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Howto: Linux Write protect a file

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Q. How do I write protect a file under Linux? I'm using CentOS 5 server Linux operating system. I need prevent accidental changes to my files.

A. There are two ways to write protect a file under Linux.

Method #1: You can make file readonly by removing users' write permission for a file. Under Linux and UNIX user cannot remove or modify file if they don't have a write permission. You can use normal chmod command for this purpose.

Method #2 : You need to use chattr command which changes the file attributes on a Linux second extended (ext2 / ext3) file system. You need to setup **i** attribute. A file with the **i** attribute cannot be modified: it cannot be deleted or renamed, no link can be created to this file and no data can be written to the file. Only the superuser (root) or a process possessing the CAP_LINUX_IMMUTABLE capability can set or clear this attribute.



[1]

Write protecting a file using chmod command

Let say you want to write protect the file called data.txt so that no other users can change it, enter:

```
$ chmod go-w data.txt
```

To provide back permission use:

```
$ chmod go+w data.txt
```

Write protecting a file using chattr command

Let say you want to write protect the file called data.txt so that no other users can change it **including root user**, enter (you must login as the root user to use chattr command):

```
# chattr +i data.txt
```

To remove i attribute, enter:

```
# chattr -i data.txt
```

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