When and How to Use >>IMP OPTION

In many COBOL applications, individual programs often require different compiler options. Some modules may need special flags, while others must *avoid* certain options entirely.

Typically, compiler options are defined in a compiler properties file or configured directly in the IDE's compiler command line. However, this approach forces you to modify global settings every time a single program needs unique compilation behavior. Over time, this becomes error-prone and disrupts the workflow for the rest of the application.

To avoid constantly changing global settings, COBOL provides the compiler directive: >>IMP OPTION "String". *String* is a quoted text value containing the compiler options you want applied or not applied *only* to that specific program. This allows you to embed program-specific compilation rules directly in the source code, ensuring the correct options are always used without modifying project-wide configuration files.

For example, suppose one program must always be compiled with the -dz option, and must *never* be compiled with -di. Instead of adjusting the global compiler settings each time, you can place the following directive at the very beginning of the program:

```
>>IMP OPTION "-dz -no-di"
```

This ensures:

- **-dz** is always applied when compiling this program
- **-di** is explicitly disabled
- No changes are required in compiler properties file, batch scripts, or the IDE settings
- The program remains self-contained and portable, because its compilation requirements travel with the source code

Another example would be to use the "-brand" compile switch introduced in 2024R2. Suppose you want every compilation of a particular program to include a timestamp or version marker. You can embed this information directly into the program using -brand:

```
>>IMP OPTION "-brand=Last modified: 2026-07-28"
```

There is more information about this directive in isCOBOL's documentation in the SDK User's Guide under Compiler and Runtime : Compiler : Compiler Directives : IMP OPTION Directive.

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