



### ***Rocky Enterprise Linux 9.2 Manual Pages on command 'chown.2'***

#### **\$ man chown.2**

CHOWN(2)                      Linux Programmer's Manual                      CHOWN(2)

#### NAME

chown, fchown, lchown, fchownat - change ownership of a file

#### SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>

int chown(const char *pathname, uid_t owner, gid_t group);

int fchown(int fd, uid_t owner, gid_t group);

int lchown(const char *pathname, uid_t owner, gid_t group);

#include <fcntl.h>            /* Definition of AT_* constants */

#include <unistd.h>

int fchownat(int dirfd, const char *pathname,
             uid_t owner, gid_t group, int flags);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see feature\_test\_macros(7)):

fchown(), lchown():

```
/* Since glibc 2.12: */ _POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200809L
|| _XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500
|| /* Glibc versions <= 2.19: */ _BSD_SOURCE
```

fchownat():

Since glibc 2.10:

`_POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200809L`

Before glibc 2.10:

`_ATFILE_SOURCE`

## DESCRIPTION

These system calls change the owner and group of a file. The `chown()`, `fchown()`, and `lchown()` system calls differ only in how the file is specified:

- \* `chown()` changes the ownership of the file specified by `pathname`, which is dereferenced if it is a symbolic link.

- \* `fchown()` changes the ownership of the file referred to by the open file descriptor `fd`.

- \* `lchown()` is like `chown()`, but does not dereference symbolic links.

Only a privileged process (Linux: one with the `CAP_CHOWN` capability) may change the owner of a file. The owner of a file may change the group of the file to any group of which that owner is a member. A privileged process (Linux: with `CAP_CHOWN`) may change the group arbitrarily.

If the owner or group is specified as `-1`, then that ID is not changed.

When the owner or group of an executable file is changed by an unprivileged user, the `S_ISUID` and `S_ISGID` mode bits are cleared. POSIX does not specify whether this also should happen when root does the `chown()`; the Linux behavior depends on the kernel version, and since Linux 2.2.13, root is treated like other users. In case of a non-group-executable file (i.e., one for which the `S_IXGRP` bit is not set) the `S_ISGID` bit indicates mandatory locking, and is not cleared by a `chown()`.

When the owner or group of an executable file is changed (by any user), all capability sets for the file are cleared.

### `fchownat()`

The `fchownat()` system call operates in exactly the same way as `chown()`, except for the differences described here.

If the `pathname` given in `pathname` is relative, then it is interpreted relative to the directory referred to by the file descriptor `dirfd`

(rather than relative to the current working directory of the calling process, as is done by `chown()` for a relative pathname).

If `pathname` is relative and `dirfd` is the special value `AT_FDCWD`, then `pathname` is interpreted relative to the current working directory of the calling process (like `chown()`).

If `pathname` is absolute, then `dirfd` is ignored.

The `flags` argument is a bit mask created by ORing together 0 or more of the following values;

`AT_EMPTY_PATH` (since Linux 2.6.39)

If `pathname` is an empty string, operate on the file referred to by `dirfd` (which may have been obtained using the `open(2)` `O_PATH` flag). In this case, `dirfd` can refer to any type of file, not just a directory. If `dirfd` is `AT_FDCWD`, the call operates on the current working directory. This flag is Linux-specific; define `_GNU_SOURCE` to obtain its definition.

`AT_SYMLINK_NOFOLLOW`

If `pathname` is a symbolic link, do not dereference it: instead operate on the link itself, like `lchown()`. (By default, `fchownat()` dereferences symbolic links, like `chown()`.)

See `openat(2)` for an explanation of the need for `fchownat()`.

## RETURN VALUE

On success, zero is returned. On error, -1 is returned, and `errno` is set appropriately.

## ERRORS

Depending on the filesystem, errors other than those listed below can be returned.

The more general errors for `chown()` are listed below.

**EACCES** Search permission is denied on a component of the `path` prefix.

(See also `path_resolution(7)`.)

**EFAULT** `pathname` points outside your accessible address space.

**ELOOP** Too many symbolic links were encountered in resolving `pathname`.

**ENAMETOOLONG**

`pathname` is too long.

ENOENT The file does not exist.

ENOMEM Insufficient kernel memory was available.

ENOTDIR

A component of the path prefix is not a directory.

EPERM The calling process did not have the required permissions (see above) to change owner and/or group.

EPERM The file is marked immutable or append-only. (See `ioctl_iflags(2)`.)

EROFS The named file resides on a read-only filesystem.

The general errors for `fchown()` are listed below:

EBADF `fd` is not a valid open file descriptor.

EIO A low-level I/O error occurred while modifying the inode.

