

**NAME**

**sudo**, **sudoedit** - execute a command as another user

**SYNOPSIS**

**sudo -h** | **-K** | **-k** | **-V**

**sudo -v** [**-AknS**] [**-a type**] [**-g group**] [**-h host**] [**-p prompt**] [**-u user**]

**sudo -l** [**-AknS**] [**-a type**] [**-g group**] [**-h host**] [**-p prompt**] [**-U user**] [**-u user**] [*command*]

**sudo** [**-AbEHnPS**] [**-a type**] [**-C num**] [**-c class**] [**-g group**] [**-h host**] [**-p prompt**] [**-r role**] [**-t type**] [**-u user**] [*VAR=value*] [**-i** | **-s**] [*command*]

**sudoedit** [**-AknS**] [**-a type**] [**-C num**] [**-c class**] [**-g group**] [**-h host**] [**-p prompt**] [**-u user**] *file ...*

**DESCRIPTION**

**sudo** allows a permitted user to execute a *command* as the superuser or another user, as specified by the security policy. The invoking user's real (*not* effective) user ID is used to determine the user name with which to query the security policy.

**sudo** supports a plugin architecture for security policies and input/output logging. Third parties can develop and distribute their own policy and I/O logging plugins to work seamlessly with the **sudo** front end. The default security policy is *sudoers*, which is configured via the file */etc/sudoers*, or via LDAP. See the *Plugins* section for more information.

The security policy determines what privileges, if any, a user has to run **sudo**. The policy may require that users authenticate themselves with a password or another authentication mechanism. If authentication is required, **sudo** will exit if the user's password is not entered within a configurable time limit. This limit is policy-specific; the default password prompt timeout for the *sudoers* security policy is 5 minutes.

Security policies may support credential caching to allow the user to run **sudo** again for a period of time without requiring authentication. The *sudoers* policy caches credentials for 5 minutes, unless overridden in *sudoers(5)*. By running **sudo** with the **-v** option, a user can update the cached credentials without running a *command*.

When invoked as **sudoedit**, the **-e** option (described below), is implied.

Security policies may log successful and failed attempts to use **sudo**. If an I/O plugin is configured, the running command's input and output may be logged as well.

The options are as follows:

**-A**, **--askpass**

Normally, if **sudo** requires a password, it will read it from the user's terminal. If the **-A** (*askpass*) option is specified, a (possibly graphical) helper program is executed to read the user's password and output the password to the standard output. If the `SUDO_ASKPASS` environment variable is set, it specifies the path to the helper program. Otherwise, if `sudo.conf(5)` contains a line specifying the *askpass* program, that value will be used. For example:

```
# Path to askpass helper program
Path askpass /usr/X11R6/bin/ssh-askpass
```

If no *askpass* program is available, **sudo** will exit with an error.

**-a** *type*, **--auth-type=***type*

Use the specified BSD authentication *type* when validating the user, if allowed by `/etc/login.conf`. The system administrator may specify a list of sudo-specific authentication methods by adding an "auth-sudo" entry in `/etc/login.conf`. This option is only available on systems that support BSD authentication.

**-b**, **--background**

Run the given command in the background. Note that it is not possible to use shell job control to manipulate background processes started by **sudo**. Most interactive commands will fail to work properly in background mode.

**-C** *num*, **--close-from=***num*

Close all file descriptors greater than or equal to *num* before executing a command. Values less than three are not permitted. By default, **sudo** will close all open file descriptors other than standard input, standard output and standard error when executing a command. The security policy may restrict the user's ability to use this option. The *sudoers* policy only permits use of the **-C** option when the administrator has enabled the `closefrom_override` option.

**-c** *class*, **--login-class=***class*

Run the command with resource limits and scheduling priority of the specified login *class*. The *class* argument can be either a class name as defined in `/etc/login.conf`, or a single '-' character. If *class* is -, the default login class of the target user will be used. Otherwise, the command must be run as the superuser (user ID 0), or **sudo** must be run from a shell that is already running as the superuser. If the command is being run as a login shell, additional `/etc/login.conf` settings, such as the `umask` and environment variables, will be applied, if present. This option is only available on systems with BSD login classes.

**-E, --preserve-env**

Indicates to the security policy that the user wishes to preserve their existing environment variables. The security policy may return an error if the user does not have permission to preserve the environment.

