

Section 2.1 C++11

constexpr Functions

```
template <typename T>
constexpr int badSizeOf(T t) { const int s = sizeof(t); return s; }
// This constexpr function template is IFNDR.
```

Most compilers, when compiling such a **specialization** for runtime use, will not attempt to determine if the **constexpr** would ever be valid. When invoked with **arguments** that are themselves **constant expressions**, they do, however, often detect this **ill-formed** nature and report the error:

```
int d[badSizeOf(S1())]; // Error, badSizeOf<S1>(S1) body not return statement
int e[badSizeOf(S0())]; // Error, badSizeOf<S0>(S0) body not return statement
int f = badSizeOf(S1()); // Oops, same issue but might work on some compilers
int g = badSizeOf(S0()); // Oops, same issue but often works without warnings
```

Importantly, note that each of the four **statements** in the code snippet above is **ill formed** because the **badSizeOf** function template is itself **ill formed**. Although the compiler is not required to diagnose the general case, it is **ill formed** to attempt to use an instantiation of **badSizeOf** in a context requiring a **constant expression**, e.g., **d** or **e**. When used in a context not requiring a **constant expression** (e.g., **f** or **g**), whether the compiler fails, warns, or proceeds is a matter of **quality of implementation (QoI)**.

constexpr-function parameter and return types

At this point, we arrive at what is perhaps the most confounding part of the seemingly *cyclical* definition of **constexpr** functions: A function cannot be **declared constexpr** unless the return type and every **parameter** of that function satisfies the criteria for being a **literal type**, i.e., the category of types whose objects are permitted to be created and destroyed when evaluating a **constant expression**:

```
struct Lt { int v; constexpr Lt() : v(0) { } }; // literal type
struct Nlt { int v; Nlt() : v(0) { } }; // nonliteral type

Lt f1() { return Lt(); } // OK, no issues
constexpr Lt f2() { return Lt(); } // OK, returning literal type
Nlt f3() { return Nlt(); } // Ok, function is nonconstexpr.
constexpr Nlt f4() { return Nlt(); } // Error, constexpr returning nonliteral

int g1(Lt x) { return x.v; } // OK, no issues
constexpr int g2(Lt x) { return x.v; } // OK, parameter is a literal type.
int g3(Nlt x) { return x.v; } // OK, function is nonconstexpr.
constexpr int g4(Nlt x) { return x.v; } // Error, constexpr taking nonliteral
```

Consider that all *pointer* and *reference* types — being *built-in types* — are **literal types** and therefore can appear in the interface of a **constexpr** function irrespective of whether they point to a **literal type**: