



# ***Common Flash Interface (CFI) and Command Sets***

***Application Note 646***

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***April 2000***



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## Revision History

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Date of Revision	Number	Description
	-001	Original version
06/01/97	-002	Added ANSI 'C' code to Appendix A
12/01/97	-003	Removed routine codes from the Appendices
04/01/00	-004	Reformatted document

## 1.0 Introduction

This application note defines Common Flash Interface (CFI), Basic Command Set (BCS), and Scaleable Command Set (SCS), as well as discusses their benefits and details how best to use them.

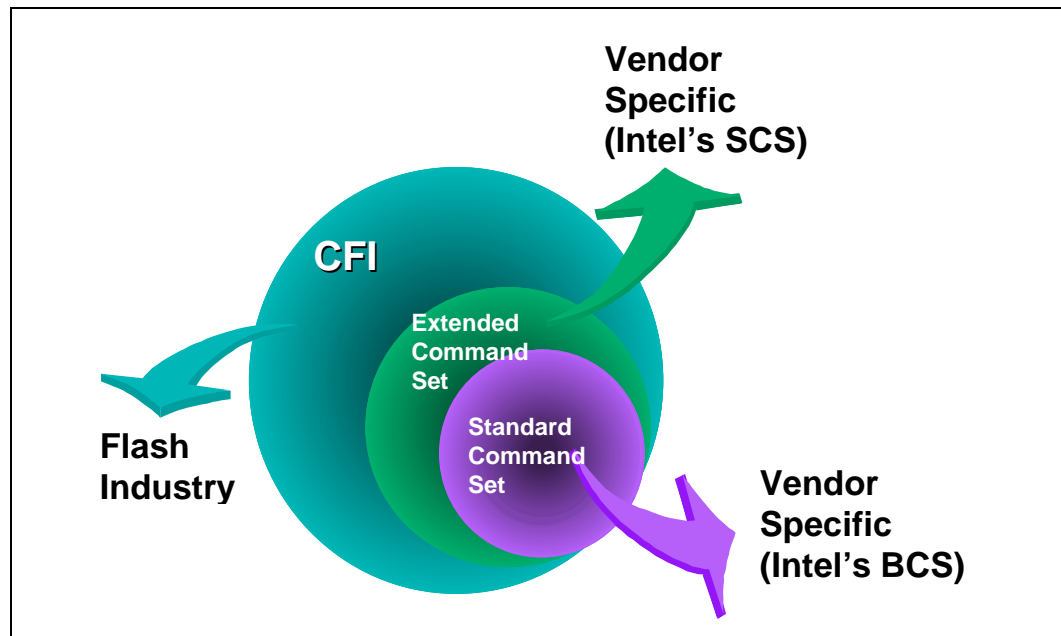
Common Flash Interface (CFI) is a published, standardized data structure that may be read from a flash memory device. CFI allows system software to query the installed device (on board component, PC [PCMCIA] Card, or Miniature Card) to determine configurations, various electrical and timing parameters, and functions supported by the device.

The Basic Command Set (BCS) is a group of commands that have been used for years on Intel’s and other vendors’ legacy products. This command set is also commonly referred to as the 28F008, or simply the 008 command set. These commands include Read Array, Read ID, Read Status Register, Clear Status Register, Program (Write), Block Erase, Erase Suspend, and Confirm/Resume. The BCS is the “Standard Command Set” used by Intel in its CFI implementations.

Scaleable Command Set (SCS) is the “Extended Command Set” that Intel uses to control the functions of most CFI-enabled flash devices. CFI allows the vendor to specify a command set that should be used with the component. SCS is the command set that will be used by Intel on most of its CFI enabled devices. SCS includes all commands available in the BCS, as well as some new advanced commands that have been designed to take advantage of Intel’s next generation optimized flash devices. These new commands include Set and Clear Lock Bits, CFI Query, Write to Buffer, Program Suspend, Status Configuration, and Full Chip Erase. With many new capabilities being designed into flash products today, these new commands were necessary to take full advantage of the improvements.

CFI is used to allow the system to learn how to interface to the flash device most optimally. The BCS and SCS are used to then command the device to perform the desired flash functions.

**Figure 1. How CFI, SCS, and BCS Fit Together**



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Figure 2. CFI Allows Easy Upgrades and Use of Second Sources



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## 2.0 Benefits of CFI

The two primary benefits of using CFI are ease of upgrading and second source availability. Both are concerns when an OEM or end-user (the consumer) purchases a product.

### 2.1 Upgrades

In order to take advantage of increased densities (or speeds, etc.) on memory devices and cards, an easy upgrade path is desirable. Care is generally taken to ensure that hardware footprints are pin-for-pin compatible or that flexible layouts may be used when upgrading a product. However, thought is seldom given to software compatibility. CFI allows many new and improved products to be used in place of their older versions without modifications of system software.

Because CFI allows the system to learn about the features, parameters, and timings of a flash device, the system can take full advantage of these improvements. For instance, if the timeout for a block erase to occur was cut in half, the system software could take advantage of that fact by changing its internal timers. Also, a 32-Mbit device can be replaced by a 64-Mbit device and vice versa because the device can tell the system what size it is.

With CFI, when upgrading a flash memory design, it is no longer necessary to re-optimize low level software drivers to take advantage of the new features. Simply program the system initially to accept CFI enabled devices, and allow the software to upgrade itself.

### 2.2 Second Sources

Particularly in the card environment, second sourcing is a primary concern. Because the end-user of a PC Card or Miniature Card could be a consumer, care must be taken to ensure compatibility among all flash cards that may be installed into the same sockets. For instance, when purchasing a replacement or spare memory card for their digital camera, consumers do not want to have to worry that they can only purchase a certain vendor's card or a particular version of what seems to be a similar card.

This is analogous to a consumer purchasing floppy disks for their computer or film for their camera. Any vendor's product works. That is the goal of CFI—complete and simple interchange between vendors in a card application. The hardware inside the PC Card or Miniature Card does not have to operate identically; the software takes care of the differences as long as the devices are CFI-compliant.

CFI allows the system to determine the manufacturer of the card, its operating parameters, its configuration, and any special command codes that the card may accept. With this knowledge, the system can optimize its use of the card by using appropriate timeout values, optimal voltages, and commands necessary to use the card to its full advantage.

## 3.0 How to Use CFI Effectively

To use CFI effectively, system software must be written to take advantage of the flexibility provided by the specification. The software must be capable of modifying timeouts, adjusting to different memory sizes, accommodating varying block erase characteristics, and branching to vendor-specific code sections. The following paragraphs outline several steps which system software must transition through to read a CFI-enabled device. Flowcharts are included in [Appendix A](#).

### 3.1 Read Query String

Not all devices installed into a flash memory socket will be CFI-enabled. To determine if a device is CFI-capable, the system software must write a 98h to location 55h within the memory (see *CFI Query Flowchart* included in [Appendix A](#)). The flash device may or may not have an address sensitive query command; the Intel devices do not. The low-level driver, however, should supply the 55h address even though the flash device may choose to ignore the address bus and enter the query mode if 98h is on the data bus only. If three consecutive maximum device bus width reads beginning at location 10h in the flash array return the ASCII equivalent “Q,” “R,” and “Y,” then the device is CFI-compliant.