**-e, --edit**

Edit one or more files instead of running a command. In lieu of a path name, the string "sudoedit" is used when consulting the security policy. If the user is authorized by the policy, the following steps are taken:

1. Temporary copies are made of the files to be edited with the owner set to the invoking user.
2. The editor specified by the policy is run to edit the temporary files. The *sudoers* policy uses the SUDO\_EDITOR, VISUAL and EDITOR environment variables (in that order). If none of SUDO\_EDITOR, VISUAL or EDITOR are set, the first program listed in the *editor* sudoers(5) option is used.
3. If they have been modified, the temporary files are copied back to their original location and the temporary versions are removed.

To help prevent the editing of unauthorized files, the following restrictions are enforced unless explicitly allowed by the security policy:

- Symbolic links may not be edited (version 1.8.15 and higher).
- Symbolic links along the path to be edited are not followed when the parent directory is writable by the invoking user unless that user is root (version 1.8.16 and higher).
- Files located in a directory that is writable by the invoking user may not be edited unless that user is root (version 1.8.16 and higher).

Users are never allowed to edit device special files.

If the specified file does not exist, it will be created. Note that unlike most commands run by *sudo*, the editor is run with the invoking user's environment unmodified. If, for some reason, **sudo** is unable to update a file with its edited version, the user will receive a warning and the edited copy will remain in a temporary file.

**-g group, --group=group**

Run the command with the primary group set to *group* instead of the primary group

specified by the target user's password database entry. The *group* may be either a group name or a numeric group ID (GID) prefixed with the '#' character (e.g. #0 for GID 0). When running a command as a GID, many shells require that the '#' be escaped with a backslash ('\'). If no **-u** option is specified, the command will be run as the invoking user. In either case, the primary group will be set to *group*.

**-H, --set-home**

Request that the security policy set the HOME environment variable to the home directory specified by the target user's password database entry. Depending on the policy, this may be the default behavior.

**-h, --help** Display a short help message to the standard output and exit.

**-h host, --host=host**

Run the command on the specified *host* if the security policy plugin supports remote commands. Note that the *sudoers* plugin does not currently support running remote commands. This may also be used in conjunction with the **-l** option to list a user's privileges for the remote host.

**-i, --login**

Run the shell specified by the target user's password database entry as a login shell. This means that login-specific resource files such as *.profile* or *.login* will be read by the shell. If a command is specified, it is passed to the shell for execution via the shell's **-c** option. If no command is specified, an interactive shell is executed. **sudo** attempts to change to that user's home directory before running the shell. The command is run with an environment similar to the one a user would receive at log in. The *Command environment* section in the *sudoers(5)* manual documents how the **-i** option affects the environment in which a command is run when the *sudoers* policy is in use.

**-K, --remove-timestamp**

Similar to the **-k** option, except that it removes the user's cached credentials entirely and may not be used in conjunction with a command or other option. This option does not require a password. Not all security policies support credential caching.

**-k, --reset-timestamp**

When used without a command, invalidates the user's cached credentials. In other words, the next time **sudo** is run a password will be required. This option does not require a password and was added to allow a user to revoke **sudo** permissions from a *.logout* file.

When used in conjunction with a command or an option that may require a password, this option will cause **sudo** to ignore the user's cached credentials. As a result, **sudo** will

prompt for a password (if one is required by the security policy) and will not update the user's cached credentials.

Not all security policies support credential caching.

**-l, --list** If no *command* is specified, list the allowed (and forbidden) commands for the invoking user (or the user specified by the **-U** option) on the current host. A longer list format is used if this option is specified multiple times and the security policy supports a verbose output format.

If a *command* is specified and is permitted by the security policy, the fully-qualified path to the command is displayed along with any command line arguments. If *command* is specified but not allowed, **sudo** will exit with a status value of 1.

**-n, --non-interactive**

Avoid prompting the user for input of any kind. If a password is required for the command to run, **sudo** will display an error message and exit.

**-P, --preserve-groups**

Preserve the invoking user's group vector unaltered. By default, the *sudoers* policy will initialize the group vector to the list of groups the target user is a member of. The real and effective group IDs, however, are still set to match the target user.

**-p *prompt*, --prompt=*prompt***

Use a custom password prompt with optional escape sequences. The following percent ('%') escape sequences are supported by the *sudoers* policy:

%H

expanded to the host name including the domain name (on if the machine's host name is fully qualified or the *fqdn* option is set in *sudoers(5)*)

%h

expanded to the local host name without the domain name

%p

expanded to the name of the user whose password is being requested (respects the *rootpw*, *targetpw*, and *runaspw* flags in *sudoers(5)*)

%U

expanded to the login name of the user the command will be run as (defaults to root)

unless the **-u** option is also specified)

**%u**

expanded to the invoking user's login name

**%%**

two consecutive '%' characters are collapsed into a single '%' character

The custom prompt will override the system password prompt on systems that support PAM unless the *passprompt\_override* flag is disabled in *sudoers*.

