

**NAME**

**chown** - change file owner and group

**SYNOPSIS**

**chown** [-fhvx] [-R [-H | -L | -P]] *owner[:group]* *file* ...

**chown** [-fhvx] [-R [-H | -L | -P]] *:group* *file* ...

**DESCRIPTION**

The **chown** utility changes the user ID and/or the group ID of the specified files. Symbolic links named by arguments are silently left unchanged unless **-h** is used.

The options are as follows:

- H** If the **-R** option is specified, symbolic links on the command line are followed and hence unaffected by the command. (Symbolic links encountered during traversal are not followed.)
- L** If the **-R** option is specified, all symbolic links are followed.
- P** If the **-R** option is specified, no symbolic links are followed. This is the default.
- R** Change the user ID and/or the group ID of the file hierarchies rooted in the files, instead of just the files themselves. Beware of unintentionally matching the **".."** hard link to the parent directory when using wildcards like **"\*"**.
- f** Do not report any failure to change file owner or group, nor modify the exit status to reflect such failures.
- h** If the file is a symbolic link, change the user ID and/or the group ID of the link itself.
- v** Cause **chown** to be verbose, showing files as the owner is modified. If the **-v** flag is specified more than once, **chown** will print the filename, followed by the old and new numeric user/group ID.
- x** File system mount points are not traversed.

The **-H**, **-L** and **-P** options are ignored unless the **-R** option is specified. In addition, these options override each other and the command's actions are determined by the last one specified.

The *owner* and *group* operands are both optional, however, one must be specified. If the *group* operand is specified, it must be preceded by a colon (":") character.

The *owner* may be either a numeric user ID or a user name. If a user name is also a numeric user ID, the operand is used as a user name. The *group* may be either a numeric group ID or a group name. If a group name is also a numeric group ID, the operand is used as a group name.

The ownership of a file may only be altered by a super-user for obvious security reasons.

If **chown** receives a SIGINFO signal (see the **status** argument for stty(1)), then the current filename as well as the old and new file owner and group are displayed.

## EXIT STATUS

The **chown** utility exits 0 on success, and >0 if an error occurs.

## COMPATIBILITY

Previous versions of the **chown** utility used the dot (".") character to distinguish the group name. This has been changed to be a colon (":") character so that user and group names may contain the dot character.

On previous versions of this system, symbolic links did not have owners.

The **-v** and **-x** options are non-standard and their use in scripts is not recommended.

## SEE ALSO

chgrp(1), chmod(1), find(1), chown(2), fts(3), symlink(7)

## STANDARDS

The **chown** utility is expected to be IEEE Std 1003.2 ("POSIX.2") compliant.

## HISTORY

A **chown** utility appeared in Version 1 AT&T UNIX.