Although there are other configuration possibilities, there are currently three CFI array configurations that are of primary interest. These configurations must be tested and accounted for in the software. These configurations are:

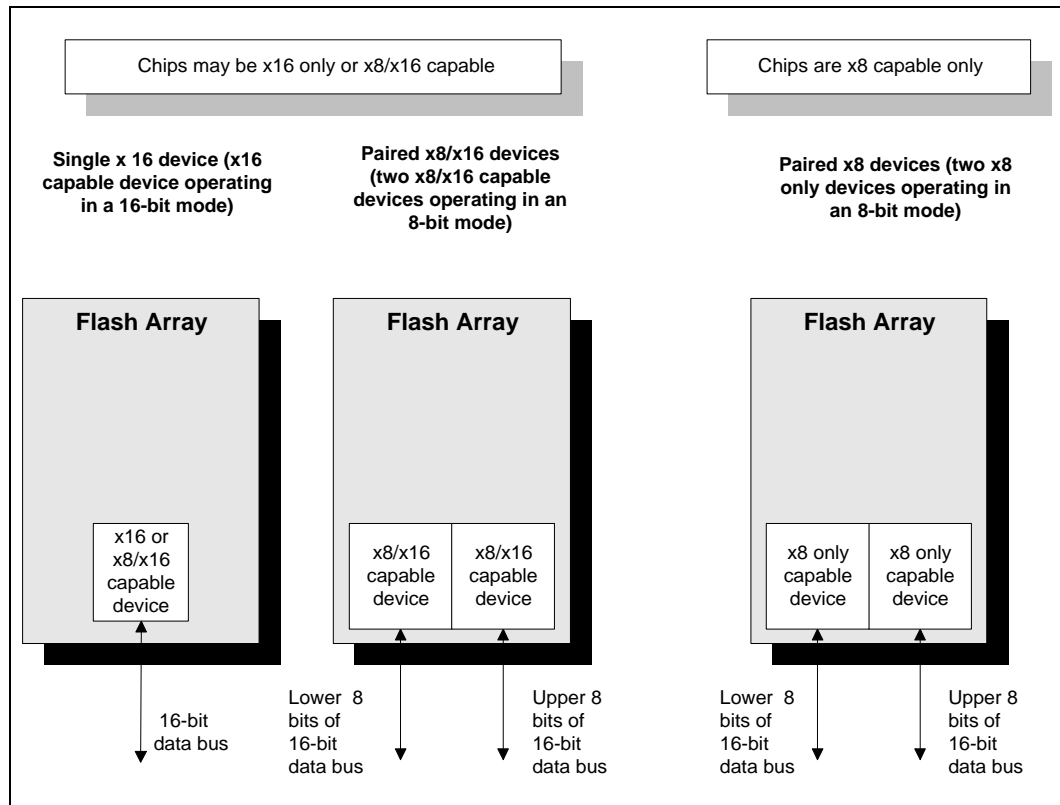
- single chip operating in a x16 mode (16-bit data bus)—chips may be capable of 8-bit accesses, but are operating only with 16-bit bus accesses
- two chips each capable of 8- and 16-bit data bus accesses, but each only operating in a x8 mode (8-bit data bus on each chip with a total array bus width of 16-bits)
- two chips each only capable of 8-bit data bus accesses operating only in a x8 mode (8-bit data bus per chip with a total array bus width of 16 bits)

Each of these configurations are shown in [Figure 3, “Possible Flash Array Configurations” on page 5](#). [Table 1, “CFI Query Read” on page 6](#) indicates the addressing necessary to read the CFI query table for each of these configurations, along with some other possible device configurations. The table also includes what the query data will look like to the host processor in byte or word addressing. Note that the query data (ASCII “Q,” “R,” and “Y,” as well as the electronic databook information discussed in the next section) may be doubled or even quadrupled depending on the array configuration. The software must be able to determine the correct array configuration based on the number of “Q”s returned to accurately calculate the array size and read and write to the array properly. The *CFI Query Flowchart* is located in [Appendix A](#). The QueryCFI routine heuristically determines the configuration of the array, calculates the appropriate data, and indicates to the higher level routines how to communicate with the CFI-enabled devices.

If the device does not respond with the “QRY” string, the device is not CFI-compliant and the software must then attempt to read the device’s JEDEC ID. (See the *Memory Heuristics Flowchart* included in [Appendix A](#).) The software must write a 90h to the first location in the device. If the device returns a Manufacturer’s ID and Component ID, the flash device may be accessed as it has been in the past, based on the Manufacturer and Component ID. If the device does not return a Manufacturer and Component ID, then the device is not a flash memory and other routines are necessary to determine what type of device is installed. (See the *Memory Heuristics Flowchart* included in [Appendix A](#).)



Figure 3. Possible Flash Array Configurations



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## 3.2 Read Electronic Databook Information

In a CFI-enabled device, following the “QRY” string is a list of device specific parameters and vendor-specific information—the “Electronic Databook.” Table 2, “CFI Query Identification String” on page 7, Table 3, “System Interface Information” on page 8, and Table 4, “Flash Geometry Information” on page 9 outline the data provided by the device during the CFI query. Software routine QueryCFI (the flowchart is included in Appendix A) reads the following information from the device:

**Table 1. CFI Query Read**

Device Type and Data Bus Operating Mode	Query Start Location in Maximum Device Buswidth Addresses	Query Data with Maximum Device Buswidth Addressing (“x” = ASCII equivalent)	Query Start Address in Bytes	Query Data With Byte Addressing
x8 device operating in 8-bit mode	10h	10h: 51h “Q” 11h: 52h “R” 12h: 59h “Y”	10h	10h: 51h “Q” 11h: 52h “R” 12h: 59h “Y”
two x8 devices operating in 8-bit mode (paired chip configuration)	10h	10h: 0051h “Q” 11h: 0052h “R” 12h: 0059h “Y”	20h	20h: 51h “Q” 21h: 51h “Q” 22h: 52h “R” 23h: 52h “R” 24h: 59h “Y” 25h: 59h “Y”
x16 device operating in 16-bit mode	10h	10h: 0051h “Q” 11h: 0052h “R” 12h: 0059h “Y”	20h	20h: 51h “Q” 21h: 00h null 22h: 52h “R” 23h: 00h null
x16 device operating in 8-bit mode	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	20h	20h: 51h “Q” 21h: 51h “Q” 22h: 52h “R”
two x16 devices operating in 8-bit mode (paired chip configuration)	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	40h	40h: 51h “Q” 41h: 51h “Q” 42h: 51h “Q” 43h: 51h “Q” 44h: 52h “R” 45h: 52h “R”
x32 device operating in 32-bit mode	10h	10h: 00000051h “Q” 11h: 00000052h “R” 12h: 00000059h “Y”	40h	40h: 51h “Q” 41h: 00h null 42h: 00h null 43h: 00h null 44h: 52h “R”
x32 device operating in 8-bit mode	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	40h	40h: 51h “Q” 41h: 51h “Q” 42h: 51h “Q” 43h: 51h “Q” 44h: 52h “R”

**NOTE:**

1. The system must drive the lowest order addresses to access all the device’s array data when the device is configured in x8 mode; therefore, word addressing where these lower addresses are not toggled by the system is “Not Applicable” for x8-configured devices.

