

NAME

chown, fchown, lchown, fchownat - change owner and group of a file

LIBRARY

Standard C Library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

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

int

```
chown(const char *path, uid_t owner, gid_t group);
```

int

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

int

```
lchown(const char *path, uid_t owner, gid_t group);
```

int

```
fchownat(int fd, const char *path, uid_t owner, gid_t group, int flag);
```

DESCRIPTION

The owner ID and group ID of the file named by *path* or referenced by *fd* is changed as specified by the arguments *owner* and *group*. The owner of a file may change the *group* to a group of which he or she is a member, but the change *owner* capability is restricted to the super-user.

The **chown()** system call clears the set-user-id and set-group-id bits on the file to prevent accidental or mischievous creation of set-user-id and set-group-id programs if not executed by the super-user. The **chown()** system call follows symbolic links to operate on the target of the link rather than the link itself.

The **fchown()** system call is particularly useful when used in conjunction with the file locking primitives (see flock(2)).

The **lchown()** system call is similar to **chown()** but does not follow symbolic links.

The **fchownat()** system call is equivalent to the **chown()** and **lchown()** except in the case where *path* specifies a relative path. In this case the file to be changed is determined relative to the directory associated with the file descriptor *fd* instead of the current working directory.

Values for *flag* are constructed by a bitwise-inclusive OR of flags from the following list, defined in

<fcntl.h>:

AT_SYMLINK_NOFOLLOW

If *path* names a symbolic link, ownership of the symbolic link is changed.

AT_RESOLVE_BENEATH

Only walk paths below the directory specified by the *fd* descriptor. See the description of the `O_RESOLVE_BENEATH` flag in the `open(2)` manual page.

AT_EMPTY_PATH

If the *path* argument is an empty string, operate on the file or directory referenced by the descriptor *fd*. If *fd* is equal to `AT_FDCWD`, operate on the current working directory.

If `chownat()` is passed the special value `AT_FDCWD` in the *fd* parameter, the current working directory is used and the behavior is identical to a call to `chown()` or `lchown()` respectively, depending on whether or not the `AT_SYMLINK_NOFOLLOW` bit is set in the *flag* argument.

One of the owner or group id's may be left unchanged by specifying it as -1.

RETURN VALUES

Upon successful completion, the value 0 is returned; otherwise the value -1 is returned and the global variable *errno* is set to indicate the error.

ERRORS

The `chown()` and `lchown()` will fail and the file will be unchanged if:

[ENOTDIR] A component of the path prefix is not a directory.

[ENAMETOOLONG] A component of a pathname exceeded 255 characters, or an entire path name exceeded 1023 characters.

[ENOENT] The named file does not exist.

[EACCES] Search permission is denied for a component of the path prefix.

[ELOOP] Too many symbolic links were encountered in translating the pathname.

[EPERM] The operation would change the ownership, but the effective user ID is not the super-user.

- [EPERM] The named file has its immutable or append-only flag set, see the `chflags(2)` manual page for more information.
- [EROFS] The named file resides on a read-only file system.
- [EFAULT] The *path* argument points outside the process's allocated address space.
- [EIO] An I/O error occurred while reading from or writing to the file system.
- [EINTEGRITY] Corrupted data was detected while reading from the file system.

The **fchown()** system call will fail if:

- [EBADF] The *fd* argument does not refer to a valid descriptor.
- [EINVAL] The *fd* argument refers to a socket, not a file.
- [EPERM] The effective user ID is not the super-user.
- [EROFS] The named file resides on a read-only file system.
- [EIO] An I/O error occurred while reading from or writing to the file system.
- [EINTEGRITY] Corrupted data was detected while reading from the file system.

In addition to the errors specified for **chown()** and **lchown()**, the **fchownat()** system call may fail if:

- [EBADF] The *path* argument does not specify an absolute path and the *fd* argument is neither `AT_FDCWD` nor a valid file descriptor open for searching.
- [EINVAL] The value of the *flag* argument is not valid.
- [ENOTDIR] The *path* argument is not an absolute path and *fd* is neither `AT_FDCWD` nor a file descriptor associated with a directory.
- [ENOTCAPABLE] *path* is an absolute path, or contained a `".."` component leading to a directory outside of the directory hierarchy specified by *fd*, and the process is in capability mode or the `AT_RESOLVE_BENEATH` flag was specified.

SEE ALSO

chgrp(1), chflags(2), chmod(2), flock(2), chown(8)

STANDARDS

The **chown()** system call is expected to conform to IEEE Std 1003.1-1990 ("POSIX.1"). The **fchownat()** system call follows The Open Group Extended API Set 2 specification.

HISTORY

The **chown()** function appeared in Version 1 AT&T UNIX. The **fchown()** system call appeared in 4.2BSD.

The **chown()** system call was changed to follow symbolic links in 4.4BSD. The **lchown()** system call was added in FreeBSD 3.0 to compensate for the loss of functionality.

The **fchownat()** system call appeared in FreeBSD 8.0.