

Managing FlukeView® Forms Databases

FlukeView Forms Technical Note

This technical note answers frequently asked questions about managing the data stored in a FlukeView Forms database. It discusses what is kept inside a database, and provides tips on managing your FlukeView Forms databases. It shows you how to copy data between databases. And it describes how you can send forms with data on it to other people, inside or outside of your company.

Table of Contents

- [What is kept in a FlukeView Forms database?](#)
- [Which database am I currently using?](#)
- [How do I create a new FlukeView Forms database?](#)
- [How do I use a different database in FlukeView Forms?](#)
- [How do I copy a form template from one database to another?](#)
- [How do I copy data between FlukeView Forms databases?](#)
- [How do I copy a saved form to another FlukeView Forms database?](#)
- [How do I copy meter data from one FlukeView Forms database to another?](#)
- [How can I send a saved form in FlukeView Forms to someone else?](#)

What is kept in a FlukeView Forms database?

Simply put, all your data. Each time a form is saved in FlukeView Forms, all of the data stored on the form is saved to the currently selected database.

Specifically, when a form is saved, the following data is saved:

- *Meter Data*: data from the meter that is uploaded, logged, or copied to the form.
- *User Data*: Data typed into the form; for example, a comment typed into a memo field.

- *Form Item Settings*: Various settings made to graphs, tables or other form items on the form to format the way the data is displayed. For instance, the zoom factors or trace selections for the graphs; or the data groups being displayed by the tables.
- *Saved Form Info*: When saving a form, you're asked for a **Form remark** – a comment about the data saved on the form. These remarks, along with the date you initially saved the form, are stored in the database, and are used (along with the form template the saved form is based on) to retrieve and view the saved form later.

The saved form is the key to viewing data you've saved to the database. Select **Open Saved Form...** from the **File** menu, and find the remark and save date in the **Open Saved Form** dialog that corresponds to the saved form you want to view.

You can also use the **Find** tool to search the database for a particular saved form. This is helpful when you have many saved forms in your database. You can search for saved form remarks, the date the form was initially saved, or text typed into the form itself (user data).

Besides data, the only other thing that's saved in the database is the form templates – “blank” forms containing no data, which you create a new form with, and then add data to and save. You initially select a form template that will display the data the way you want (i.e., with or without graphs, tables, comment fields, etc.). After choosing the form template, data may then be transferred to the form. (For example, the “Generic Logging Form” form template is frequently used for displaying logged readings.)

Form templates can be modified or created using the FlukeView Forms Designer program, and can be exported and imported to form template files. For details, see the *FlukeView Forms Tutorial 1: Customizing Form Templates* from the FlukeView Forms Help Menu, CD, or the FlukeView Forms support page at <http://www.fluke.com/flukeviewforms/>.

Which database am I currently using?

FlukeView Forms and FlukeView Forms Designer always displays the pathname of the currently open database in the blue title bar – in brackets, following “FlukeView Forms”. By default, all FlukeView Forms databases have file extension `.fdb`; e.g., “`tutorial.fdb`”.

Whenever FlukeView Forms (or FlukeView Forms Designer) is started, the database that was previously used is opened automatically. So, unless you [open a different database](#), or [create a new database](#), you will continue to use the same database every time you run FlukeView Forms.

When FlukeView Forms is installed, the default database is “`sample.fdb`”. `sample.fdb` contains saved forms with sample data, and is intended to provide examples of typical ways that FlukeView Forms can be used to retrieve and display data.

After using `sample.fdb` to become familiar with FlukeView Forms, it's a good idea to [create new databases](#), and use them instead of `sample.fdb`. Storing all of the data you collect into a

single, ever-growing database can lead to poor performance and clutter. Instead, store your data in several smaller FlukeView Forms databases, with similar data stored together.

How do I create a new FlukeView Forms database?

You can create a new FlukeView Forms database in FlukeView Forms Designer.

1. If FlukeView Forms is running, close the application.
2. Open FlukeView Forms Designer.
3. From the **File** menu, select **New Database...** The **New Database** dialog will appear.
4. Type in the name of the new database you wish to create. (`new.fdb` is the default.)
5. Click on the **Save** button.