**Table 2. CFI Query Identification String**

Offset	Length (bytes)	Description
10h	03h	Query-unique ASCII string "QRY"
13h	02h	Primary Vendor Command Set and Control Interface ID Code 16-bit ID code defining specific Vendor-specified algorithm [Refer to CFI Publication 100 for definition of the ID codes]
15h	02h value = <i>P</i>	Address for Primary Algorithm extended Query table Note: Address 0000h means that no extended table exists
17h	02h	Alternate Vendor Command Set and Control Interface ID Code second vendor-specified algorithm supported by the device [Refer to CFI Publication 100 for definition of the ID codes] Note: ID Code = 0000h means that no alternate algorithm is employed
19h	02h value = <i>A</i>	Address for Alternate Algorithm extended Query table Note: Address 0000h means that no alternate extended table exists

**NOTES:**

- Offset is the location in memory when using maximum device bus width addressing.
- The CFI specification allows for replacement of all or part of the standard query table contents. If the vendor primary (or alternate) algorithm extended query table address (P or A) points to any address between 10h and the end of [Table 4, "Flash Geometry Information" on page 9](#), the standard query table contents from that point on are assumed to be replaced by the information defined by the vendor primary (or alternate) algorithm. Thus, some or all of the standard query may be replaced. For example, a vendor primary (or alternate) algorithm extended query table address of 27h means that the standard device geometry definition has been replaced by something which has been defined by the vendor. The System Interface information at locations 1Bh to 26h may be assumed valid, but the ultimate definition must be described by the particular vendor algorithm. If the vendor primary (or alternate) algorithm extended query table address points to an address beyond the end of [Table 4, "Flash Geometry Information,"](#) a new table of data is included at that address. The contents of this table are defined by the corresponding vendor primary (or alternate) algorithm.

Table 3. System Interface Information

Offset	Length (bytes)	Description
1Bh	01h	V <sub>CC</sub> Logic Supply Minimum Program/Erase voltage bits 7–4                   BCD value in volts bits 3–0                   BCD value in 100 millivolts
1Ch	01h	V <sub>CC</sub> Logic Supply Maximum Program/Erase voltage bits 7–4                   BCD value in volts bits 3–0                   BCD value in 100 millivolts
1Dh	01h	V <sub>PP</sub> [Programming] Supply Maximum Program/Erase voltage bits 7–4                   HEX value in volts bits 3–0                   BCD value in 100 millivolts Note: This value must be 0000h if no V <sub>PP</sub> pin is present
1Eh	01h	V <sub>PP</sub> [Programming] Supply Maximum Program/Erase voltage bits 7–4                   HEX value in volts bits 3–0                   BCD value in 100 millivolts Note: This value must be 0000h if no V <sub>PP</sub> pin is present
1Fh	01h	Typical timeout per single byte/word write (buffer write count = 1), 2 <sup>n</sup> μs
20h	01h	Typical timeout for maximum-size buffer write, 2 <sup>n</sup> μs (if supported; 00h = not supported)
21h	01h	Typical timeout per individual block erase, 2 <sup>n</sup> ms
22h	01h	Typical timeout for full chip erase, 2 <sup>n</sup> ms (if supported; 00h = not supported)
23h	01h	Maximum timeout for byte/word write, 2 <sup>n</sup> times typical (offset 1Fh)
24h	01h	Maximum timeout for buffer write, 2 <sup>n</sup> times typical (offset 20h) (00h = not supported)
25h	01h	Maximum timeout per individual block erase, 2 <sup>n</sup> times typical (offset 21h)
26h	01h	Maximum timeout for chip erase, 2 <sup>n</sup> times typical (offset 22h) (00h = not supported)

**Table 4. Flash Geometry Information**

Offset	Length (bytes)	Description
27h	01h	Device Size = 2 <sup>n</sup> in number of bytes.
28h	02h	Flash Device Interface description [Refer to CFI Publication 100]
2Ah	02h	Maximum number of bytes in buffer write = 2 <sup>n</sup> .
2Ch	01h	Number of erase block regions within device <b>bits 7–0 = x</b> = number of erase block regions Notes: 1. x = 0 means no erase blocking, i.e., the device erases at once in “bulk.” 2. x specifies the number of regions within the device containing one or more contiguous erase blocks of the same size. For example, a 128-KB device (1 Mb) having blocking of 16-KB, 8-KB, four 2-KB, two 16-KB, and one 64-KB is considered to have five erase block regions. Even though two regions both contain 16-KB blocks, the fact that they are not contiguous means they are separate erase block regions. 3. By definition, symmetrically-blocked devices have only one blocking region.
2Dh	04h	Erase block region information <b>bits 31–16 = z</b> , where the erase block(s) within this region are (z) times 256 bytes in size. The value z = 0 is used for 128-byte block size. e.g., for 64-KB block size, z = 0100h = 256 => 256 * 256 = 64K <b>bits 15– 0 = y</b> , where y+1 = number of erase blocks of identical size within the erase block region, e.g.,: y = D15-D0 = FFFFh => y+1 = 64K blocks [maximum number] y = 0 means no blocking (# blocks = y+1 = “1 block”) Note: y = 0 value must be used with # of block regions of one as indicated by (x) = 0
31h to (k-1)h	04h per entry	Additional erase block region information, 4 bytes per region Notes: 1. The total number of blocks multiplied by individual block size must add up to the device size. 2. The address K is next available query address at end of the device geometry structure. It is the first possible starting address of the optional vendor-specific query table(s) (i.e., Address “P,” the primary vendor-specific extended query table offset, must be ≥ k to not overwrite the existing tables). See note 2 under Table 2, “CFI Query Identification String” on page 7 for more information.

### 3.3 Read Vendor-Specific Extended Query Table

Using data from addresses 15h (address for primary algorithm extended query table) and possibly 19h (address for alternate algorithm extended query table), the system software can read more specific information about the flash device (see the *CFI Query Flowchart*, included in [Appendix A](#)). Each vendor will have specific data that should be read from the extended query table. Intel defines this data with its SCS. Also, each vendor may locate this table in a different location, so it is important that the software reads the location of the tables from offsets 15h and 19h to determine where (if at all) the extended query data is stored. The Vendor Command Set definition (Intel’s SCS) will indicate what data is stored in the extended query table. [Table 5, “Intel Primary Algorithm Extended Query Table” on page 10](#) shows the extended table for the Intel devices implementing CFI (all devices implementing CFI will use the extended query table regardless of the command set being used).

Table 5. Intel Primary Algorithm Extended Query Table

Offset	Length (bytes)	Description
(P + 0)h (P + 1)h (P + 2)h	03h	Primary extended Query table unique ASCII string "PRI"
(P + 3)h	01h	Major version number, ASCII
(P + 4)h	01h	Minor version number, ASCII
(P + 5)h (P + 6)h (P + 7)h (P + 8)h	04h	Optional Feature & Command Support (1=yes, 0=no) bits 9-31 are reserved; undefined bits are "0". If bit 31 is "1," then another 31-bit field of optional features follows at the end of the bit-30 field. 1 = Yes, supported      0 = No, not supported. bit 0 Chip erase supported bit 1 Suspend erase supported bit 2 Suspend program supported bit 3 Legacy lock/unlock supported bit 4 Queued erase supported bit 5 Instant individual block locking supported bit 6 Protection bits supported bit 7 Page-mode read supported bit 8 Synchronous read supported
(P + 9)h	01h	Supported functions after suspend Read array, status, and query are always supported during suspended erase or program operation. This field defines other operations supported. bit 0 Program supported after Erase Suspend (1=yes, 0=no) <i>bits 1–7 Reserved for future use; undefined bits should be "0"</i>
(P + A)h (P + B)h	02h	Block status register mask Defines which bits in the block status register section of query are implemented. bit 0 Block status register lock-bit [BSR.0] active (1=yes, 0=no) bit 1 Block status register valid bit [BSR.1] active (1=yes, 0=no) <i>bits 2–15 Reserved for future use; undefined bits should be "0"</i>
(P + C)h	01h	V <sub>CC</sub> logic supply optimum program/erase voltage (highest performance) bits 7–4 BCD value in volts bits 3–0 BCD value in 100 millivolts
(P + D)h	01h	V <sub>PP</sub> [programming] supply optimum program/erase voltage bits 7–4 HEX value in volts bits 3–0 BCD value in 100 millivolts Note: This value must be 0000h if no Vpp pin is present
(P + E)h	reserved	Reserved for future versions of the SCS Specification

