then zero is returned. This is an optional argument.

lsda_va

OpenVMS usage: address
type: quadword (unsigned)
access: write
mechanism: by reference

Address of a quadword to store the address of the language-specific data area (LSDA). If none is present, then zero is returned. This is an optional argument.

Description

Takes in the address of an unwind information block (UIB) and the GP value for a routine and returns the addresses of the start of the unwind descriptors (if any), the handler function descriptor (if any), and the operating system-specific data area (if any). The size in bytes of the unwind descriptors is also returned.

Related Services

SYSSSET_UNWIND_TABLE, SYSSCLEAR_UNWIND_TABLE, SYSSGET_UNWIND_ENTRY_INFO,

Condition Values Returned

SS\$_NORMAL	Routine completed successfully.
LIB\$_INVARG	Bad UIB virtual address.

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

Note

For compatibility with the VAX and Alpha calling standards, this appendix describes big-endian values stored in little-endian bytes.

The unwind descriptor records are encoded in variable-length byte strings. The various record formats are described in this appendix. The first byte of each record is sufficient to determine its format. The high-order bit of this byte determines whether it is a header record (if the bit is zero), or a region descriptor record (if the bit is one). The remaining bits and any subsequent bytes are divided into separate fields. In most formats, the first field, R, identifies the record type. The record formats are listed by the bit pattern of the first byte in Table B-1.

Table B-1 Record Formats

Region Header Records		Prologue Descriptor Records		Body Descriptor Records	
Bit Pattern	Format	Bit Pattern	Format	Bit Pattern	Format
00-- ----	R1	100- ----	P1	10-- ----	B1
0100 0---	R2	1010 ----	P2		
0110 00--	R3	1011 0---	P3		
		1011 1000	P4		
		1011 1001	P5		
		110- ----	P6	110- ----	B2
		1110 ----	P7	1110 0000	B3
		1111 0000	P8	1111 -000	B4
		1111 0001	P9		
		1111 1001	X1	1111 1001	X1
		1111 1010	X2	1111 1010	X2
		1111 1011	X3	1111 1011	X3
		1111 1100	X4	1111 1100	X4
		1111 1111	P10		

Some fields in the unwind descriptor records are variable in length. The variable-length encoding uses the ULEB128 (Unsigned Little-Endian Base 128) encoding, described below:

- Divide the number into groups of 7 bits, beginning at the low-order end.

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

- Discard all groups of leading zeroes, but keep at least the first (low-order) group if the number is all zeroes.
- Place a 1 bit to the left of all but the last group; place a 0 bit to the left of the last group. This forms one or more 8-bit groups.

Table B-2 shows example ULEB128 encodings.

Table B-2 Example ULEB128 Encodings

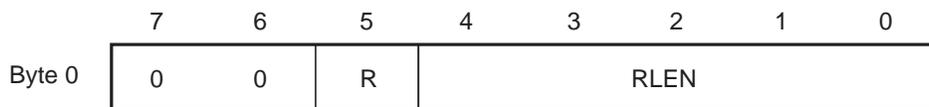
Value	Encoding	Interpretation
0	00000000	0
127	01111111	127
128	10000000 00000001	0 + (1 << 7)
1544	10001000 00001100	8 + (12 << 7)
49,802	10001010 10000101 00000011	10 + (5 << 7) + (3 << 14)

Fields in the ULEB128 format always follow the fixed fields, and begin on a byte boundary.

B.1 Region Header Records

The PROLOGUE and BODY region header records can appear in either format R1 or R3, depending on the magnitude of the region length field. If the region length is no greater than 31 instruction slots, the R1 format may be used; otherwise, format R3 must be used.

B.1.1 Format R1



VM-0987A-AI

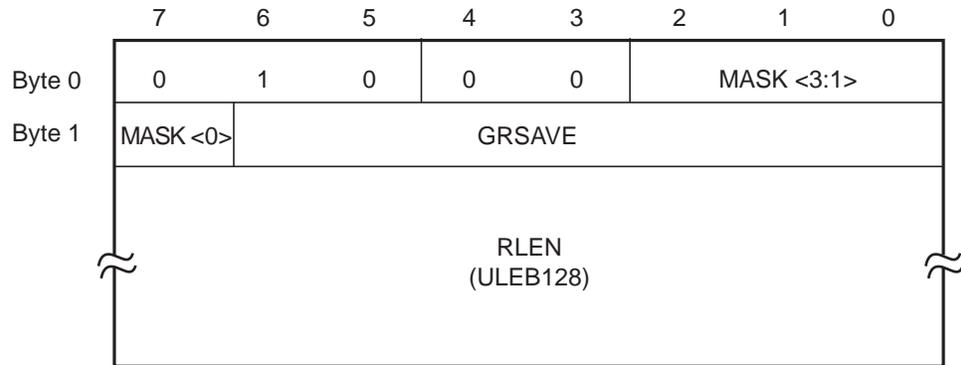
This format is used for the short forms of the PROLOGUE and BODY region header records. The R bit identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

Record Type	R
PROLOGUE	0
BODY	1

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.1 Region Header Records

B.1.2 Format R2



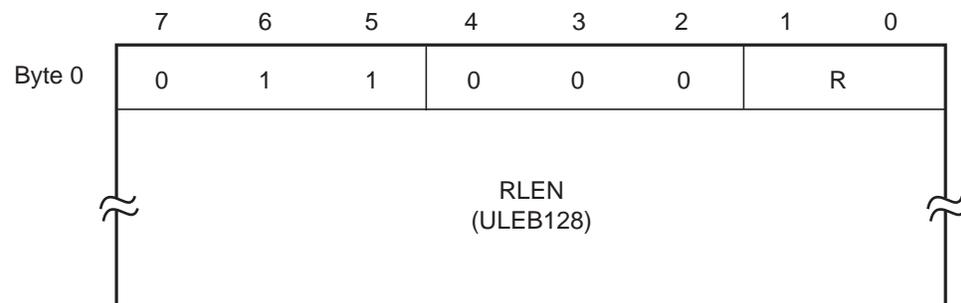
VM-0988A-AI

This format is used only for the PROLOGUE_GR region header record. The following table shows the meaning of the bits in the MASK field:

Mask bit	Meaning when bit is set
Byte 0, bit 2	RP is saved in a standard general register.
Byte 0, bit 1	AR.PFS is saved in a standard general register.
Byte 0, bit 0	PSP is saved in a standard general register.
Byte 1, bit 7	Predicate registers are saved in a standard general register.

The GRSAVE field identifies the general register in which the first of these values is stored. Additional general registers are used as needed. For example, assume that RP, AR.PFS, and the predicate registers are stored, but not PSP. The mask bits would be 1101, and GRSAVE might be set to 39, indicating that the three values are stored in R39, R40, and R41, respectively.

B.1.3 Format R3



VM-0989A-AI

This format is used for the long forms of the PROLOGUE and BODY region header records. The R field identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

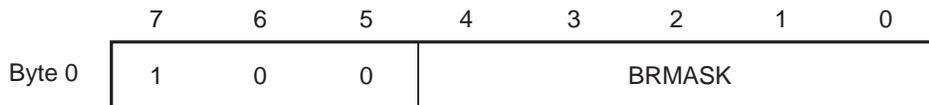
Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.1 Region Header Records

Record Type	R
PROLOGUE	00
BODY	01

B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

B.2.1 Format P1

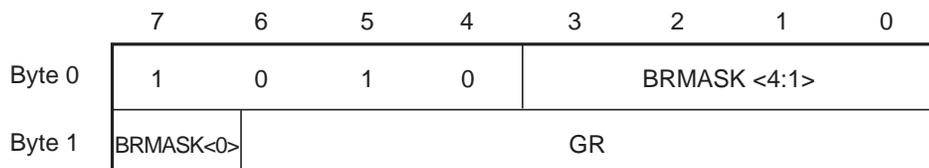


VM-0977A-AI

This format is used only for the BR_MEM descriptor record.

