



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'execl.3'

\$ man execl.3

execl(3) Library Functions Manual execl(3)

NAME

execl, execlp, execl, execv, execvp, execvpe - execute a file

LIBRARY

Standard C library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>
```

```
extern char **environ;
```

```
int execl(const char *path, const char *arg, ...
```

```
    /*, (char *) NULL */);
```

```
int execlp(const char *file, const char *arg, ...
```

```
    /*, (char *) NULL */);
```

```
int execl(const char *path, const char *arg, ...
```

```
    /*, (char *) NULL, char *const envp[] */);
```

```
int execvp(const char *path, char *const argv[]);
```

```
int execvp(const char *file, char *const argv[]);
```

```
int execvpe(const char *file, char *const argv[], char *const envp[]);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see feature_test_macros(7)):

```
execvpe():
```

```
    _GNU_SOURCE
```

DESCRIPTION

The `exec()` family of functions replaces the current process image with a new process image.

The functions described in this manual page are layered on top of `execve(2)`. (See the `man?`

ual page for `execve(2)` for further details about the replacement of the current process image.)

The initial argument for these functions is the name of a file that is to be executed.

The functions can be grouped based on the letters following the "exec" prefix.

l - `execl()`, `execlp()`, `execle()`

The `const char *arg` and subsequent ellipses can be thought of as `arg0`, `arg1`, ..., `argn`. Together they describe a list of one or more pointers to null-terminated strings that represent the argument list available to the executed program. The first argument, by convention, should point to the filename associated with the file being executed. The list of arguments must be terminated by a null pointer, and, since these are variadic functions, this pointer must be cast `(char *) NULL`.

By contrast with the 'l' functions, the 'v' functions (below) specify the command-line arguments of the executed program as a vector.

v - `execv()`, `execvp()`, `execvpe()`

The `char *const argv[]` argument is an array of pointers to null-terminated strings that represent the argument list available to the new program. The first argument, by convention, should point to the filename associated with the file being executed. The array of pointers must be terminated by a null pointer.

e - `execle()`, `execvpe()`

The environment of the new process image is specified via the argument `envp`. The `envp` argument is an array of pointers to null-terminated strings and must be terminated by a null pointer.

All other `exec()` functions (which do not include 'e' in the suffix) take the environment for the new process image from the external variable `environ` in the calling process.

p - `execlp()`, `execvp()`, `execvpe()`

These functions duplicate the actions of the shell in searching for an executable file if the specified filename does not contain a slash (/) character. The file is sought in the colon-separated list of directory pathnames specified in the `PATH` environment variable. If this variable isn't defined, the path list defaults to a list that includes the directories returned by `confstr(_CS_PATH)` (which typically returns the value `"/bin:/usr/bin"`) and possibly also the current working directory; see `VERSIONS` for further details.

`execvpe()` searches for the program using the value of `PATH` from the caller's environment, not from the `envp` argument.

search path. This accidental behavior change is considered mildly beneficial, and won't be reverted.

The behavior of `execlp()` and `execvp()` when errors occur while attempting to execute the file is historic practice, but has not traditionally been documented and is not specified by the POSIX standard. BSD (and possibly other systems) do an automatic sleep and retry if `ETXTBSY` is encountered. Linux treats it as a hard error and returns immediately.

Traditionally, the functions `execlp()` and `execvp()` ignored all errors except for the ones described above and `ENOMEM` and `E2BIG`, upon which they returned. They now return if any error other than the ones described above occurs.

STANDARDS

`environ`

`execl()`

`execlp()`

`execle()`

`execv()`

`execvp()`

POSIX.1-2008.

`execvpe()`

GNU.

HISTORY

`environ`

`execl()`

`execlp()`

`execle()`

`execv()`

`execvp()`

POSIX.1-2001.

`execvpe()`

glibc 2.11.

BUGS

Before glibc 2.24, `execl()` and `execle()` employed `realloc(3)` internally and were consequently not async-signal-safe, in violation of the requirements of POSIX.1. This was fixed in glibc 2.24.

Architecture-specific details

On sparc and sparc64, `execv()` is provided as a system call by the kernel (with the prototype shown above) for compatibility with SunOS. This function is not employed by the `execv()` wrapper function on those architectures.

SEE ALSO

`sh(1)`, `execve(2)`, `execveat(2)`, `fork(2)`, `ptrace(2)`, `fexecve(3)`, `system(3)`, `environ(7)`

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`exec(3)`