### 3.4 Software Branch to Appropriate Routines

Using the information read from location 13h (Primary Vendor Command Set and Control Interface ID code) and possibly from 17h (Alternate Vendor Command Set and Control Interface ID Code), the system determines which set(s) of commands are recognizable by the flash device. Every vendor has defined at least one set of commands that their flash devices accept. Any commands other than those defined will either be rejected or cause unexpected behavior and should therefore be avoided.

Intel has two such sets of commands defined, BCS (Basic Command Set) and SCS (Scaleable Command Set). SCS includes all of the BCS commands plus some new enhanced ones. The low level reference code provided by Intel includes both of these command sets. By using this reference code, current and future flash devices may be controlled using the same system software drivers.

## 4.0 How to Use Command Sets Effectively

Flowcharts for most of the driver software routines necessary to implement the Basic and Scaleable Command Sets are located in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#) respectively. All of the reference codes may be downloaded from the Intel web site from the Electronic Tools Catalog (ETC). The ETC can be accessed from the Intel Developer's site from:

<http://developer.intel.com/design/flash/swtools/etc.htm>

Link to the ETC: Flash Memory components set "Tool Type" to "Software-Templates" and select the button "find my selection" from the list select the common flash interface, or CFI entry. If all works well, it can be directly linked at:

<http://amber.intel.com/scripts-toolcat/listtools.asp?pid=4582&cid=683&pfamily=>

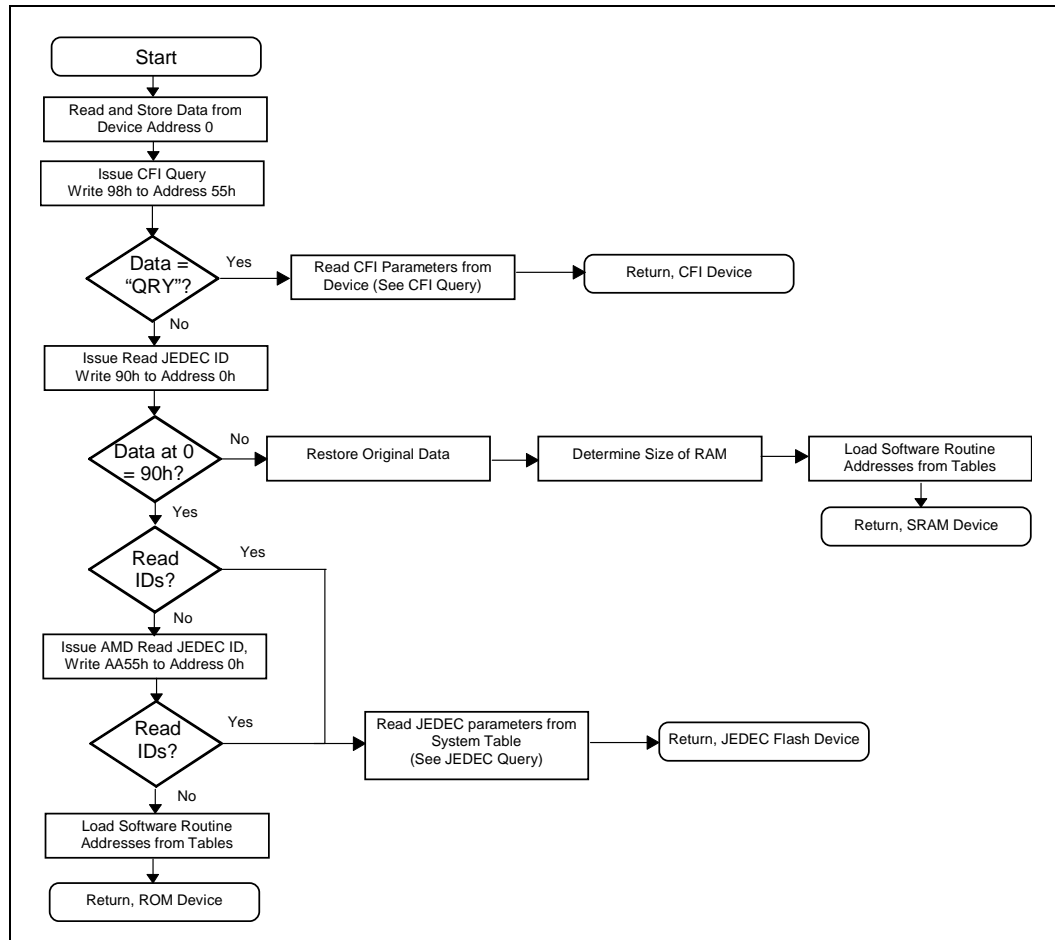
To ensure compatibility with future CFI compliant devices, all functions of the reference code should be included in a design.

## 5.0 Conclusion

CFI and SCS have been created to allow a system designer the flexibility to design products now that can use both current and future flash memory devices, as well as the security of knowing that second source products may be used without system software modifications.

