

# Database sweep

When a database is swept, all old invalid data is removed from the data pages, thus reducing the total size of the database and making room for new data sets.

A database sweep performs a [garbage collection](#) in the database, and is performed automatically during a [database backup](#) or when a [SELECT](#) query is made on a [table](#) (and not by [INSERT](#), [ALTER](#) or [DELETE](#)). Furthermore database sweeps are, as standard, executed automatically after every 20,000 operations. With very consistent databases however a database sweep can be started unnecessarily and thus cost unnecessary performance loss during normal user processing. The default database sweep interval value of 20,000 (operations) can be overwritten using the IBExpert Services menu item Database Properties.

Under *Sweep Interval* the number of operations can be specified before a database sweep should be automatically performed. A database sweep or backup can be performed during 24 hour operation online without any problems (i.e. the server does not need to be shut down). This however does slow performance during the sweep which may not be desired.

If the sweep interval is specified at zero (0) it is not performed automatically at all. It could then be performed explicitly, for example, at night as a sweep or backup using [GFIX](#) and the at Windows command or the Linux `cron` command.

**New to Firebird 2.0:** [Superserver garbage collection changes](#)

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Last update: **2023/08/14 15:13**