ENOENT See above.

EPERM See above.

EROFS See above.

The same errors that occur for `chown()` can also occur for `fchownat()`.

The following additional errors can occur for `fchownat()`:

EBADF `dirfd` is not a valid file descriptor.

EINVAL Invalid flag specified in `flags`.

ENOTDIR

`pathname` is relative and `dirfd` is a file descriptor referring to a file other than a directory.

## VERSIONS

`fchownat()` was added to Linux in kernel 2.6.16; library support was added to glibc in version 2.4.

## CONFORMING TO

`chown()`, `fchown()`, `lchown()`: 4.4BSD, SVr4, POSIX.1-2001, POSIX.1-2008.

The 4.4BSD version can be used only by the superuser (that is, ordinary users cannot give away files).

`fchownat()`: POSIX.1-2008.

## NOTES

Ownership of new files

When a new file is created (by, for example, `open(2)` or `mkdir(2)`), its

owner is made the same as the filesystem user ID of the creating process. The group of the file depends on a range of factors, including the type of filesystem, the options used to mount the filesystem, and whether or not the set-group-ID mode bit is enabled on the parent directory. If the filesystem supports the `-o grp`id (or, synonymously `-o bsdgroups`) and `-o no`grp`id` (or, synonymously `-o sysvgroups`) mount options, then the rules are as follows:

- \* If the filesystem is mounted with `-o grp`id, then the group of a new file is made the same as that of the parent directory.
- \* If the filesystem is mounted with `-o no`grp`id` and the set-group-ID bit is disabled on the parent directory, then the group of a new file is made the same as the process's filesystem GID.
- \* If the filesystem is mounted with `-o no`grp`id` and the set-group-ID bit is enabled on the parent directory, then the group of a new file is made the same as that of the parent directory.

As at Linux 4.12, the `-o grp`id and `-o no`grp`id` mount options are supported by ext2, ext3, ext4, and XFS. Filesystems that don't support these mount options follow the `-o no`grp`id` rules.

#### Glibc notes

On older kernels where `fchownat()` is unavailable, the glibc wrapper function falls back to the use of `chown()` and `lchown()`. When `pathname` is a relative pathname, glibc constructs a pathname based on the symbolic link in `/proc/self/fd` that corresponds to the `dirfd` argument.

#### NFS

The `chown()` semantics are deliberately violated on NFS filesystems which have UID mapping enabled. Additionally, the semantics of all system calls which access the file contents are violated, because `chown()` may cause immediate access revocation on already open files. Client side caching may lead to a delay between the time where ownership have been changed to allow access for a user and the time where the file can actually be accessed by the user on other clients.

#### Historical details

The original Linux `chown()`, `fchown()`, and `lchown()` system calls supported

ported only 16-bit user and group IDs. Subsequently, Linux 2.4 added `chown32()`, `fchown32()`, and `lchown32()`, supporting 32-bit IDs. The glibc `chown()`, `fchown()`, and `lchown()` wrapper functions transparently deal with the variations across kernel versions.

In versions of Linux prior to 2.1.81 (and distinct from 2.1.46), `chown()` did not follow symbolic links. Since Linux 2.1.81, `chown()` does follow symbolic links, and there is a new system call `lchown()` that does not follow symbolic links. Since Linux 2.1.86, this new call (that has the same semantics as the old `chown()`) has got the same syscall number, and `chown()` got the newly introduced number.

## EXAMPLES

The following program changes the ownership of the file named in its second command-line argument to the value specified in its first command-line argument. The new owner can be specified either as a numeric user ID, or as a username (which is converted to a user ID by using `getpwnam(3)` to perform a lookup in the system password file).

Program source

```
#include <pwd.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <unistd.h>

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    uid_t uid;
    struct passwd *pwd;
    char *endptr;
    if (argc != 3 || argv[1][0] == '\0') {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s <owner> <file>\n", argv[0]);
        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
    }
    uid = strtol(argv[1], &endptr, 10); /* Allow a numeric string */
    if (*endptr != '\0') { /* Was not pure numeric string */
```

```

    pwd = getpwnam(argv[1]); /* Try getting UID for username */
    if (pwd == NULL) {
        perror("getpwnam");
        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
    }
    uid = pwd->pw_uid;
}
if (chown(argv[2], uid, -1) == -1) {
    perror("chown");
    exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
}
exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
}

```

#### SEE ALSO

chgrp(1), chown(1), chmod(2), flock(2), path\_resolution(7), symlink(7)

#### COLOPHON

This page is part of release 5.10 of the Linux man-pages project. A description of the project, information about reporting bugs, and the latest version of this page, can be found at <https://www.kernel.org/doc/man-pages/>.