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Linux / UNIX: Delete a file

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How do I delete a file under Linux / UNIX / BSD / AIX / HP-UX operating system?

To remove a file or directory in Linux, FreeBSD, Solaris or Unixish oses use the rm command.

[1]

rm command syntax

rm (short for remove) is a Unix command used to delete files from a filesystem. Usually, on most filesystems, deleting a file requires write permission on the parent directory (and execute permission, in order to enter the directory in the first place). (Note that, confusingly for beginners, permissions on the file itself are irrelevant.)

```
rm -f -r {file-name}
```

Where,

- -f: Forcefully remove file
- -r: Remove the contents of directories recursively

Remote or Delete a file

To remove a file called abc.txt type the following command:

```
$ rm abc.txt
```

To remove all files & subdirectories from a directory (MS-DOS deltree like command), enter:

```
$ rm -rf mydir
```

To remove empty directory use rmdir and not rm:

```
$ rmdir mydirectory
```

Read a list of file to delete from text file

rm command is often used in conjunction with xargs to supply a list of files to delete:

```
$ cat file.txt
```

List of to delete:

```
file1
/tmp/file2.txt
~/data.txt
```

Now delete all file listed in file.txt, enter:

```
$ xargs rm < file.txt
```

Never run rm -rf / as an administrator or normal UNIX / Linux user

WARNING! These examples will delete all files on your computer if executed.

```
$ rm -rf /
$ rm -rf *
```

rm -rf (variously, rm -rf /, rm -rf *, and others) is frequently used in jokes and anecdotes about Unix disasters. The rm -rf / variant of the command, if run by an administrator, would cause the contents of every writable mounted filesystem on the computer to be deleted. Do not try these commands.

See also:

- [Linux : How to delete file securely](#) [2]

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