



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

\$ man setenv.3

setenv(3) Library Functions Manual setenv(3)

NAME

setenv - change or add an environment variable

LIBRARY

Standard C library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <stdlib.h>

int setenv(const char *name, const char *value, int overwrite);

int unsetenv(const char *name);
```

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

```
setenv(), unsetenv():

    _POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200112L

    || /* glibc <= 2.19: */ _BSD_SOURCE
```

DESCRIPTION

The `setenv()` function adds the variable name to the environment with the value `value`, if `name` does not already exist. If `name` does exist in the environment, then its value is changed to `value` if `overwrite` is nonzero; if `overwrite` is zero, then the value of `name` is not changed (and `setenv()` returns a success status). This function makes copies of the strings pointed to by `name` and `value` (by contrast with `putenv(3)`).

The `unsetenv()` function deletes the variable name from the environment. If `name` does not exist in the environment, then the function succeeds, and the environment is unchanged.

RETURN VALUE

`setenv()` and `unsetenv()` functions return zero on success, or -1 on error, with `errno` set to

ERRORS

ENOMEM Insufficient memory to add a new variable to the environment.

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see `attributes(7)`.

? Interface	? Attribute	? Value	?
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? setenv(), unsetenv() ? Thread safety ? MT-Unsafe const:env ?

STANDARDS

HISTORY

Prior to glibc 2.2.2, unsetenv() was prototyped as returning void; more recent glibc ver?

CAVEATS

BUGS

SEE ALSO

Linux man-pages 6.17 2026-02-08 setenv(3)