

Table Of Contents

Table Of Contents	1
Default configuration file	2

[Home](#) > [Faq](#) > [Debian / Ubuntu](#)

How do I rotate log files?

Posted by [Vivek Gite](#) <vivek@nixcraft.com>

Q. How do I rotate log files under Linux operating system?

A. You need use tool called logrotate, which is designed to ease administration of systems that generate large numbers of log files. It allows automatic rotation, compression, removal, and mailing of log files.

Each log file may be handled daily, weekly, monthly, or when it grows too large. With this tool you keep logs longer with less disk space.



[1]

Default configuration file

The default configuration file is `/etc/logrotate.conf`:

```
# see "man logrotate" for details
# rotate log files weekly
weekly
# keep 4 weeks worth of backlogs
rotate 4
# create new (empty) log files after rotating old ones
create
# uncomment this if you want your log files compressed
#compress
# RPM packages drop log rotation information into this directory
include /etc/logrotate.d
# no packages own wtmp -- we'll rotate them here
/var/log/wtmp {
monthly
create 0664 root wtmp
rotate 1
}
```

Service or server specific configurations stored in `/etc/logrotate.d` directory, for example here is sample apache logrotate configuration file:

```
# cat /etc/logrotate.d/httpd
```

Output:

```
/var/log/httpd/*.log {
weekly
rotate 52
compress
missingok
notifempty
sharedscripts
postrotate
/bin/kill -HUP `cat /var/run/httpd.pid 2>/dev/null` 2> /dev/null || true
endscript
}
```

Where,

- **weekly** : Log files are rotated if the current weekday is less then the weekday of the last rotation or if more then a week has passed since the last rotation.
- **rotate 52** : Log files are rotated 52 times before being removed or mailed to the address specified in a mail directive. If count is 0, old versions are removed rather then rotated.
- **compress** : Old versions of log files are compressed with gzip to save disk space.
- **missingok** : If the log file is missing, go on to the next one without issuing an error message.
- **notifempty** : Do not rotate the log if it is empty

- sharedscripts : Normally, prerotate and postrotate scripts are run for each log which is rotated, meaning that a single script may be run multiple times for log file entries which match multiple files. If sharedscript is specified, the scripts are only run once, no matter how many logs match the wildcarded pattern. However, if none of the logs in the pattern require rotating, the scripts will not be run at all.
- postrotate
/bin/kill -HUP `cat /var/run/httpd.pid 2>/dev/null` 2> /dev/null || true
endscript : The lines between postrotate and endscript (both of which must appear on lines by themselves) are executed after the log file is rotated. These directives may only appear inside a log file definition.

See complete working example: How [to rotating logs with logrotate](#) ^[2] for Lighttpd web server.

4000+ howtos and counting! Want to read more Linux / UNIX howtos, tips and tricks? Subscribe to our [daily email](#) newsletter or [weekly newsletter](#) to make sure you don't miss a single tip/tricks. Alternatively, subscribe via [RSS/XML](#) feed.

Article printed from Frequently Asked Questions About Linux / UNIX: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/>

URL to article: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/how-do-i-rotate-log-files/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/faq/category/linux/>

[2] to rotating logs with logrotate: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/tips/lighttpd-rotating-logs-with-logrotate.html>

Copyright © 2006-2010 [nixCraft](#). All rights reserved. This print / pdf version is for personal non-commercial use only. More details <http://www.cyberciti.biz/tips/copyright>.