

# How to use unsafe pointers

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version	1.0.0
scope	Example. This code is provided as example code for a user to base their code on.
description	How to use unsafe pointers
boards	Unless otherwise specified, this example runs on the SliceKIT Core Board, but can easily be run on any XN device by using a different XN file.

An `unsafe` pointer type is provided. This is for compatibility with C and to implement dynamic, aliasing data structures (for example linked lists). This is not the default pointer type and the onus is on the programmer to ensure memory safety for these types.

An unsafe pointer is opaque unless accessed in an `unsafe` region. A function can be marked as `unsafe` to show that its body is an unsafe region:

```
unsafe void f(int * unsafe x) {
    // We can dereference x in here,
    // but be careful - it may point to garbage
    printintln(*x);
}
```

Unsafe functions can only be called from unsafe regions. You can make a local unsafe region by marking a compound statement as `unsafe`:

```
void g(int * unsafe p) {
    int i = 99;
    unsafe {
        p = &i;
        f(p);
    }
    // Cannot dereference p or call f from here
}
```

These regions allow the programmer to manage the parts of their program that are safe by construction and the parts that require the programmer to ensure safety.

Within unsafe regions, unsafe pointers can be explicitly cast to safe pointers - providing a contract from the programmer that the pointer can be regarded as safe from then on.

It is undefined behaviour for an unsafe pointer to be written from one task and read from another.



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