A new FlukeView Forms database will be created with the filename you provided. The next time you start FlukeView Forms, the new database will automatically be opened.

The new database is created with no saved data, and only the generic form templates. You can [copy saved forms](#) or [form templates](#) from other databases to your new database, if you wish.

How do I use a different database in FlukeView Forms?

Once you have created several FlukeView Forms databases (perhaps assigning a separate database to each of your clients, or to separate projects or tasks), how do you select which database you want to use in FlukeView Forms?

1. From the **File** menu, select **Open Database...** The **Open Database** dialog will appear.
2. Browse and select the database you wish to open. Click on the **Open** button.
3. The **New Blank Form** dialog will appear. Select the form template you wish to display. (You can always change the form template later, by selecting **New Blank Form...** from the **File** menu, or by selecting a form template from **Select a form:** on the FlukeView Forms toolbar.)

The database you selected will become the default database from now on, until you open a different database, or [create a new one](#).

A shortcut: the names of the last four FlukeView Forms databases you've used are listed at the bottom of the **File** menu. Select any of these database names will open that database.

How do I copy a form template from one database to another?

When you [create a new database](#), the database contains no data, and only the default form templates. You may want to use a form template contained in a different database for creating forms in your new database. For example, you might want to use the *Three Meter Sample* form template in the `sample.fdb` in your new database.

However, a form template is only available for use if it is stored in the database that is currently open; and *Three Meter Sample* is only in `sample.fdb`. So the form template must be copied from `sample.fdb` to your new database:

1. If FlukeView Forms is running, close the application.
2. Open FlukeView Forms Designer.
3. [Open the database](#) containing the form template you wish to copy. (E.g., `sample.fdb`.)
4. From the **File** menu of FlukeView Forms Designer, select **Open... The Open Form Template** dialog appears.
5. Select the form template you wish to copy and click on the **OK** button. The form template you selected will be displayed in FlukeView Forms Designer.
6. From the **File** menu, select **Export...** The **Export Form Template** dialog will appear.
7. Type in a new filename to save the form template in. Click on the **Save** button. This creates a new form template file (with file extension `.ftf`), containing only the file template you are currently displaying.
8. Now select **Open Database...** from the FlukeView Forms Designer **File** menu. The **Open Database** dialog will appear.
9. Select the database you wish to copy the form template into (in this example, the new database), and click on the **Open** button.
10. Select **Import...** from the **File** menu. The **Import Form Template** dialog appears.
11. Select the form template file you just created, and click on the **Open** button.
12. The form template is copied into the database. You still need to name the form template and save it into the database; do this by selecting **Save As...** from the **File Menu**.

You can now use this form template to create forms in your new database.

Note: when you [copy a saved form from one database to another](#), the form template associated with the saved form is automatically copied as well. This is actually a simpler way of copying a form template from one database to another, but it also copies data along with the template.

This operation, along with other form template design procedures, can be found in *FlukeView Forms Tutorial 1: Customizing Form Templates* from the FlukeView Forms Help Menu, CD, or the FlukeView Forms support page at <http://www.fluke.com/flukeviewforms/>.

How do I copy data between FlukeView Forms databases?

Beginning with FlukeView Forms version 2.1, there are two ways to copy data between databases:

1. [Copy an entire saved form from one database to another](#). All the meter data, typed-in user data and form item settings of the saved form will be copied (along with the associated form template, if necessary) into either an existing database.

Alternatively, the saved form can be copied into a new database, containing only the saved form and its form template.

2. [Copy only the meter data from a saved form in another database](#). This is useful when you wish to copy meter data saved in a different database into the form you are currently viewing in FlukeView Forms.

These two methods of copying data are described below.

How do I copy a saved form to another FlukeView Forms database?

Beginning with FlukeView Forms 2.1, you can copy an entire saved form into another database, or into a new database. The entire saved form – including the meter data stored in the form, the user data typed into the form, and the form item settings – will be duplicated. If the form template associated with the saved form does not exist in the target database, it will be copied as well.