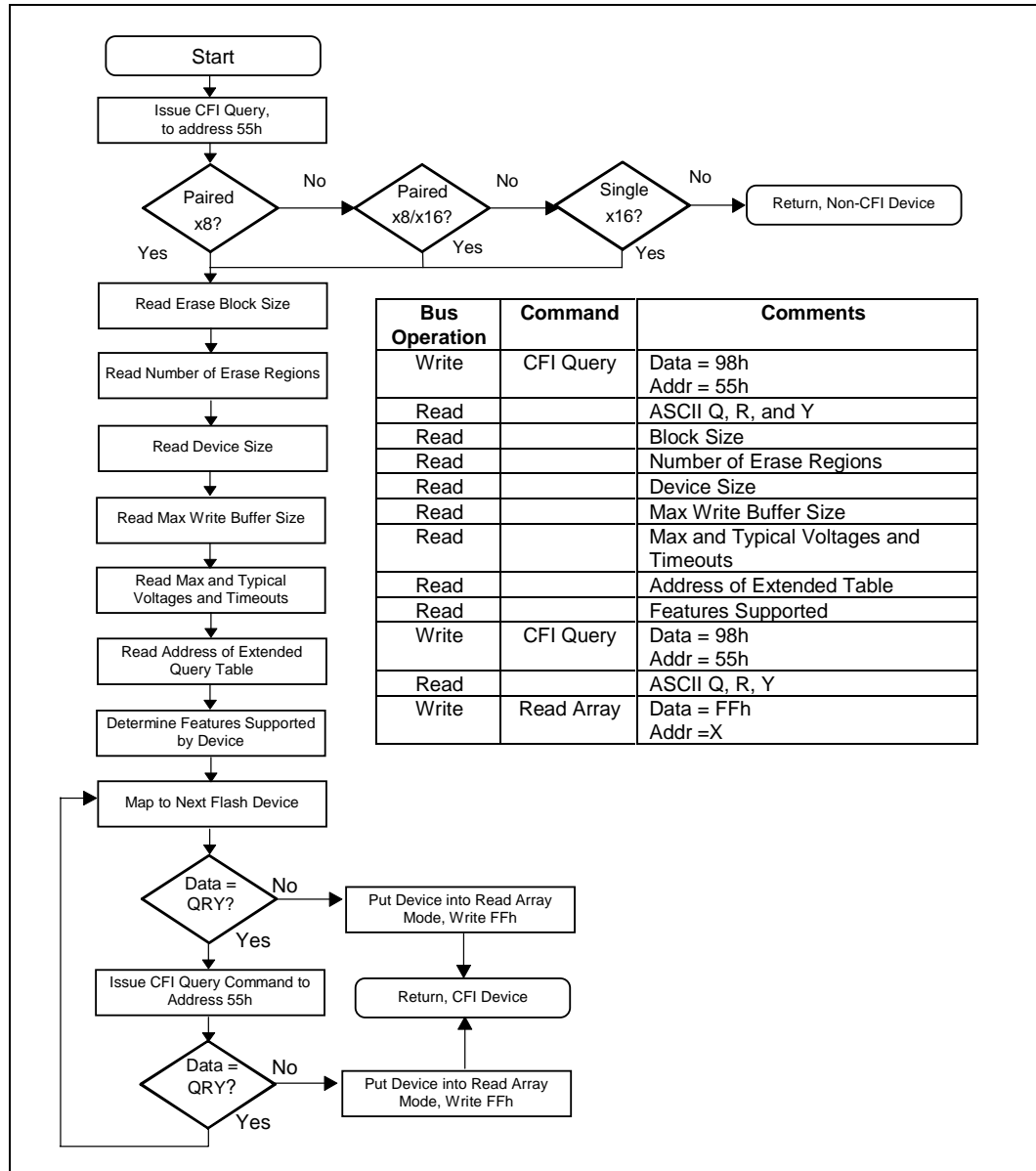
## Appendix A Memory Hueristics

### A1 Memory Hueristics Flowchart

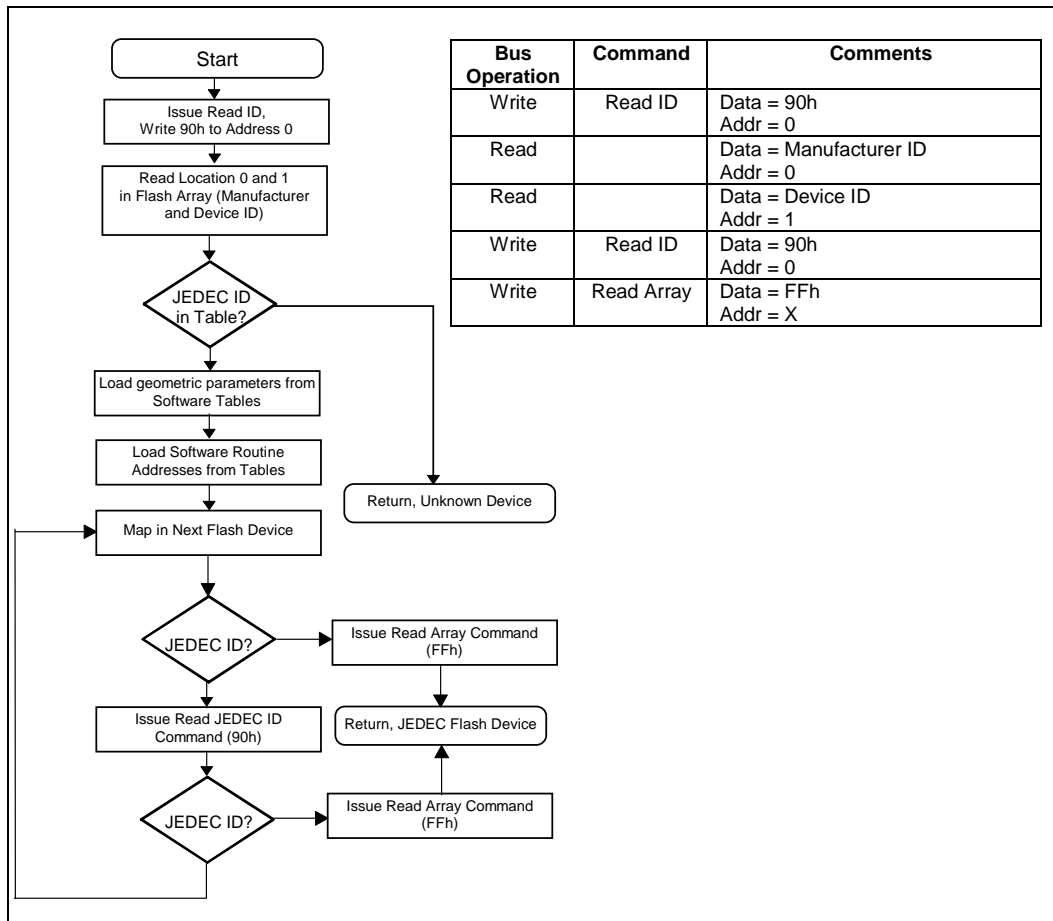




## A2 CFI Query Flowchart

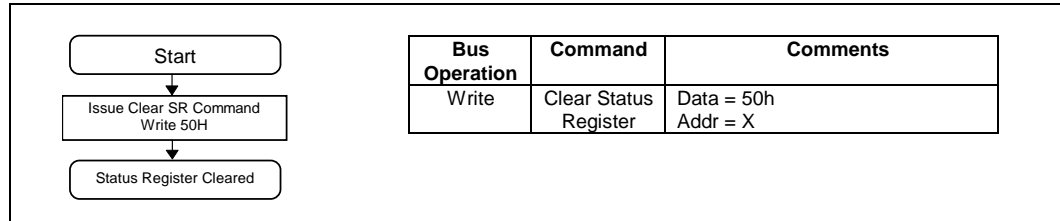


