



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'setterm.1'

\$ man setterm.1

SETTERM(1)

User Commands

SETTERM(1)

NAME

setterm - set terminal attributes

SYNOPSIS

setterm [options]

DESCRIPTION

setterm writes to standard output a character string that will invoke the specified terminal capabilities. Where possible, terminfo is consulted to find the string to use. Some options (marked "virtual consoles only" below) do not correspond to a terminfo(5) capability. In these cases, if the terminal type is "con" or "linux", the string that invokes the specified capability on the PC Minix virtual console is output. Options that are not implemented by the terminal are ignored.

OPTIONS

For boolean options (on or off), the default is on.

Below, an 8-color can be black, red, green, yellow, blue, magenta, cyan, or white.

A 16-color can be an 8-color, or grey, or bright followed by red, green, yellow, blue, magenta, cyan, or white.

The various color options may be set independently, at least on virtual consoles, though the results of setting multiple modes (for example, --underline and --half-bright) are hardware-dependent.

The optional arguments are recommended with '=' (equals sign) and not space between the option and the argument. For example --option=argument. setterm can interpret the next non-option argument as an optional argument too.

`--appcursorkeys on|off`

Sets Cursor Key Application Mode on or off. When on, ESC O A, ESC O B, etc. will be sent for the cursor keys instead of ESC [A, ESC [B, etc. See the vi and Cursor-Keys section of the Text-Terminal-HOWTO for how this can cause problems for vi users. Virtual consoles only.

`--append console_number`

Like `--dump`, but appends to the snapshot file instead of overwriting it. Only works if no `--dump` options are given.

`--background 8-color|default`

Sets the background text color.

`--blank[=0-60|force|poke]`

Sets the interval of inactivity, in minutes, after which the screen will be automatically blanked (using APM if available). Without an argument, it gets the blank status (returns which vt was blanked, or zero for an unblanked vt). Virtual consoles only.

The force argument keeps the screen blank even if a key is pressed.

The poke argument unblanks the screen.

`--bfreq[=number]`

Sets the bell frequency in Hertz. Without an argument, it defaults to 0. Virtual consoles only.

`--blength[=0-2000]`

Sets the bell duration in milliseconds. Without an argument, it defaults to 0. Virtual consoles only.

`--blink on|off`

Turns blink mode on or off. Except on a virtual console, `--blink off` turns off all attributes (bold, half-brightness, blink, reverse).

`--bold on|off`

Turns bold (extra bright) mode on or off. Except on a virtual console, `--bold off` turns off all attributes (bold, half-brightness, blink, reverse).

`--clear[=all|rest]`

Without an argument or with the argument all, the entire screen is cleared and the cursor is set to the home position, just like `clear(1)` does. With the argument rest, the screen is cleared from the current cursor position to the end.

`--clrtabs[=tab1 tab2 tab3 ...]`

Clears tab stops from the given horizontal cursor positions, in the range 1-160. Without arguments, it clears all tab stops. Virtual consoles only.

`--cursor on|off`

Turns the terminal's cursor on or off.

`--default`

Sets the terminal's rendering options to the default values.

`--dump[=console_number]`

Writes a snapshot of the virtual console with the given number to the file specified with the `--file` option, overwriting its contents; the default is `screen.dump`. Without an argument, it dumps the current virtual console. This overrides `--append`.

`--file filename`

Sets the snapshot file name for any `--dump` or `--append` options on the same command line. If this option is not present, the default is `screen.dump` in the current directory. A path name that exceeds the system maximum will be truncated, see `PATH_MAX` from `linux/limits.h` for the value.

`--foreground 8-color|default`

Sets the foreground text color.

`--half-bright on|off`

Turns dim (half-brightness) mode on or off. Except on a virtual console, `--half-bright off` turns off all attributes (bold, half-brightness, blink, reverse).

`--hbcOLOR 16-color`

Sets the color for half-bright characters.

`--initialize`

Displays the terminal initialization string, which typically sets the terminal's rendering options, and other attributes to the default values.

`--inversescreen on|off`

Swaps foreground and background colors for the whole screen.

`--linewrap on|off`

Makes the terminal continue on a new line when a line is full.

`--msg on|off`

Enables or disables the sending of kernel `printk()` messages to the console. Virtual consoles only.

`--msglevel 0-8`

Sets the console logging level for kernel `printk()` messages. All messages strictly more important than this will be printed, so a logging level of 0 has the same effect as `--msg on` and a logging level of 8 will print all kernel messages. `klogd(8)` may be a more convenient interface to the logging of kernel messages.

Virtual consoles only.

`--powerdown[=0-60]`

Sets the VESA powerdown interval in minutes. Without an argument, it defaults to 0 (disable powerdown). If the console is blanked or the monitor is in suspend mode, then the monitor will go into vsync suspend mode or powerdown mode respectively after this period of time has elapsed.

`--powersave mode`

Valid values for mode are:

`vsync|on`

Puts the monitor into VESA vsync suspend mode.

`hsync`

Puts the monitor into VESA hsync suspend mode.

`powerdown`

Puts the monitor into VESA powerdown mode.

`off`

Turns the monitor's powersaving features off.

`--regtabs[=1-160]`

Clears all tab stops, then sets a regular tab stop pattern, with one tab every specified number of positions. Without an argument, it defaults to 8. Virtual consoles only.

`--repeat on|off`

Turns keyboard repeat on or off. Virtual consoles only.

`--reset`

Displays the terminal reset string, which typically resets the terminal to its power-on state.

`--resize`

Reset terminal size by assessing maximum row and column. This is useful when actual geometry and kernel terminal driver are not in sync. Most notable use case is with serial consoles, that do not use `ioctl(2)` but just byte streams and breaks.

`--reverse on|off`

Turns reverse video mode on or off. Except on a virtual console, `--reverse off` turns off all attributes (bold, half-brightness, blink, reverse).

`--store`

Stores the terminal's current rendering options (foreground and background colors) as the values to be used at `reset-to-default`. Virtual consoles only.

`--tabs=[tab1 tab2 tab3 ...]`

Sets tab stops at the given horizontal cursor positions, in the range 1-160. Without arguments, it shows the current tab stop settings.

`--term terminal_name`

Overrides the `TERM` environment variable.

`--ulcolor 16-color`

Sets the color for underlined characters. Virtual consoles only.

`--underline on|off`

Turns underline mode on or off.

`-h, --help`

Display help text and exit.

`-V, --version`

Display version and exit.

WARNING

Use of `setterm` in combination with `stdout` redirection can have unexpected results, as some options operate on `stdin`. To prevent problems, always redirect both `stdin` and `stdout` to the same device.

COMPATIBILITY

Since version 2.25 `setterm` has support for long options with two hyphens, for example `--help`, beside the historical long options with a single hyphen, for example `-help`. In scripts it is better to use the backward-compatible single hyphen rather than the double hyphen. Currently there are no plans nor good reasons to discontinue single-hyphen compatibility.

BUGS

Differences between the Minix and Linux versions are not documented.

SEE ALSO

`stty(1)`, `tput(1)`, `tty(4)`, `terminfo(5)`

REPORTING BUGS

For bug reports, use the issue tracker <<https://github.com/util-linux/util-linux/issues>>.

AVAILABILITY

The setterm command is part of the util-linux package which can be downloaded from Linux

Kernel Archive <<https://www.kernel.org/pub/linux/utils/util-linux/>>.

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