The five bits in the BRMASK field are used to indicate which of the five preserved branch registers (B1-B5) are saved in the prologue. Bit 0 corresponds to B1; bit 4 corresponds to B5. If the bit is clear, the corresponding register is not saved; if the bit is set, the corresponding register is saved.

B.2.2 Format P2



VM-0978A-AI

This format is used only for the BR_GR descriptor record.

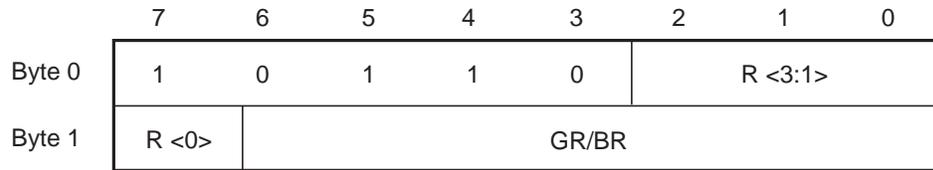
The five bits in the BRMASK field are used to indicate which of the five preserved branch registers (B1-B5) are saved in the prologue. Bit 7 of byte 1 corresponds to B1; bit 3 of byte 0 corresponds to B5. If the bit is clear, the corresponding register is not saved; if the bit is set, the corresponding register is saved.

The GR field identifies the general register in which the first of these registers is stored. Additional general registers are used as needed. For example, assume that B1, B4, and B5 are stored. The mask bits would be 11001, and GR might be set to 37, indicating that the three branch registers are stored in R37, R38, and R39, respectively.

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

B.2.3 Format P3

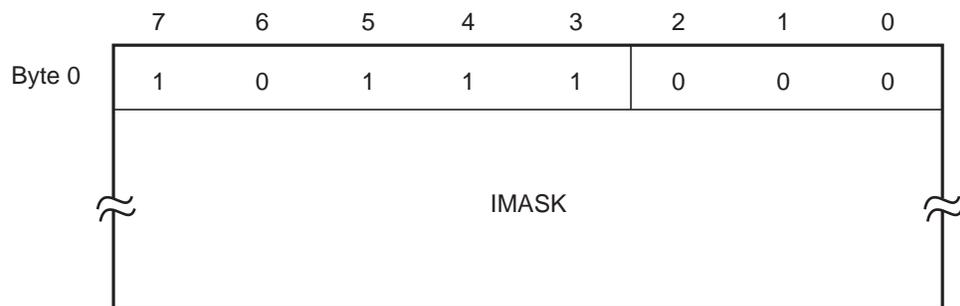


VM-0979A-AI

This format is used by the group of descriptor records that specify a general register or branch register number. The record type is identified by the R field, which is read as a four bit number whose low-order bit is bit 7 of byte 1. The following table shows the record types:

Record Type	R	Record Type	R
PSP_GR	0	RP_BR	6
RP_GR	1	RNAT_GR	7
PFS_GR	2	BSP_GR	8
PREDS_GR	3	BSPSTORE_GR	9
UNAT_GR	4	FPSR_GR	10
LC_GR	5	PRIUNAT_GR	11

B.2.4 Format P4



VM-0980A-AI

This format is used only by the SPILL_MASK descriptor record. The first byte is followed by the IMASK field, whose length is determined by the length of the current prologue region as given by the region header record. The IMASK field contains two bits for each instruction slot in the region, and the size is rounded up to the next whole number of bytes, if necessary.

The high-order (leftmost) two bits of the first byte of the IMASK field correspond to the first instruction slot of the region. Bit pairs are read from left to right (high-order bits to low-order bits) within each byte, and bytes are read from increasing memory addresses. Each bit field describes the behavior of the corresponding instruction slot as follows:

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

Bit Pair	Meaning
00	The instruction slot does not save one of these registers.
01	The instruction slot saves the next floating-point register.
10	The instruction slot saves the next general register.
11	The instruction slot saves the next branch register.

B.2.5 Format P5

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Byte 0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Byte 1	GRMASK				FRMASK <19:16>			
Byte 2	FRMASK <15:8>							
Byte 3	FRMASK <7:0>							

VM-0981A-AI

This format is used only by the FRGR_MEM descriptor record.

The bits in the GRMASK field correspond to the preserved general registers (R4-R7). The bits are read from right to left: bit 4 of byte 1 corresponds to R4, and bit 7 corresponds to R7.

The bits in the FRMASK field correspond to the preserved floating-point registers (F2-F5 and F16-F31). The bits are read from right to left: bit 0 of byte 3 corresponds to F2, and bit 3 of byte 1 corresponds to F31.

A value of 1 in each bit position indicates that the corresponding register is saved.

B.2.6 Format P6

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Byte 0	1	1	0	R	RMASK			

VM-0982A-AI

This format is used by the FR_MEM and GR_MEM descriptor records. The R bit identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

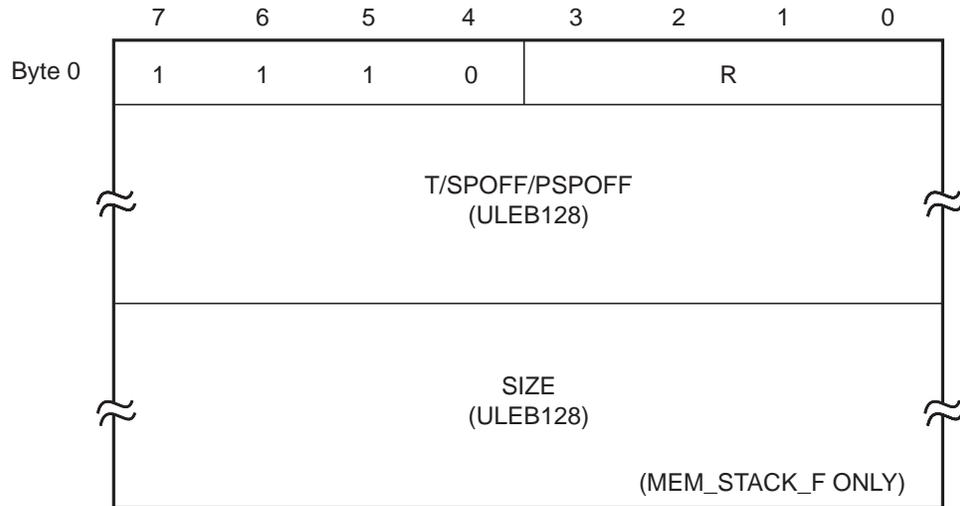
Record Type	R
FR_MEM	0
GR_MEM	1

The bits in the RMASK field correspond to either the preserved general registers (R4-R7) or the set of the first four preserved floating-point registers (F2-F5). The bits are read from right to left: bit 0 corresponds to R4 or F2, and bit 3

Unwind Descriptor Record Format B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

corresponds to R7 or F5. A value of 1 in each bit position indicates that the corresponding register is saved.