### A3 Read JEDEC ID Flowchart

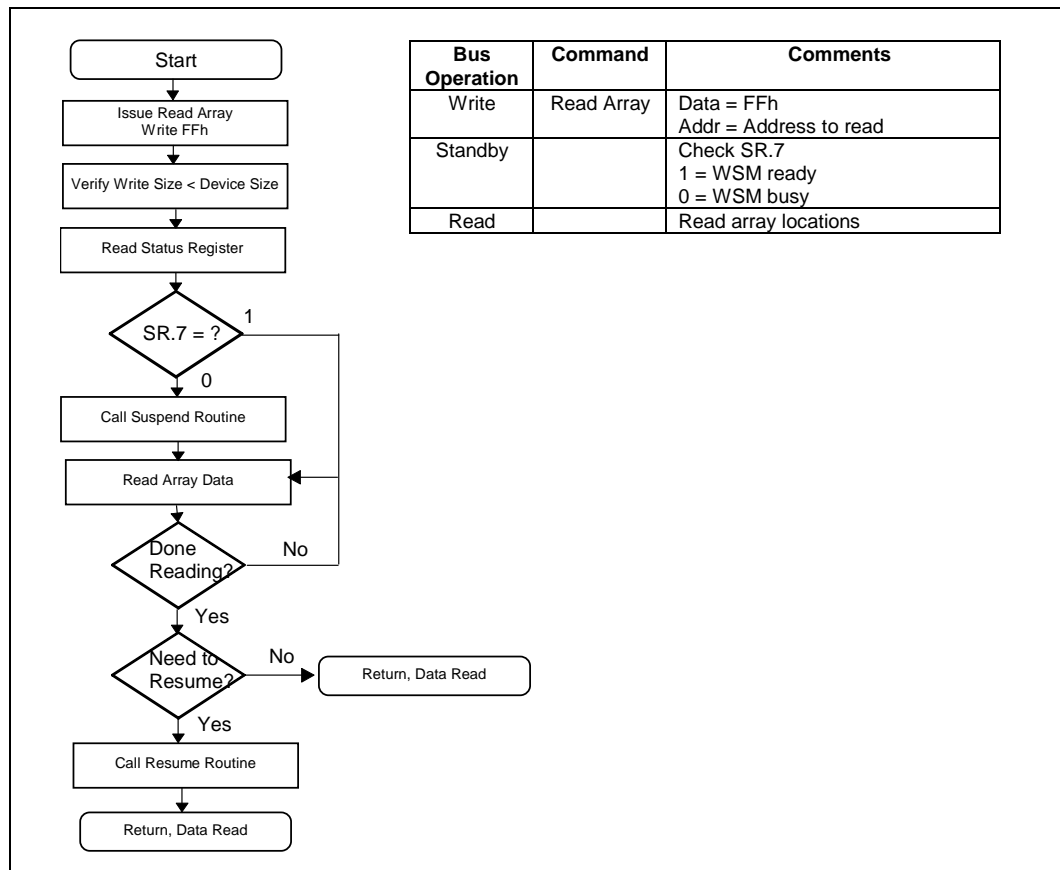


## Appendix B Basic Command Set

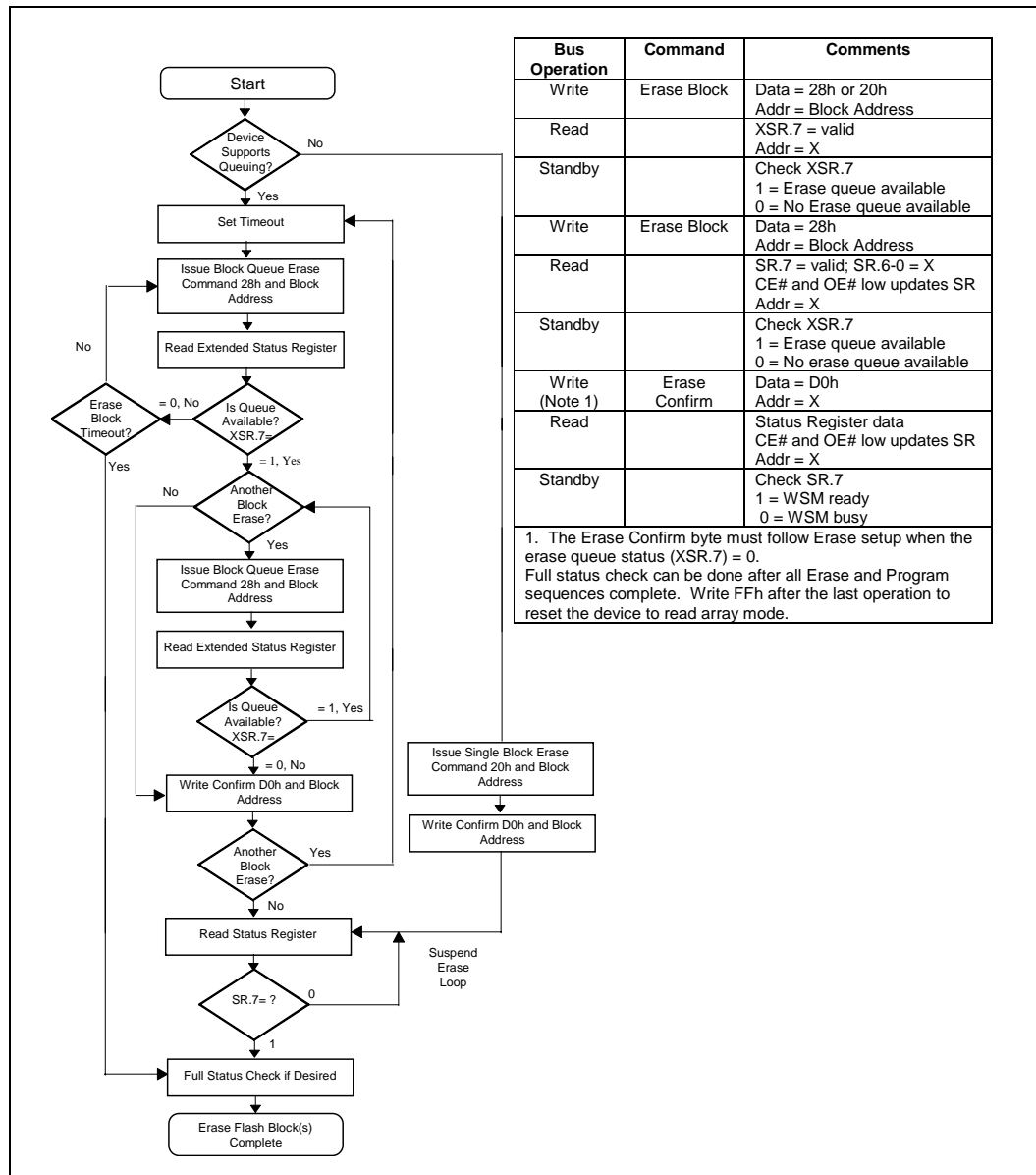
### B1 Clear Status Register Flowchart



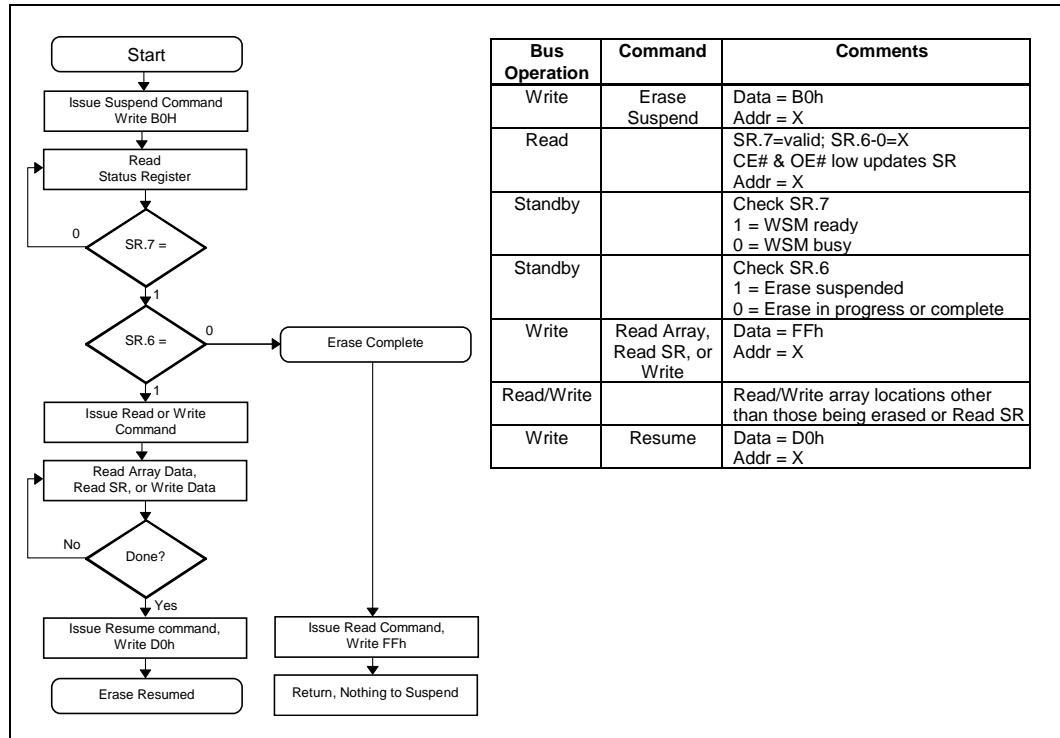
### B2 Read Array Flowchart



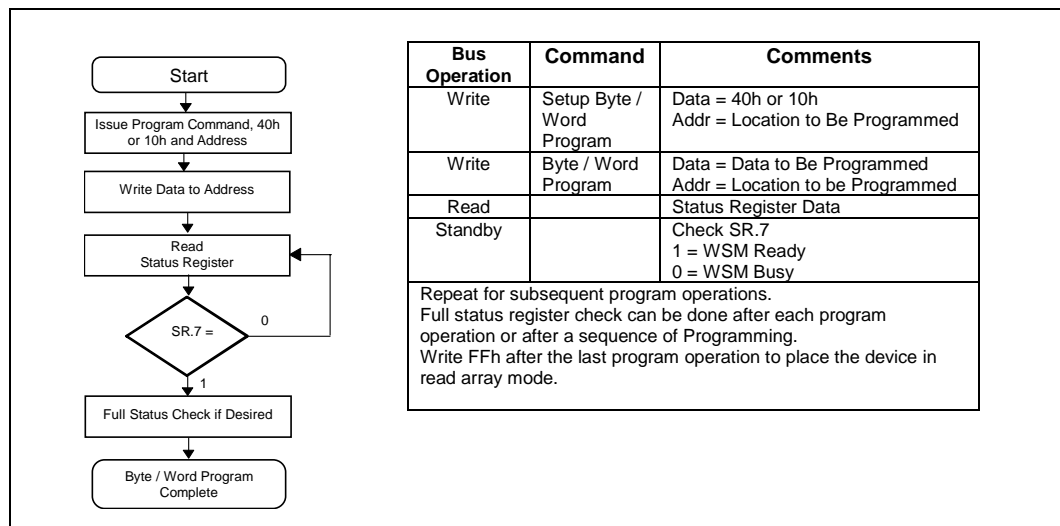
