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## FreeBSD Set Date Time and Timezone

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How do I setup date and time under FreeBSD operating system using a shell prompt?

Under FreeBSD you can use date command to display or set date and time. The date command displays the date and time read from the kernel clock. If you just type date command without any options (read as without arguments) the date command display the current date and time only.

Please note that if you are looking Linux specific date command faq, please [read this FAQ](#) <sup>[2]</sup>.

## FreeBSD Display todays date

Type date command as follows, to display todays date and time:

```
$ date
```

Output:

```
Thu Feb  9 23:43:19 IST 2006
```

## FreeBSD set date and time

Only the superuser or root user may set the date under FreeBSD. General format of date command is as follows:

```
date yymmddhhmmss
```

Where,

- yy : Year in two digit
- mm : Month (1-12)
- dd : Day (1-31)
- hh : Hours (0..23)
- mm : Minutes (0..59)
- ss : Seconds (0..61)

For example following command set date to 12-Jan-2004, 4:27 PM (remember you must be a root user to set date and time)

```
# date 0401121627
```

Output:

```
Mon Jan 12 16:27:00 IST 2004
```

## FreeBSD Set Time Without Modifying The Date

Type the following command to sets the time to 4:30 PM:

```
# date 1630
```

## FreeBSD Setup Timezone

To setup corrcrt timezone you need to copy your timezone file from /usr/share/zoneinfo directory to /etc/localtime file. Just goto directory:

```
# cd /usr/share/zoneinfo
```

Use ls -l command to find out your zonefile.

```
# ls -l
```

For example I am in Asia/Culcatta (IST time zone) so I need to copy file as follows:

```
# cp /usr/share/zoneinfo/Asia/Calcutta /etc/localtime
```

## date command and use of environment variable

You can also use TZ environment variable to display date and time according to your timezone. For example to display the current time in California you need to export TZ as follows (assuming that you are using bash shell):

```
# date
```

Output:

```
Fri Feb 10 00:39:59 IST 2006
```

Now use TZ variable:

```
# export TZ=America/Los_Angeles  
# date
```

Output:

```
Thu Feb 9 11:10:08 PST 2006
```

## See also:

- [How to: FreeBSD Setup Time / Clock Synchronization with NTP server](#) <sup>[3]</sup>
- [Linux set date and time from command prompt](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

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[3] How to: FreeBSD Setup Time / Clock Synchronization with NTP server: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/tips/freebsd-timeclock-synchronization-with-ntp-server.html>