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Floppy Disks: How They Are Affected By Magnetic Fields

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Apple Technical Support is sometimes asked how to measure a magnet to determine if it can damage the data on diskettes. Specifications of this nature are not very informative, because there are numerous variables. Besides, not many users have instrumentation to test the magnetic field to insure the safety of the information stored on the diskette.

Some of the variables:

- the strength and proximity of the magnet
- the flux field of the magnet, which may be highly influenced by the ferrite material to which it is attached
- the age of the disk and the age of the data on the disk
- the age of the disk drive
- the condition, alignment, and cleanliness of the disk drive
- the orientation of the disk in relationship to the field

Our recommendation is always to isolate diskettes from magnetic sources, including telephones, certain monitors, even the cover of the ImageWriter I (which contains a small magnet as part the interlock switching mechanism).

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