B.2.7 Format P7



This format is used for a number of descriptor records. The R field identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

Record Type	R	Additional ULEB128 Fields
MEM_STACK_F	0	T, SIZE
MEM_STACK_V	1	T
SPILL_BASE	2	PSPOFF
PSP_SPREL	3	SPOFF
RP_WHEN	4	T
RP_PSPREL	5	PSPOFF
PFS_WHEN	6	T
PFS_PSPREL	7	PSPOFF
PREDS_WHEN	8	T
PREDS_PSPREL	9	PSPOFF
LC_WHEN	10	T
LC_PSPREL	11	PSPOFF
UNAT_WHEN	12	T
UNAT_PSPREL	13	PSPOFF
FPSR_WHEN	14	T
FPSR_PSPREL	15	PSPOFF

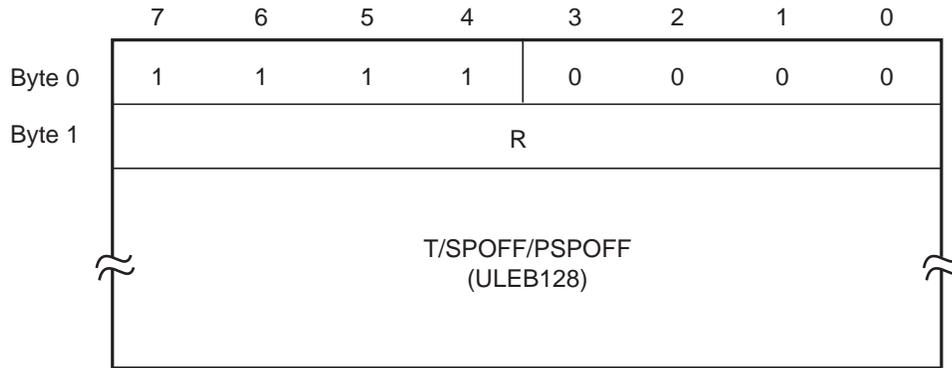
Stack pointer offsets (SPOFF) are represented as positive longword offsets from the top of the stack frame (that is, the location is $SP + 4 * SPOFF$). Previous stack pointer offsets (PSPOFF) are encoded as positive numbers

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

representing a negative longword offset relative to PSP+16 (that is, the location is $PSP + 16 - 4 * PSPOFF$).

B.2.8 Format P8



VM-0984A-AI

This format is used for a number of descriptor records. The R field identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

Record Type	R	Additional ULEB128 Fields
RP_SPREL	1	SPOFF
PFS_SPREL	2	SPOFF
PREDS_SPREL	3	SPOFF
LC_SPREL	4	SPOFF
UNAT_SPREL	5	SPOFF
FPSR_SPREL	6	SPOFF
BSP_WHEN	7	T
BSP_PSPREL	8	PSPOFF
BSP_SPREL	9	SPOFF
BSPSTORE_WHEN	10	T
BSPSTORE_PSPREL	11	PSPOFF
BSPSTORE_SPREL	12	SPOFF
RNAT_WHEN	13	T
RNAT_PSPREL	14	PSPOFF
RNAT_SPREL	15	SPOFF
PRIUNAT_WHEN_GR	16	T
PRIUNAT_PSPREL	17	PSPOFF
PRIUNAT_SPREL	18	SPOFF
PRIUNAT_WHEN_MEM	19	T

Stack pointer offsets (SPOFF) are represented as positive longword offsets from the top of the stack frame (that is, the location is $SP + 4 * SPOFF$). Previous stack pointer offsets (PSPOFF) are encoded as positive numbers

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.2 Descriptor Records for Prologue Regions

representing a negative longword offset relative to PSP+16 (that is, the location is PSP + 16 - 4 * PSPOFF).

B.2.9 Format P9

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Byte 0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Byte 1	0	0	0	0	GRMASK			
Byte 2	0	GR						

VM-0985A-AI

This format is used only by the GR_GR descriptor record.

The bits in the GRMASK field correspond to the preserved general registers (R4-R7). The bits are read from right to left: bit 0 of byte 1 corresponds to R4, and bit 3 corresponds to R7. The GR field identifies the general register in which the first of these registers is stored. Additional general registers are used as needed. For example, assume that R4, R5, and R7 are stored. The mask bits would be 1011, and GR might be set to 37, indicating that the three preserved general registers are stored in R37, R38, and R39, respectively.

B.2.10 Format P10

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Byte 0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Byte 1	ABI							
Byte 2	CONTEXT							

VM-0986A-AI

This format is reserved for ABI-specific unwind descriptor records, typically to identify a region whose stack frame indicates some saved context record (for example, a Unix signal context).

The value defined to indicate the OpenVMS ABI is 13. Codes for other operating systems are defined in the Itanium documentation.

The interpretation of the CONTEXT field is ABI dependent. No codes or interpretations are currently defined for OpenVMS. All codes are reserved for future use.

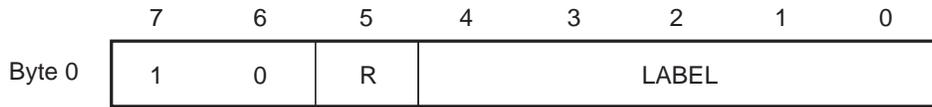
B.3 Descriptor Records for Body Regions

The EPILOGUE, LABEL_STATE, and COPY_STATE descriptor records can each appear in two formats, depending on the magnitudes of their fields.

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.3 Descriptor Records for Body Regions

B.3.1 Format B1

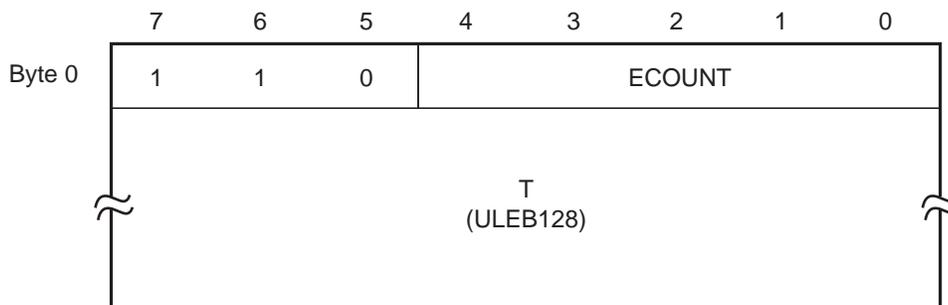


VM-0973A-AI

This record is used for the short form of LABEL_STATE and COPY_STATE descriptor records. If the label is no greater than 31, this format may be used; otherwise, format B4 must be used. The record types are shown in the following table:

Record Type	R
label_state	0
copy_state	1

B.3.2 Format B2

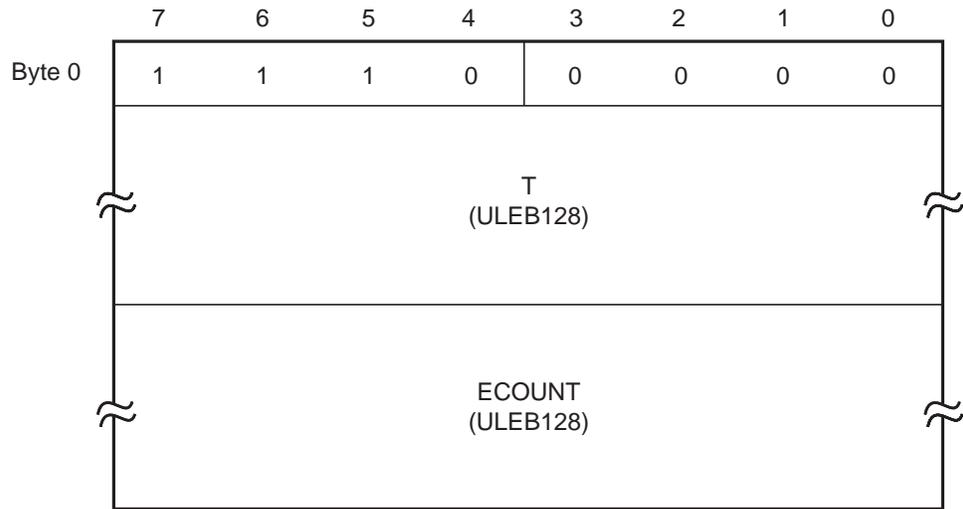


VM-0974A-AI

This format is used only for the short form of the EPILOGUE descriptor record. If the ECOUNT field is no greater than 31, this format may be used; otherwise, format B3 must be used.

B.3.3 Format B3

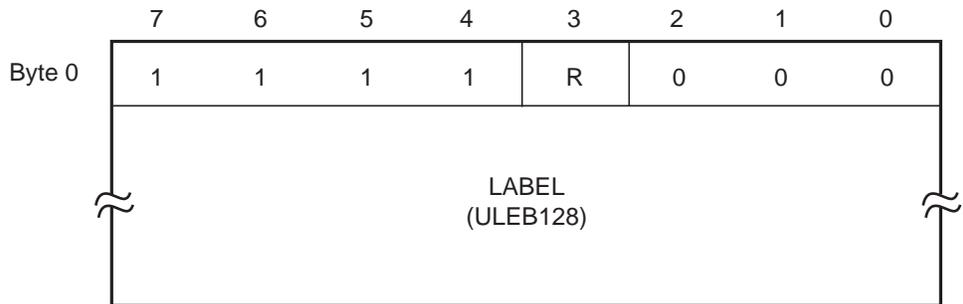
Unwind Descriptor Record Format B.3 Descriptor Records for Body Regions



VM-0975A-AI

This format is used only for the long form of the EPILOGUE descriptor record.

B.3.4 Format B4



VM-0976A-AI

This format is used only for the long form of the LABEL_STATE and COPY_STATE descriptor records. The record types are shown in the following table:

Record Type	R
label_state	0
copy_state	1

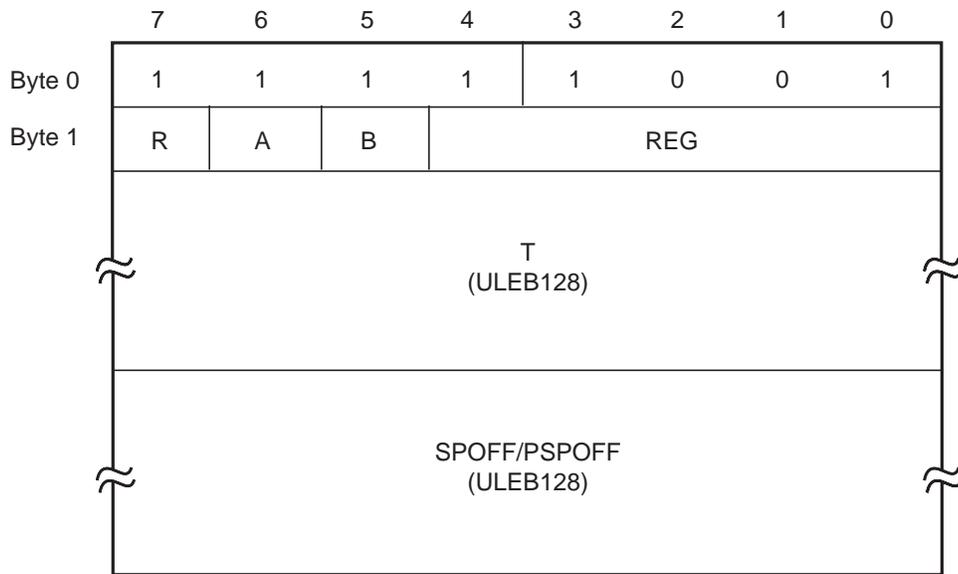
B.4 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions

The record formats listed here describe general spills and restores, and may appear in either body or prologue regions.

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.4 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions

B.4.1 Format X1



VM-0990A-AI

This format is used by the SPILL_PSPREL and SPILL_SPREL descriptor records, which identify when a register is saved by spilling to the memory stack. The R bit identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

Record Type	R
SPILL_PSPREL	0
SPILL_SPREL	1

The A, B, and REG fields identify the register being spilled. The encodings are given in the following table:

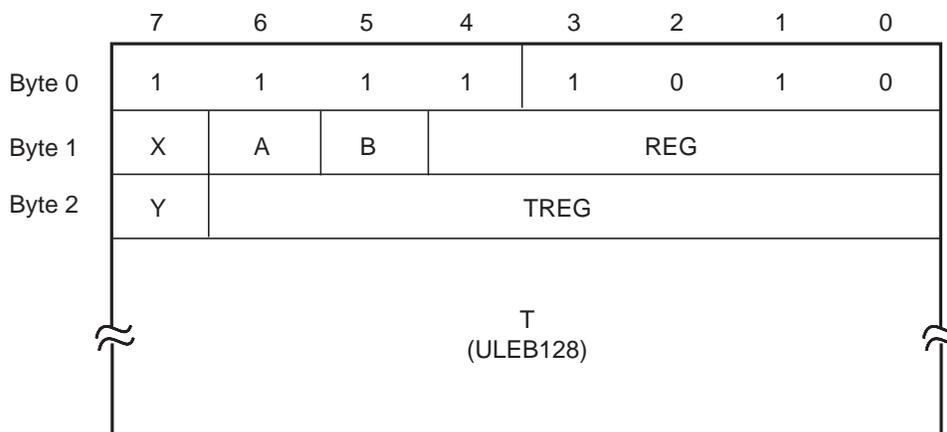
Register	A	B	REG
R3-R31	0	0	GR
F2-F5 or F16-F31	0	1	FR
B1-B5	1	0	BR
P1-P63	1	1	0
PSP	1	1	1
PRIUNAT	1	1	2
RP	1	1	3
AR.BSP	1	1	4
AR.BSPSTORE	1	1	5
AR.RNAT	1	1	6
AR.UNAT	1	1	7
AR.FPSR	1	1	8

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.4 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions

Register	A	B	REG
AR.PFS	1	1	9
AR.LC	1	1	10

B.4.2 Format X2



VM-0991A-AI

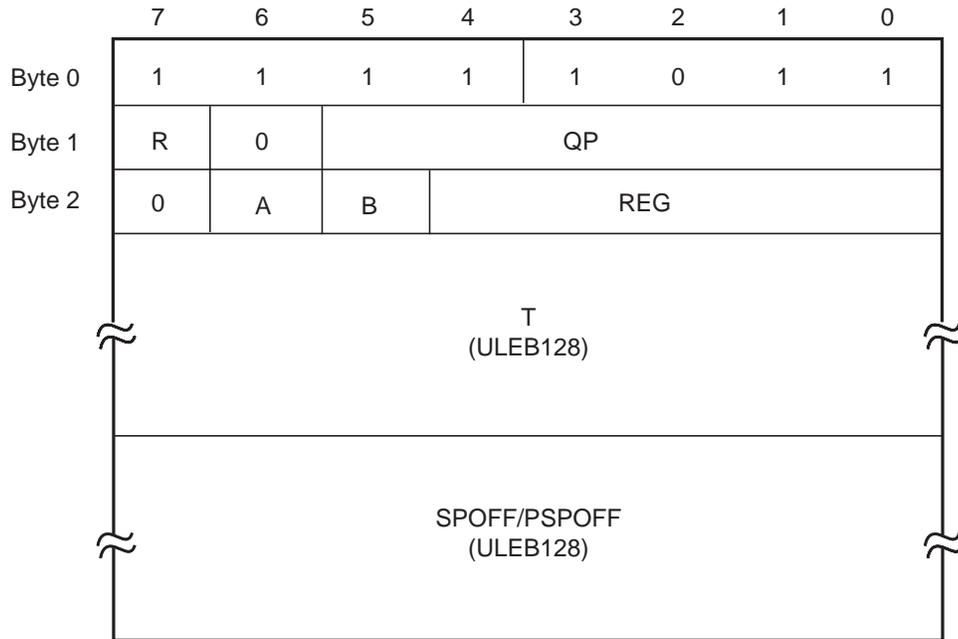
This format is used only by the SPILL_REG descriptor record, which identifies when a register is saved by copying to another register, or when a register is restored from its spill location. The register being saved or restored is identified by the A, B, and REG fields, using the same encodings given for Format X1. The target register to which the saved register is copied is identified by the X, Y, and TREG fields; a special encoding also indicates the restore operation. The encodings for these fields are given in the following table:

Register	X	Y	TREG
Restore	0	0	0
R1-R127	0	0	GR
F2-F127	0	1	FR
B0-B7	1	0	BR

B.4.3 Format X3

Unwind Descriptor Record Format

B.4 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions



VM-0992A-AI

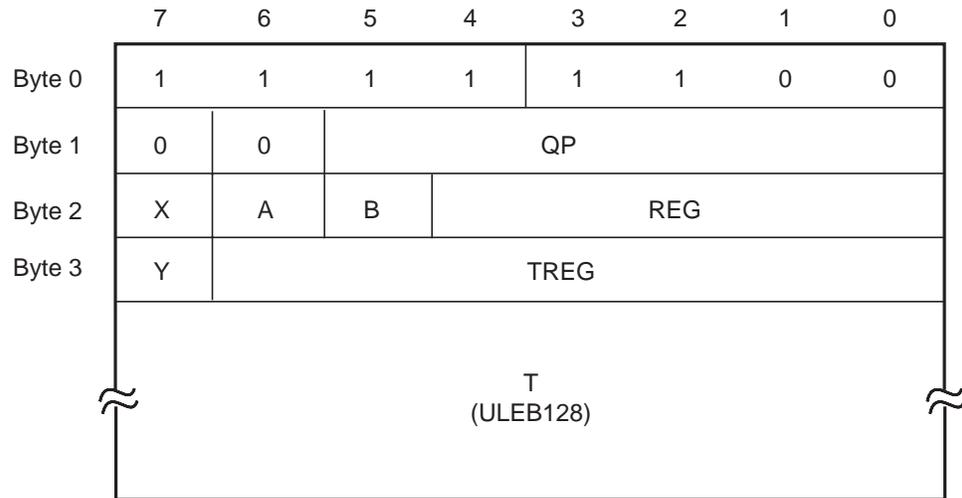
This format is used by the `SPILL_PSPREL_P` and `SPILL_SPREL_P` descriptor records, which identify when a register is saved under control of a predicate register. The R bit identifies the record type, as shown in the following table:

Record Type	R
<code>SPILL_PSPREL_P</code>	0
<code>SPILL_SPREL_P</code>	1

The QP field identifies the controlling predicate register. The remaining fields are encoded the same as Format X1.

B.4.4 Format X4

Unwind Descriptor Record Format B.4 Descriptor Records for Body or Prologue Regions



VM-0993A-AI

This format is used only by the SPILL_REG_P descriptor record, which identifies when a register is saved to another register under control of a predicate register, or when a register is restored under control of a predicate register. The QP field identifies the controlling predicate register. The remaining fields are encoded the same as Formats X1 and X2.

Summary of Differences from the Itanium Software Conventions

The OpenVMS Calling Standard on the Intel Itanium processor family is designed to follow the Itanium software conventions as much as possible while avoiding user-visible differences from the OpenVMS VAX and Alpha conventions. The design methodology was basically to start with the Itanium conventions and make changes only where it was deemed necessary to maintain compatibility with the historical OpenVMS design in ways that minimize the cost and difficulty of porting applications and OpenVMS itself to the Itanium architecture.

Following is a brief summary of the differences between the *Itanium® Software Conventions and Runtime Architecture Guide* and this Calling Standard. This summary assumes the reader is already familiar with the Intel Itanium processor family and related software specifications.

C.1 Changes

Data Model— OpenVMS on Alpha systems is deliberately ambiguous about the data model in use: many programs are compiled using what appears to be an ILP32 model, yet most of the system operates as though using either a P64 or LP64 model. The sign extension rules for integer parameters play a key role in making this more or less transparent. OpenVMS I64 preserves this characteristic, while the Itanium conventions define a pure LP64 data model.

Data Terminology— This specification uses the terms *word* and *quadword* to mean 2 bytes and 8 bytes, respectively, while the Itanium terminology uses these words to mean 4 bytes and 16 bytes respectively.

General Register Usage—General registers are used for integer arithmetic, some parts of VAX floating-point emulation, and other general-purpose computation. OpenVMS uses the same (default) conventions for these registers except for the following cases:

- R8 and R9 (only) are used for return values.
- R10 and R11 are used as scratch registers and not for return values.
- R25 is used for an AI (argument information) register.

Floating-Point Register Usage—Floating-point registers are used for floating-point computations, some parts of VAX floating-point emulation, and certain integer computations. OpenVMS uses the same (default) conventions for these registers except for the following cases:

- F8 and F9 (only) are used for return values.
- F10 through F15 are used as scratch registers and not for return values.

Summary of Differences from the Itanium Software Conventions

C.1 Changes

Parameter Passing—OpenVMS parameter passing is similar to the Itanium conventions, but with the following differences:

- Add an argument information register (for argument count and parameter type information).
- No argument is ever duplicated in both general and floating-point registers.
- For parameters that are passed in registers, the first parameter is passed in either the first general register slot (R32) or the first floating point register slot (F8), the second parameter in either the second general register slot (R33) or second floating register (F9) slot, and so on. Floating point parameters are not packed into the available floating point registers and at most eight parameters total are passed in registers.
- For 32-bit parameters passed in the general registers, the 32-bit value is sign-extended to the full 64-bit width of the parameter slot by replicating bit 31 (even for unsigned types).
- There is no even slot alignment for arguments larger than 64-bits.
- There is no special handling for HFA (homogeneous floating-point aggregates) in general, although some rules for complex types have a similar benefit.
- OpenVMS implements `__float128` pass-by value semantics using a reference mechanism.
- OpenVMS supports only little-endian representations.
- OpenVMS supports three additional VAX floating-point types for backward compatibility: `F_floating` (32 bits), `D_floating` (64 bits), and `G_floating` (64 bits). Values of these types are passed using the general registers.