To copy a saved form to another existing database, or to a new database:

1. In FlukeView Forms, [open the database](#) containing the saved form you wish to copy.
2. Select **Open Saved Form...** from the **File** menu. The **Open Saved Form** dialog will appear.
3. Select the saved form you want to copy. Click on the **OK** button. The saved form will be displayed.
4. Select **Export Form...** from the **File** menu. The **Export Form to New or Different Database** dialog will appear.
 - a. If you want to copy the saved form to an existing FlukeView Forms database, select the existing database in the dialog box.

- b. If you want to create a new database, containing only the saved form (and its associated form template), type in a new file name in **File name:**.
5. Click on the **Save** button.

The saved form has been copied to the database you specified.

How do I copy meter data from one FlukeView Forms database to another?

Beginning with FlukeView Forms 2.1, you can copy the meter data from a saved form in another database into the form you are currently displaying. This is useful when you wish to compare data you've stored in a different database to data you're currently evaluating – particularly when you're using a template that has been enabled for multiple data groups. (For more details on multiple data groups, see the *FlukeView Forms Tutorial 4: Working with Multiple Data Groups on a Form* from the FlukeView Forms Help Menu, CD, or the FlukeView Forms support page at <http://www.fluke.com/flukeviewforms/>.)

1. In FlukeView Forms, display the form you wish to copy the meter data to. It can be a new blank form (i.e., a form template), or a saved form that already contains some data.
2. Select **Import Form Data...** from the **Edit** menu. The **Import Form Data From Database** dialog will appear.
3. Select the database containing the meter data you want to copy. Click on the **Open** button.
4. The **Import Form Data From Database** dialog will appear. This is similar to the **Open Saved Form** dialog; select the saved form containing the meter memory you want to copy.
5. If the saved form you selected and/or the form you are currently viewing is enabled for multiple data groups, a dialog will appear asking you to specify:
 - a. The data group associated with meter data you wish to copy from the saved form in the other database.
 - b. The data group on the currently displayed form to copy the meter data to.

The dialog will reappear for each data group that is active on the currently displayed form. If you don't want to copy the meter data to other data groups on this form, simply click on the **Cancel** button.

The data has now been copied to the active form.

How can I send a saved form in FlukeView Forms to someone else?

After you've placed meter data and your comments on a form, and then formatted and saved it, you probably want to show it to other people – your customers or other people in your company, for example.

In many cases, this can be done by printing out the form, and then mailing or faxing the printout to the people concerned. However, what if you want to send it to someone electronically, via e-mail? Or to someone who wants to analyze the data further, or wants to compare it with data collected in other FlukeView Forms databases?

This can be done by [copying the saved form \(or forms\) to a new database](#), and sending it to the intended audience. The new database will contain only the saved forms you want to distribute.

A FlukeView Forms database can be e-mailed, or copied to a CD-ROM or floppy disk. While it may be large, there are ways to reduce its size for easier transport:

1. Open the database with FlukeView Forms Designer, and **Optimize** the database (select **Database Maintenance...** from the **Advanced** menu). This will compact the database.
2. To further reduce the size of the database, use a program like ZIP or WinZIP to compress the database. Data compression programs can dramatically reduce the size of a FlukeView Forms database for transport.

If the people you are sending the database to do not own FlukeView Forms, they will not be able to view the saved forms in the database. However, there is now a FlukeView Forms Demo version available from Fluke, which can be used to view existing FlukeView Forms databases. It is free, and available for download from the FlukeView Forms web site at <http://www.fluke.com/flukeviewforms/>.

The Demo version of FlukeView Forms cannot communicate with meters; all meter communications components have been disabled. The commercial version of FlukeView Forms must be purchased to transfer data from supported meters. The Demo version also does not come with FlukeView Forms Designer.

However, the Demo version can be used to display, edit and print saved forms created with the commercial version. It basically provides all the data display, formatting and printing capabilities of the commercial FlukeView Forms software.