**-r *role*, --role=*role***

Run the command with an SELinux security context that includes the specified *role*.

**-S, --stdin** Write the prompt to the standard error and read the password from the standard input instead of using the terminal device. The password must be followed by a newline character.

**-s, --shell** Run the shell specified by the SHELL environment variable if it is set or the shell specified by the invoking user's password database entry. If a command is specified, it is passed to the shell for execution via the shell's **-c** option. If no command is specified, an interactive shell is executed.

**-t *type*, --type=*type***

Run the command with an SELinux security context that includes the specified *type*. If no *type* is specified, the default type is derived from the role.

**-U *user*, --other-user=*user***

Used in conjunction with the **-l** option to list the privileges for *user* instead of for the invoking user. The security policy may restrict listing other users' privileges. The *sudoers* policy only allows root or a user with the ALL privilege on the current host to use this option.

**-u *user*, --user=*user***

Run the command as a user other than the default target user (usually *root*). The *user* may be either a user name or a numeric user ID (UID) prefixed with the '#' character (e.g. #0 for UID 0). When running commands as a UID, many shells require that the '#' be escaped with a backslash ('\'). Some security policies may restrict UIDs to those listed in the password database. The *sudoers* policy allows UIDs that are not in the password database as long as the *targetpw* option is not set. Other security policies may not support

this.

**-V, --version**

Print the **sudo** version string as well as the version string of the security policy plugin and any I/O plugins. If the invoking user is already root the **-V** option will display the arguments passed to configure when **sudo** was built and plugins may display more verbose information such as default options.

**-v, --validate**

Update the user's cached credentials, authenticating the user if necessary. For the *sudoers* plugin, this extends the **sudo** timeout for another 5 minutes by default, but does not run a command. Not all security policies support cached credentials.

-- The -- option indicates that **sudo** should stop processing command line arguments.

Environment variables to be set for the command may also be passed on the command line in the form of *VAR=value*, e.g. *LD\_LIBRARY\_PATH=/usr/local/pkg/lib*. Variables passed on the command line are subject to restrictions imposed by the security policy plugin. The *sudoers* policy subjects variables passed on the command line to the same restrictions as normal environment variables with one important exception. If the *setenv* option is set in *sudoers*, the command to be run has the SETENV tag set or the command matched is ALL, the user may set variables that would otherwise be forbidden. See *sudoers(5)* for more information.

**COMMAND EXECUTION**

When **sudo** executes a command, the security policy specifies the execution environment for the command. Typically, the real and effective user and group and IDs are set to match those of the target user, as specified in the password database, and the group vector is initialized based on the group database (unless the **-P** option was specified).

The following parameters may be specified by security policy:

- ⊕ real and effective user ID
- ⊕ real and effective group ID
- ⊕ supplementary group IDs
- ⊕ the environment list
- ⊕ current working directory

- file creation mode mask (umask)
- SELinux role and type
- Solaris project
- Solaris privileges
- BSD login class
- scheduling priority (aka nice value)

### Process model

When **sudo** runs a command, it calls `fork(2)`, sets up the execution environment as described above, and calls the `execve` system call in the child process. The main **sudo** process waits until the command has completed, then passes the command's exit status to the security policy's close function and exits. If an I/O logging plugin is configured or if the security policy explicitly requests it, a new pseudo-terminal ("pty") is created and a second **sudo** process is used to relay job control signals between the user's existing pty and the new pty the command is being run in. This extra process makes it possible to, for example, suspend and resume the command. Without it, the command would be in what POSIX terms an "orphaned process group" and it would not receive any job control signals. As a special case, if the policy plugin does not define a close function and no pty is required, **sudo** will execute the command directly instead of calling `fork(2)` first. The *sudoers* policy plugin will only define a close function when I/O logging is enabled, a pty is required, or the *pam\_session* or *pam\_setcred* options are enabled. Note that *pam\_session* and *pam\_setcred* are enabled by default on systems using PAM.