Return Values— Return values up to at most 16 bytes in size may be returned in registers; larger return values are returned using a *hidden parameter* method using the first or second parameter slot.

C.2 Extensions

Some differences are not changes but rather additions or extensions. These include:

Floating-Point Data Types— The calling standard for OpenVMS I64 includes support for the VAX `F_floating` (32-bit), `D_floating` (64-bit) and `G_floating` (64-bit) data types found on VAX and Alpha systems; it omits support for the Itanium 80-bit double-extended floating-point type.

VAX Compatible Record Layout—The OpenVMS standard adds a user optional VAX compatible record layout.

Linkage Options—OpenVMS allows additional flexibility and user control in the use of the static general registers as inputs, outputs, global registers and whether used at all.

Memory Stack Overflow Checking—OpenVMS defines how memory stack overflow checking should be performed.

Function Descriptors—OpenVMS defines extended forms of function descriptors to support additional functionality for bound procedure values and translated image support.

Summary of Differences from the Itanium Software Conventions C.2 Extensions

Unwind Information— OpenVMS adds an operating system-specific data area to the Itanium unwind information block. The presence of an operating system-specific data area is indicated by a flag in the unwind information header.

Handler Invocation— OpenVMS does not invoke a handler while control is in either a prologue or epilogue region of a routine. This difference in behavior is indicated by a flag in the unwind information header.

Translated Images— OpenVMS adds support (signature information and special ABIs) for calls between native and translated VAX or Alpha images.

A

Active procedure, 3-22, 4-36, 4-37
Addresses
 for OpenVMS Alpha, 1-4
 for OpenVMS I64, 1-4
 for OpenVMS VAX, 1-4
Address representation, 1-4, 3-3, 4-8
AI (argument information)
 format, 3-32, 4-29
 register, 3-32, 4-29
Aligned record layout, 3-53, 4-60
Application register usage, 4-5
Argument data types, 6-1
Argument descriptors
 See DSCs
Argument home area, 3-12, 4-24
Argument information
 See AI
Argument Information Register (AI), 3-32, 4-29
Argument items, 3-42, 4-24
Argument lists, 3-12, 3-31, 4-30
 definition, 1-4
 evaluation, 2-5
 for Alpha, 3-43
 for I64, 4-23
 format, 2-4
 for VAX, 2-3
 interpreting, 2-4
Argument list structure
 Alpha, 3-43
 I64, 4-23
Argument mechanisms, 8-13
Argument order
 evaluation, 3-47, 4-31
Arguments
 passed in memory, 3-9, 3-12, 4-24
Argument vectors
 mechanism, 8-15
Array descriptors, 7-7
Asynchronous software interrupts
 definition, 1-4
Atomic data types, 6-1
Automatic registers, 4-1

B

Backing store for register stack, 4-17
Base register architecture, 3-34
BASIC file array descriptors, 7-35
Bits
 unused in passed data, 3-44, 4-28
Bound procedures, 3-36, 4-33
 definition, 1-4
 descriptors, 3-36, 4-35
 environment value, 3-38, 4-35
 values, 3-3, 3-36, 4-35
Branch register usage, 4-5
bss area, 4-57

C

Callback mechanism, overriding, 4-52
Call conventions
 invocation and return, 3-31, 4-18
Caller spill register information segment, A-25
Call frames
 definition, 1-4
Calling sequence, 2-3, 3-39, 4-19
 argument list, 2-3
Calling standard
 architectural level, 1-2
 goals, 1-2, 1-4
 terms, 1-4
Calls
 with computed addresses, 3-36, 4-22
Call stack, 3-22, 4-36
 how to walk, 3-27, 4-41
 transfer of control, 3-31, 4-18
Call tracing, 3-24, 4-37
CHF
 See Condition Handling Facility (CHF)
Cluster, 4-18
Compression text descriptors, 7-35
Computed calls
 See Calls with computed addresses
Condition handlers, 8-5
 coordinating with establisher, 8-24
 default, 8-24
 definition, 1-4
 deleting, 8-8

- Condition handlers (cont'd)
 - establishing, 8-7
 - exceptions, 8-5
 - memory use, 8-24
 - multiple active signals, 8-33
 - operations, 8-6
 - options, 8-6
 - parameters and invocation, 8-12
 - properties, 8-12
 - register values, 8-28
 - reinvokable, 8-33
 - request to unwind, 8-26
 - returning from, 8-25
 - searching for, 8-11
 - stack usage, 8-6
- Condition handling
 - procedure exceptions, 8-1
 - standards, 8-1
 - vector processor, 8-16
- Condition Handling Facility (CHF), 8-5, 8-6
- Conditions
 - from called procedures, 8-1
- Condition values
 - condition identification, 8-2
 - control, 8-3
 - definition, 1-4
 - description, 8-1
 - facility, 8-3
 - format, 8-1
 - interpreting severity codes, 8-4
 - message number, 8-3
 - severity codes, 8-2
 - symbols, 8-3
 - use, 8-5
- Constant registers, 4-1
- Constants, 4-59
- Current procedure, 3-23, 4-36

D

- Data alignment, 3-51, 4-58
- Data allocation, 3-50, 4-57
- Data area, 4-57
- Data passing, 3-42, 4-26
 - unused bits, 3-44, 4-27
- Data types

- atomic
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_B, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_BU, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_D, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_DC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_F, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FS, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FSC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FT, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FTC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FX, 6-3

Data types

- atomic (cont'd)
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_FXC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_G, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_GC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_H, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_HC, 6-3
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_L, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_LU, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_O, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_OU, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_Q, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_QU, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_W, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_WU, 6-2
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_Z, 6-2
- codes
 - facility specific, 6-7
 - reserved, 6-6
- miscellaneous
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_ADT, 6-6
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_BLV, 6-5
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_BPV, 6-5
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_DSC, 6-5
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_ZEM, 6-5
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_ZI, 6-5
- string
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NL, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NLO, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NR, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NRO, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NU, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_NZ, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_P, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_T, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_V, 6-4
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_VT, 6-4, 6-8
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_VU, 6-5
- varying character string, 6-8
 - DSCSK_DTYPE_VT, 6-8
- Decimal string descriptors, 7-14
- Default condition handlers, 8-24
- Default signature information, 5-13
- Default unwind information, A-27
- Definition of terms, 1-4
- Descriptors
 - See also DSCs, FDSCs and PDSCs
 - argument item, 3-42, 4-24
 - arrays, 7-7
 - BASIC file array, 7-35
 - class codes, 7-35
 - compression text, 7-35
 - decimal strings, 7-14
 - definition, 1-5
 - dynamic strings, 7-6
 - facility-specific class codes, 7-35
 - fixed length, 7-5
 - formats

Descriptors

formats (cont'd)

- DSC\$A_POINTER, 7-4
 - DSC\$B_CLASS, 7-4
 - DSC\$B_DTYPE, 7-4
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_A, 7-7
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_BFA, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_CT, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_D, 7-6
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_J, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_JI, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_NCA, 7-16
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_P, 7-12
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_PI, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_S, 7-5
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_SB, 7-31
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_SD, 7-14
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_UBA, 7-27
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_UBS, 7-26
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_UBSB, 7-33
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_V, 7-35
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_VS, 7-21
 - DSC\$K_CLASS_VSA, 7-23
 - DSC\$W_LENGTH, 7-4
 - DSC64\$B_CLASS, 7-4
 - DSC64\$B_DTYPE, 7-4
 - DSC64\$L_MBMO, 7-4, 7-6, 7-7, 7-10, 7-13, 7-15, 7-19, 7-22, 7-26
 - DSC64\$PQ_POINTER, 7-4
 - DSC64\$Q_LENGTH, 7-4
 - DSC64\$W_MBO, 7-4, 7-5, 7-7, 7-10, 7-13, 7-15, 7-19, 7-22, 7-26
 - prototype, 7-2
 - label, 7-35
 - noncontiguous arrays, 7-16
 - obsolete class codes, 7-35
 - procedure argument, 7-12
 - reserved class codes, 7-35
 - strings with bounds, 7-31
 - unaligned bit arrays, 7-27
 - unaligned bit strings, 7-26
 - unaligned bit strings with bounds, 7-33
 - variable buffer, 7-35
 - varying string arrays, 7-23
 - varying strings, 7-21
- Direct calls
See Calling Sequence
- DSCs (descriptors)
argument descriptors, 7-1 to 7-35
procedure descriptors, 7-12
- Dynamic string descriptor, 7-6

E

- Entry code sequences, 3-39
 - example for register frame procedures, 3-41
 - example for stack frame procedures, 3-40
- Environment value, 3-38, 4-35
- Exception conditions, 8-1
 - definition, 1-5
 - handler, 8-5
 - indicating, 8-8
 - signaling, 8-8
- Exceptions
 - continuation from, 8-25
 - synchronization, 8-24
- Exit code sequences, 3-41, 4-19
 - example for register frame procedures, 3-42
 - example for stack frame procedures, 3-41

F

- Facility-specific data type codes, 6-7
- Facility-specific descriptor class codes, 7-35
- FDSCs
 - bound function descriptor, 4-34
 - simple function descriptor, 4-33
- Fixed length
 - returned to stack, 2-8
- Fixed-length descriptor, 7-5
- Fixed-size stack frames, 3-9, 4-12
- Fixed temporary locations, 3-12
- Floating-point register usage, 3-2, 4-4
- Flow control, 3-3, 4-9
- Frame markers, 4-17
- free routine, 4-56
- Full function, 3-4
- Function
 - definition, 1-5
- Function descriptor, 4-57
 - See also PDSC for Alpha
- Function pointer, 4-57
 - definition, 1-5
- Function result, 3-32
- Function value returns, 2-6, 3-47, 4-32
 - by descriptor, 3-49
 - by immediate value, 3-48
 - by reference, 3-48
 - dynamic text, 3-49
 - in registers, 2-6
 - object created by called routine, 3-50
 - object created by calling routine, 3-49
 - registers, 2-1
 - to stack, 2-7, 2-8

G

General information segment, A-23
General register usage, 4-2
GENTRAP instruction, 8-9
Global data, 4-59
Global registers, 4-1
Global variables, 4-59
GOTO unwinds, 8-29
 nonlocal, 8-29
GP register, 4-18
Guard pages, 3-55, 4-13
Guard regions, 3-55, 4-13

H

Handler invocations
 during unwind, 8-32
Hardware exceptions, 8-1
 definition, 1-5
High-level languages
 argument evaluation, 2-5
 argument transmission, 2-5
 mapped into argument lists, 2-5

I

I64
 jacket function descriptor, 5-4
Image, 4-18
Immediate value
 argument item, 3-42, 4-24
 definition, 1-5
 large, 3-46, 4-25
Indirect calls, 4-19
 See Calls with computed addresses
Initial context
 I64, A-2
Inline code, 3-57, 4-15
Inline procedures calls
 and invocation chains, 4-41
 optimized
 and invocation chains, 4-41
Input registers, 4-2, 4-8, 4-16
Integer register usage, 3-1
 See also General register usage
Invocation chains
 in optimized procedure calls, 4-41
Invocation context
 access routines, 3-28, 4-40, 4-47
 analyzing, 4-45
 functions, 3-28, 4-40, 4-47
 obtaining handle, 3-29, 4-43, 4-44
 updating, 3-30, 4-45
Invocation context block, 3-25, 4-37

Invocation context callback routines, 4-52
 allocating memory, 4-56
 deallocating memory, 4-56
 obtaining the initial context, 4-53
 obtaining unwind information, 4-53
 transferring data, 4-54
 writing data, 4-55
Invocation handles, 3-24, 4-40
 creating, 3-27
 encoding, 3-24
 format for procedure, 3-24, 4-40
IP
 definition, 1-5

J

Jacket function descriptor, 5-4

L

Label descriptors, 7-35
Language extensions, 2-5
Language-specific Data Area, A-27
Language-support procedure, 1-5
Large immediate value, 3-46, 4-25
Leaf procedure, 1-5
LIB\$GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT routine, 3-29
LIB\$GET_INVO_CONTEXT routine, 3-28
LIB\$GET_INVO_HANDLE routine, 3-29
LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT routine, 3-29
LIB\$GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE routine, 3-30
LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_CONTEXT routine,
 4-42
LIB\$I64_GET_CURR_INVO_HANDLE routine,
 4-44
LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_CONTEXT routine, 4-41
LIB\$I64_GET_INVO_HANDLE routine, 4-43
LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_CONTEXT routine,
 4-43
LIB\$I64_GET_PREV_INVO_HANDLE routine,
 4-44
LIB\$I64_PUT_INVO_REGISTERS routine, 4-45
LIB\$I64_REV_INVO_END routine, 4-45
LIB\$PUT_INVO_REGISTERS routine, 3-30
LIB\$SIGNAL routine
 signaling, 8-8, 8-13
LIB\$STOP routine
 using, 8-8, 8-11, 8-13
LIBICB\$PH_UO_FREE routine, 4-56
LIBICB\$PH_UO_GETCONTEXT routine, 4-53
LIBICB\$PH_UO_GETUEINFO routine, 4-53
LIBICB\$PH_UO_MALLOC routine, 4-56
LIBICB\$PH_UO_READ_MEM routine, 4-54
LIBICB\$PH_UO_WRITE_MEM routine, 4-54
LIBICB\$PH_UO_WRITE_REG routine, 4-55
Library procedures, 1-5

- Lightweight procedures
 - Alpha requirements, 3–14
- Linkage pair blocks, 3–35
- Linkage pointers, 3–34
- Linkage sections, 3–34
- Linkage table, 4–57
- Literals, 4–59
- Local calls, 4–19
- Local registers, 4–16
- Local static data, 4–59
- Long bss area, 4–57
- Long data area, 4–57

M

- malloc routine, 4–56
- Memory stack, 4–10
- Memory stack parameters, 4–30
- Miscellaneous data types, 6–5
- Multiple active signals, 8–33
- Multithreaded execution environments, 3–54, 4–12

N

- Natural alignment
 - definition, 1–5
- Nested unwind, 8–34
- New stack region, 3–55, 4–13
- Noncontiguous array descriptors, 7–16
- Non-leaf procedure, 1–5
- Non-local calls, 4–19
- Non-own data items, 4–57
- Null frame procedures, 3–20, 4–9