## B3 Block Erase Flowchart



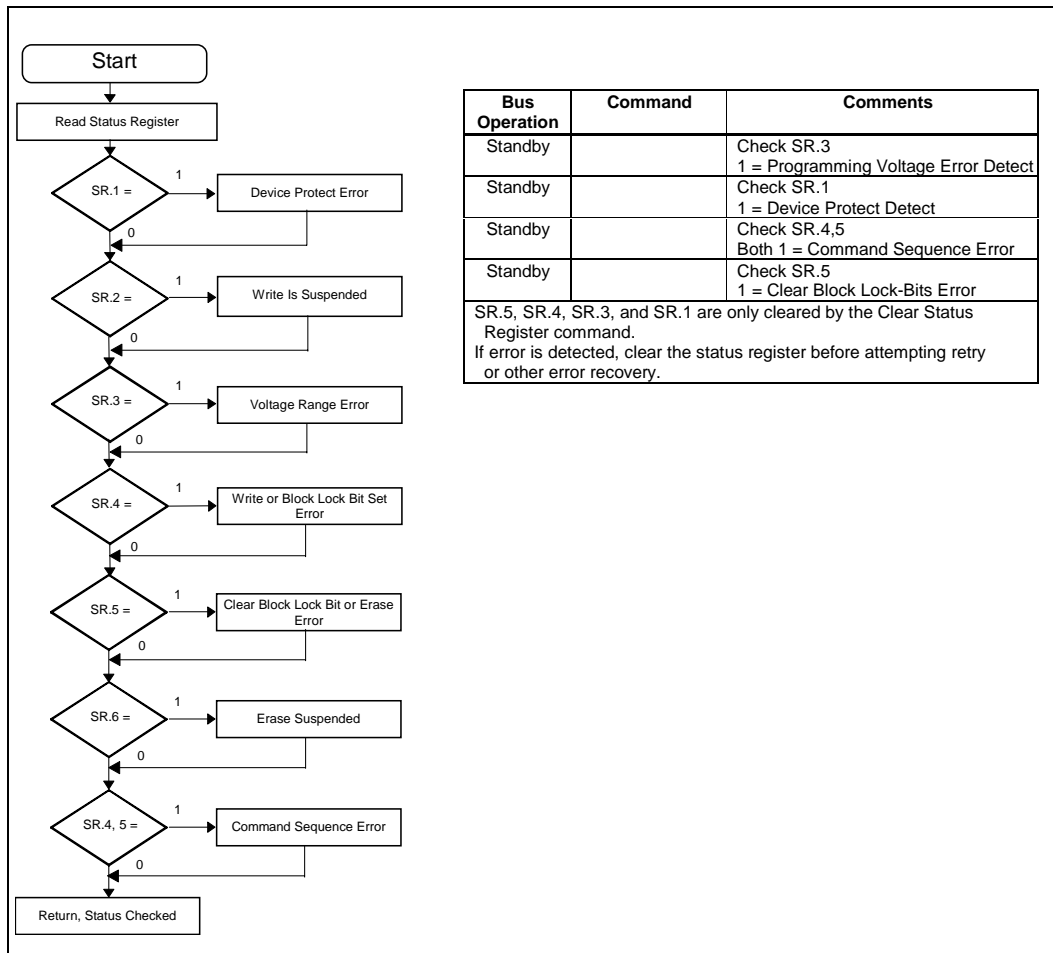
## B4 Erase Suspend/Resume Flowchart



## B5 Single Byte Program (Write) Flowchart

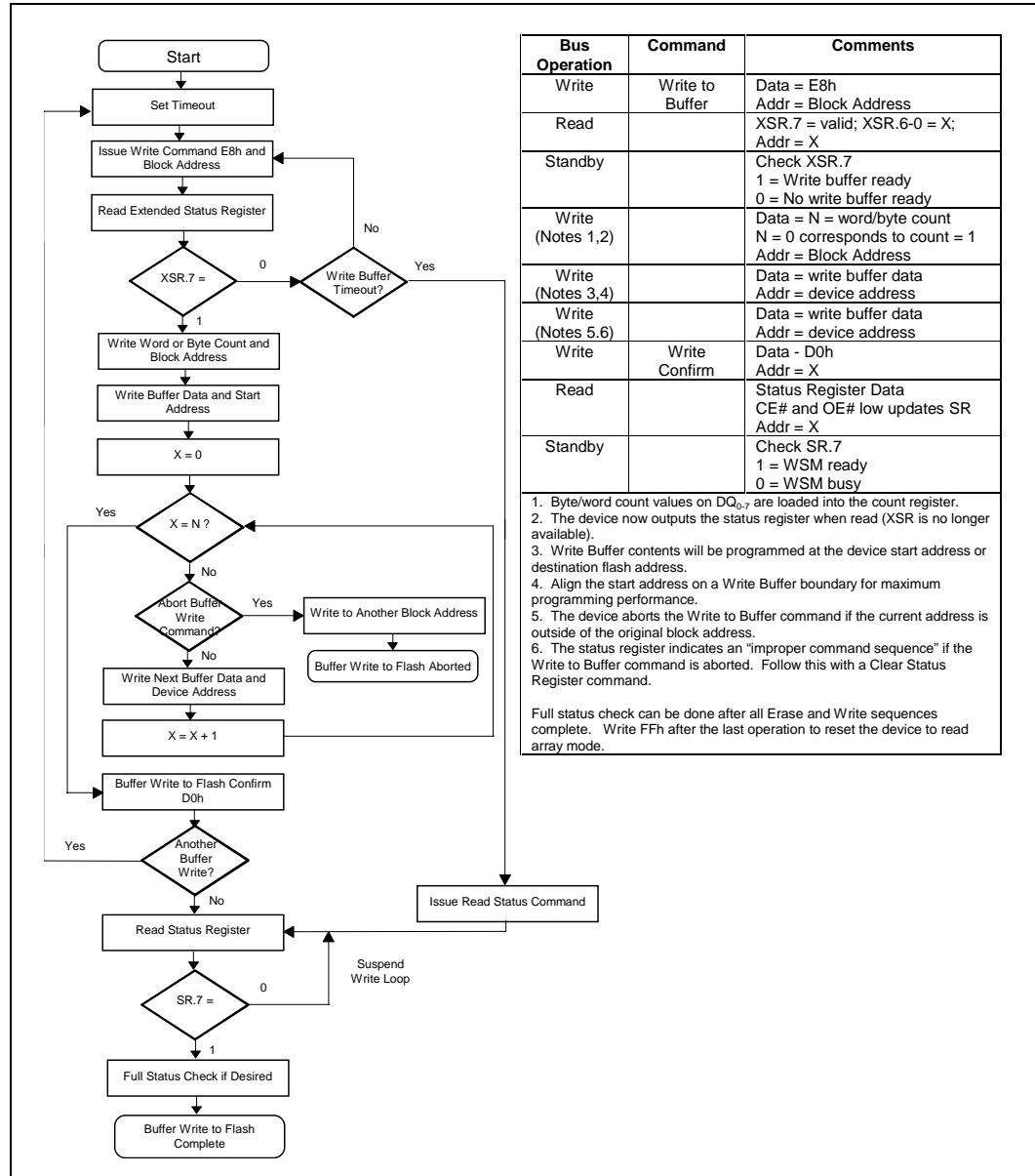


## B6 Full Status Check Flowchart

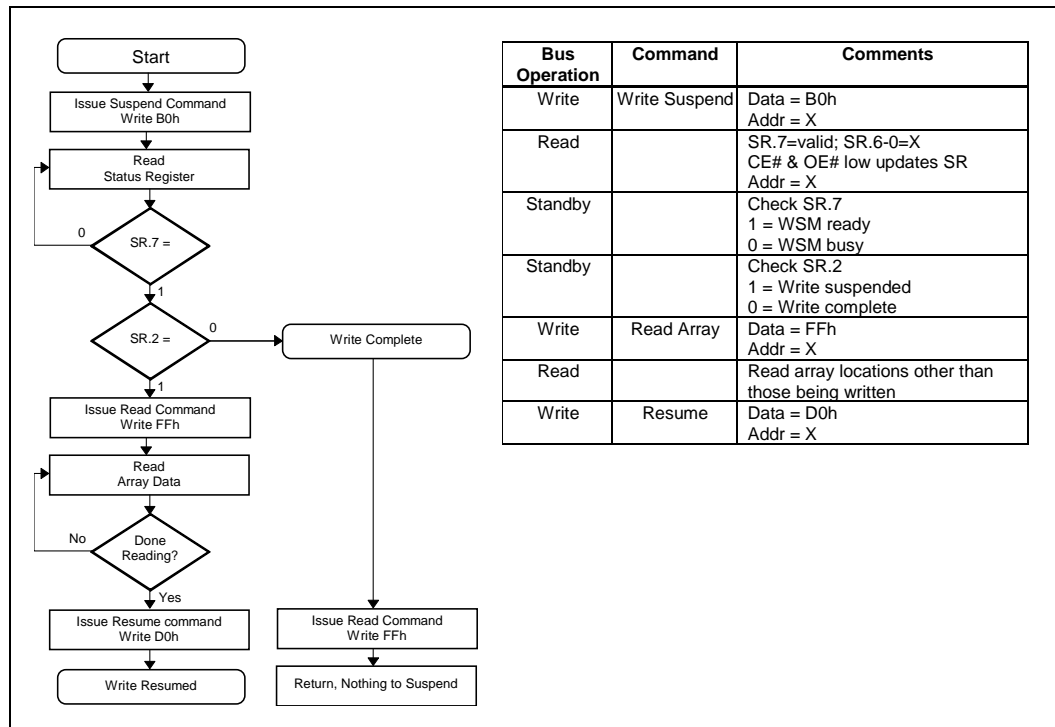