### Signal handling

When the command is run as a child of the **sudo** process, **sudo** will relay signals it receives to the command. The SIGINT and SIGQUIT signals are only relayed when the command is being run in a new pty or when the signal was sent by a user process, not the kernel. This prevents the command from receiving SIGINT twice each time the user enters control-C. Some signals, such as SIGSTOP and SIGKILL, cannot be caught and thus will not be relayed to the command. As a general rule, SIGTSTP should be used instead of SIGSTOP when you wish to suspend a command being run by **sudo**.

As a special case, **sudo** will not relay signals that were sent by the command it is running. This prevents the command from accidentally killing itself. On some systems, the `reboot(8)` command sends SIGTERM to all non-system processes other than itself before rebooting the system. This prevents **sudo** from relaying the SIGTERM signal it received back to `reboot(8)`, which might then exit before the system was actually rebooted, leaving it in a half-dead state similar to single user mode. Note, however, that this check only applies to the command run by **sudo** and not any other processes that the command



may create. As a result, running a script that calls `reboot(8)` or `shutdown(8)` via **sudo** may cause the system to end up in this undefined state unless the `reboot(8)` or `shutdown(8)` are run using the **exec()** family of functions instead of **system()** (which interposes a shell between the command and the calling process).

If no I/O logging plugins are loaded and the policy plugin has not defined a **close()** function, set a command timeout or required that the command be run in a new pty, **sudo** may execute the command directly instead of running it as a child process.

### Plugins

Plugins may be specified via Plugin directives in the `sudo.conf(5)` file. They may be loaded as dynamic shared objects (on systems that support them), or compiled directly into the **sudo** binary. If no `sudo.conf(5)` file is present, or it contains no Plugin lines, **sudo** will use the traditional *sudoers* security policy and I/O logging. See the `sudo.conf(5)` manual for details of the `/etc/sudo.conf` file and the `sudo_plugin(8)` manual for more information about the **sudo** plugin architecture.

### EXIT VALUE

Upon successful execution of a command, the exit status from **sudo** will be the exit status of the program that was executed. If the command terminated due to receipt of a signal, **sudo** will send itself the signal that terminated the command.

Otherwise, **sudo** exits with a value of 1 if there is a configuration/permission problem or if **sudo** cannot execute the given command. In the latter case, the error string is printed to the standard error. If **sudo** cannot `stat(2)` one or more entries in the user's PATH, an error is printed to the standard error. (If the directory does not exist or if it is not really a directory, the entry is ignored and no error is printed.) This should not happen under normal circumstances. The most common reason for `stat(2)` to return ‘‘permission denied’’ is if you are running an automounter and one of the directories in your PATH is on a machine that is currently unreachable.

### SECURITY NOTES

**sudo** tries to be safe when executing external commands.

To prevent command spoofing, **sudo** checks `."` and `""` (both denoting current directory) last when searching for a command in the user's PATH (if one or both are in the PATH). Note, however, that the actual PATH environment variable is *not* modified and is passed unchanged to the program that **sudo** executes.

Users should *never* be granted **sudo** privileges to execute files that are writable by the user or that reside in a directory that is writable by the user. If the user can modify or replace the command there is no way to limit what additional commands they can run.

Please note that **sudo** will normally only log the command it explicitly runs. If a user runs a command such as `sudo su` or `sudo sh`, subsequent commands run from that shell are not subject to **sudo**'s security policy. The same is true for commands that offer shell escapes (including most editors). If I/O logging is enabled, subsequent commands will have their input and/or output logged, but there will not be traditional logs for those commands. Because of this, care must be taken when giving users access to commands via **sudo** to verify that the command does not inadvertently give the user an effective root shell. For more information, please see the *Preventing shell escapes* section in `sudoers(5)`.

To prevent the disclosure of potentially sensitive information, **sudo** disables core dumps by default while it is executing (they are re-enabled for the command that is run). This historical practice dates from a time when most operating systems allowed `setuid` processes to dump core by default. To aid in debugging **sudo** crashes, you may wish to re-enable core dumps by setting “`disable_coredump`” to `false` in the `sudo.conf(5)` file as follows:

```
Set disable_coredump false
```

See the `sudo.conf(5)` manual for more information.

## ENVIRONMENT

**sudo** utilizes the following environment variables. The security policy has control over the actual content of the command's environment.