O

- Obsolete descriptor class codes, 7–35
- Operating system-specific data area, A–23
- Optimized procedure calls
 - and invocation chains, 4–41
- OTSSCALL_PROC, 4–36
 - Alpha version, 5–3
 - I64 version, 5–5
- OTSSJUMP_TO_BPV, 4–36
- Output registers, 4–2, 4–8, 4–16
- Overlapping unwind, 8–34
- Override callback mechanism, 4–52
- Own data items, 4–57

P

- Parameter passing, 3–46, 4–23
- Parameter slots, 3–43, 4–26
- Partitioning, 4–1
- Passing mechanisms
 - descriptor
 - definition, 1–5

- Passing mechanisms (cont'd)
 - immediate value
 - definition, 1–5
 - language extensions, 2–5
 - reference
 - definition, 1–6

PC

- definition, 1–6
- PDSCs (procedure descriptors), 3–3
 - for bound procedures, 3–36
 - for null frame procedures, 3–20
 - for register frame procedures, 3–15
 - for stack frame procedures, 3–5

- Predicate register usage, 4–4

- Preserved registers, 2–1, 3–1, 4–1

Procedure calls

- optimized
 - and invocation chains, 4–41
- stack, 3–22, 4–36
- tracing, 3–24

Procedure descriptors

- See also FDSCs for I64
- See PDSCs for Alpha or DSCs for VAX and Alpha

- Procedure frames, 3–9, 4–10

- Procedure invocation, 3–22, 4–36
 - handle, 3–24, 4–40

- Procedure linkage, 4–18

Procedures, 3–3

- definition, 1–6
- language support, 1–5
- library, 1–5
- types, 4–9
- without frames, 3–20

Procedure signature

- see Signature information

Procedure signature information blocks

- See PSIGs

- Procedure types, 3–3, 4–9

- Procedure values, 1–6, 3–31, 4–57

- bound, 3–3, 3–36
- definition, 3–3, 4–9
- examining, 3–36

Process

- definition, 1–6

- PSIGs ((procedure) signature information blocks), 5–6

- field conversions, 5–10

R

- Read-only registers, 4–1

- Receiving data
 - Alpha, 3–47

- Record layout, 3–52, 4–59

- VAX compatible, 3–54, 4–61

- Reference
 - definition, 1-6
- Reference argument item, 3-42, 4-25
- Register classes, 4-1
- Register frame procedures, 3-14, 4-36
 - descriptors, 3-15, 4-36
- Registers, 2-1, 3-1, 4-1
 - application usage, 4-5
 - automatic, 4-1
 - branch usage, 4-5
 - floating-point usage, 3-2, 4-4
 - for returns, 2-1
 - general usage, 4-2
 - global, 4-1
 - input, 4-8
 - integer usage, 3-1
 - output, 4-8
 - predicate usage, 4-4
 - preserved, 4-1
 - scalar, 2-1
 - scratch, 4-1
 - special, 4-1
 - user mask, 4-18
 - VAX usage, 2-1
 - vector, 2-2
 - volatile, 4-8
- Register save area
 - See RSA
- Register stack, 4-15
- Request to unwind, 8-26
- Reserved data type codes, 6-6
- Reserved descriptor class codes, 7-35
- Reserve region, 3-55, 4-13
- Returning data, 3-47
- Returning from condition handlers, 8-25
- Returning function value
 - fixed length to stack, 2-8
 - to stack, 2-7
 - varying string to stack, 2-8
- Returns
 - address, 3-31
 - condition value, 8-1
 - function value, 2-6
- Return values, 4-32
- Revert to caller's handling, 8-8
- Rotating registers, 4-17
- RSA (register save area)
 - layout, 3-12, 3-13
 - stack frames, 3-12

S

- Scalars
 - processor synchronization, 2-8
 - register usage, 2-1

- Scratch registers, 4-1
- Sending data
 - argument order evaluation, 3-47, 4-31
 - mechanisms, 3-46, 4-25
- Severity codes, 8-2
 - handling, 8-4
 - interpreting, 8-4
 - meanings, 8-4
 - symbols, 8-4
- Short bss area, 4-57
- Short data area, 4-57
- Signal
 - definition, 1-6
- Signal argument vectors, 8-13
- Signaler's register, 8-28
- Signaling conditions, 8-8
 - with GENTRAP, 8-9
 - with LIBSSIGNAL, 8-9
- Signature information, 5-6
 - default, 5-13
- Simple procedure, 3-36, 4-33
- Special calls, 4-19
- Special registers, 4-1
- Stack frames
 - fixed size, 3-9
 - format, 3-9
 - procedure descriptors, 3-5
 - procedures, 3-4, 4-10
 - register save area, 3-12
 - variable size, 3-10, 4-12
- Stack guard region
 - multithreads, 3-55, 4-13
- Stack limit checking
 - explicit, 3-57, 4-14
 - implicit, 3-56, 4-13
 - methods, 3-55, 4-13
 - multithreads, 3-55, 4-13
- Stack overflow, 3-55, 4-12, 4-13
 - handling, 3-58, 4-13
 - multithreads, 3-55, 4-13
- Stack reserve region
 - checking, 3-57, 4-13
 - multithreads, 3-55, 4-13
- Stack return
 - mechanism, 3-50
 - values to top, 2-7
- Stack temporary area, 3-11, 4-11
- Stack usage, 3-34, 8-6
 - for Alpha systems, 3-9
 - for VAX, 2-2
- Standard calls
 - definition, 1-6
- Standard-conforming procedures
 - definition, 1-6
- Static data, 3-50, 4-59
- Static data alignment, 3-51, 4-58

- String data types, 6–4
- String with bounds descriptors, 7–31
- Synchronization
 - exception, 2–8
 - memory, 2–8
- SYSSCALL_HANDL+4 routine
 - using, 8–28
- SYSSGOTO_UNWIND routine, 8–30
 - unwinding, 8–33
- SYSSGOTO_UNWIND_64 routine, 8–30
 - unwinding, 8–33
- SYSSUNWIND routine
 - unwinding, 8–26, 8–33

T

- TEBs (thread environment blocks), 3–54, 4–12
- Thread environment blocks
 - See TEBs
- Thread-safe code
 - definition, 1–6
- Threads of execution
 - definition, 1–6
- Transfer code
 - address, 3–38
 - sequence, 3–38
- Translated images
 - overview, 5–1
- TRAPB instruction, 8–24

U

- Unaligned bit array descriptors, 7–27
- Unaligned bit string descriptors, 7–26
- Unaligned bit string with bounds descriptors, 7–33
- Unused bits in passed data, 3–44, 4–28
- Unwind information, default, A–27
- Unwinding the stack, A–2
- Unwinds
 - completion, 8–28, 8–32
 - exit, 8–30
 - GOTO, 8–29
 - handler invocation, 8–32
 - nested, 8–34
 - operations, 8–26
 - multiple active, 8–34
 - overlapping, 8–34
- User mask, 4–7
- User override callback mechanism, 4–52

V

- Variable buffer descriptors, 7–35
- Variable-size stack frames, 3–10
- Varying character string data types, 6–8

- Varying string
 - returned to stack, 2–8
- Varying string array descriptors, 7–23
- Varying string descriptors, 7–21
- VAX language extension, 2–5
- VAX scalar
 - See Scalars
- VAX vector
 - See Vector processors; Vector registers
- Vector processors
 - exception handling, 8–16
 - synchronization, 2–8
- Vector registers
 - usage, 2–2
- Volatile registers, 4–2, 4–8