## Appendix C Scalable Command Set

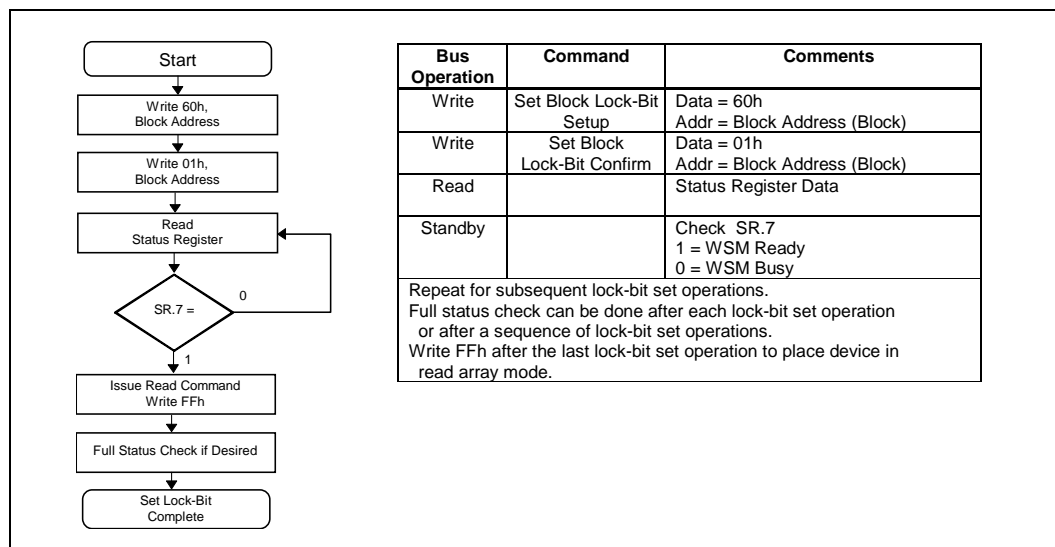
### C1 Write to Buffer Flowchart



## C2 Program (Write) Suspend/Resume Flowchart



## C3 Block Lock Bit Set Flowchart





## C4 Block Lock Bit Reset Flowchart