EDITOR	Default editor to use in <code>-e</code> ( <code>sudoedit</code> ) mode if neither <code>SUDO_EDITOR</code> nor <code>VISUAL</code> is set.
MAIL	Set to the mail spool of the target user when the <code>-i</code> option is specified or when <code>env_reset</code> is enabled in <code>sudoers</code> (unless <code>MAIL</code> is present in the <code>env_keep</code> list).
HOME	Set to the home directory of the target user when the <code>-i</code> or <code>-H</code> options are specified, when the <code>-s</code> option is specified and <code>set_home</code> is set in <code>sudoers</code> , when <code>always_set_home</code> is enabled in <code>sudoers</code> , or when <code>env_reset</code> is enabled in <code>sudoers</code> and <code>HOME</code> is not present in the <code>env_keep</code> list.
LOGNAME	Set to the login name of the target user when the <code>-i</code> option is specified, when the <code>set_logname</code> option is enabled in <code>sudoers</code> or when the <code>env_reset</code> option is enabled in <code>sudoers</code> (unless <code>LOGNAME</code> is present in the <code>env_keep</code> list).
PATH	May be overridden by the security policy.
SHELL	Used to determine shell to run with <code>-s</code> option.

**SUDO\_ASKPASS**

Specifies the path to a helper program used to read the password if no terminal is available or if the **-A** option is specified.

**SUDO\_COMMAND**

Set to the command run by sudo.

**SUDO\_EDITOR** Default editor to use in **-e** (suedoedit) mode.

**SUDO\_GID** Set to the group ID of the user who invoked sudo.

**SUDO\_PROMPT** Used as the default password prompt.

**SUDO\_PS1** If set, PS1 will be set to its value for the program being run.

**SUDO\_UID** Set to the user ID of the user who invoked sudo.

**SUDO\_USER** Set to the login name of the user who invoked sudo.

**USER** Set to the same value as LOGNAME, described above.

**USERNAME** Same as USER.

**VISUAL** Default editor to use in **-e** (suedoedit) mode if SUDO\_EDITOR is not set.

**FILES**

*/etc/sudo.conf* **sudo** front end configuration

**EXAMPLES**

Note: the following examples assume a properly configured security policy.

To get a file listing of an unreadable directory:

```
$ sudo ls /usr/local/protected
```

To list the home directory of user yaz on a machine where the file system holding ~yaz is not exported as root:

```
$ sudo -u yaz ls ~yaz
```

To edit the *index.html* file as user `www`:

```
$ sudo -u www vi ~www/htdocs/index.html
```

To view system logs only accessible to root and users in the `adm` group:

```
$ sudo -g adm view /var/log/syslog
```

To run an editor as `jim` with a different primary group:

```
$ sudo -u jim -g audio vi ~jim/sound.txt
```

To shut down a machine:

```
$ sudo shutdown -r +15 "quick reboot"
```

To make a usage listing of the directories in the `/home` partition. Note that this runs the commands in a sub-shell to make the `cd` and file redirection work.

```
$ sudo sh -c "cd /home ; du -s * | sort -rn > USAGE"
```

## SEE ALSO

`su(1)`, `stat(2)`, `login_cap(3)`, `passwd(5)`, `sudo.conf(5)`, `sudoers(5)`, `sudo_plugin(8)`, `sudoreplay(8)`, `visudo(8)`

## HISTORY

See the `HISTORY` file in the **sudo** distribution (<https://www.sudo.ws/history.html>) for a brief history of `sudo`.

## AUTHORS

Many people have worked on **sudo** over the years; this version consists of code written primarily by:

Todd C. Miller

See the `CONTRIBUTORS` file in the **sudo** distribution (<https://www.sudo.ws/contributors.html>) for an exhaustive list of people who have contributed to **sudo**.

## CAVEATS

There is no easy way to prevent a user from gaining a root shell if that user is allowed to run arbitrary commands via **sudo**. Also, many programs (such as editors) allow the user to run commands via shell

escapes, thus avoiding **sudo**'s checks. However, on most systems it is possible to prevent shell escapes with the sudoers(5) plugin's *noexec* functionality.

It is not meaningful to run the `cd` command directly via `sudo`, e.g.,

```
$ sudo cd /usr/local/protected
```

since when the command exits the parent process (your shell) will still be the same. Please see the *EXAMPLES* section for more information.

Running shell scripts via **sudo** can expose the same kernel bugs that make `setuid` shell scripts unsafe on some operating systems (if your OS has a `/dev/fd/` directory, `setuid` shell scripts are generally safe).

## BUGS

If you feel you have found a bug in **sudo**, please submit a bug report at <https://bugzilla.sudo.ws/>

## SUPPORT

Limited free support is available via the `sudo-users` mailing list, see <https://www.sudo.ws/mailman/listinfo/sudo-users> to subscribe or search the archives.

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