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# How to check if port is in use on Linux or Unix

Author: Vivek Gite • Last updated: May 27, 2023 • 16 comments

ow do I determine if a port is in use under Linux or Unixlike system? How can I verify which ports are listening on Linux server? How do I check if port is in use on Linux operating system using the CLI?



It is important you verify which ports are listening on the server's network interfaces. You need to pay attention to open ports to detect an intrusion. Apart from an intrusion, for troubleshooting purposes, it may be necessary to check if a port is already in use by a different application on your servers. For example, you may install Apache and Nginx server on the same system. So it is necessary to know if Apache or Nginx is using TCP port #80/443. This guick tutorial provides

steps to use the netstat, nmap and lsof command to check the ports in use and view the application that is utilizing the port.

Tutorial details			
Difficulty level <u>Easy</u>			
Root privileges	<u>Yes</u>		
Requirements	Linux or Unix terminal		
Category	Network Utilities		
Prerequisites	Isof/ss/netstat commands		
OS compatibility	*BSD • <u>Linux</u> • <u>macOS</u> • <u>Unix</u> • WSL		
Est. reading time	8 minutes		

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# How to check if port is in use in

To check the listening ports and applications on Linux:

- 1. Open a terminal application i.e. shell prompt.
- 2. Run any one of the following command on Linux to see open ports:

```
$ sudo lsof -i -P -n | grep LISTEN
$ sudo netstat -tulpn | grep LISTEN
$ sudo ss -tulpn | grep LISTEN
```

```
$ sudo lsof -i:22 ## see a specific port such as 22 ##
$ sudo nmap -sTU -0 IP-address-Here
```

3. For the latest version of Linux use the ss command. For example, ss -tulw

Let us see commands and its output in details.

# Option #1: Isof command

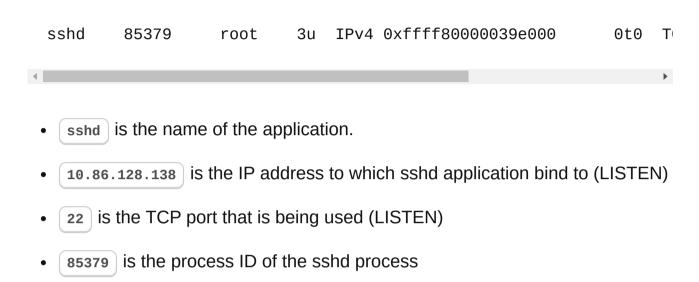
### The syntax is:

```
$ sudo lsof -i -P -n
$ sudo lsof -i -P -n | grep LISTEN
$ doas lsof -i -P -n | grep LISTEN # OpenBSD #
```

#### Sample outputs:

Fig.01: Check the listening ports and applications with Isof command

Consider the last line from above outputs:



# Viewing the Internet network services list

The /etc/services is a text file mapping between human-friendly textual names for internet services and their underlying assigned port numbers and protocol types. Use the <u>cat command</u> or <u>more command/less command</u> to view it:

```
$ less /etc/services
```

A sample file:

tcpmux	1/tcp		# TCP port servic
echo	7/tcp		
echo	7/udp		
discard	9/tcp	sink null	
discard	9/udp	sink null	
systat	11/tcp	users	
daytime	13/tcp		
daytime	13/udp		
netstat	15/tcp		
qotd	17/tcp	quote	
chargen	19/tcp	ttytst source	
chargen	19/udp	ttytst source	
ftp-data	20/tcp		
ftp	21/tcp		
fsp	21/udp	fspd	
ssh	22/tcp		# SSH Remote Logi
telnet	23/tcp		
smtp	25/tcp	mail	
time	37/tcp	timserver	
time	37/udp	timserver	
whois	43/tcp	nicname	
tacacs	49/tcp		# Login Host Prot
tacacs	49/udp		

domain	53/tcp	#	Domain	Name	Ser
domain	53/udp				

Each line describes one service, and is of the form:

# Option #2: netstat or ss command

You can check the listening ports and applications with netstat as follows.

### Linux netstat syntax

### **Prerequisite**

By default, netstat command may not be installed on your system. Hence, use the <u>apk command</u> on Alpine Linux, dnf command/<u>yum</u> command on RHEL & co, <u>apt command/apt-get command</u> on Debian,

Ubuntu & co, zypper command on SUSE/OpenSUSE, pacman command on Arch Linux to install the netstat.

Run the netstat command along with <u>grep command</u> to filter out port in LISTEN state:

```
$ netstat -tulpn | grep LISTEN
$ netstat -tulpn | more
```

OR filter out specific TCP port such as 443:

```
$ netstat -tulpn | grep ':443'
```

Where netstat command options are:

- -t : Select all TCP ports
- -u : Select all UDP ports
- -1 : Show listening server sockets (open TCP and UDP ports in listing state)
- -p : Display PID/Program name for sockets. In other words, this option tells who opened the TCP or UDP port. For example, on my system, Nginx

opened TCP port 80/443, so I will /usr/sbin/nginx or its PID.

 -n : Don't resolve name (avoid dns lookup, this speed up the netstat on busy Linux/Unix servers)

The netstat command deprecated for some time on Linux. Therefore, you need to use the ss command as follows:

```
$ sudo ss -tulw
$ sudo ss -tulwn
$ sudo ss -tulwn | grep LISTEN
```

			111	ow to check if port is in use on Linux or on	ix TilxCraft
			~\$ sudo ss	s -tulw	
Netid	State	Recv-Q	Send-Q	Local Address:Port	Peer Address:Port
udp	UNCONN	0	Θ	192.168.122.1:domain	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	Θ	0.0.0.0%virbr0:bootps	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	Θ	0.0.0.0:tpp	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.0:34651	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	Õ	Ö	224.0.0.251:mdns	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	ŏ	Ö	224.0.0.251:mdns	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251:mdns	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	Ö	0	224.0.0.251:mdns	0.0.0.0.*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251:mdns	0.0.0.0.*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251: mdns	0.0.0.0:*
		0	0		
udp	UNCONN			0.0.0.0:mdns	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.0:59020	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	[::]:mdns	[::]:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	[::]:45569	[::]:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	32	192.168.122.1:domain	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	128	0.0.0.0:ssh	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	Θ	5	127.0.0.1:ipp	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	Θ	128	127.0.0.1:postgresql	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	128	[::]:ssh	[::]:*
tcp	LISTEN	Θ	5	[::1]:ipp	[::]:*
vivek	@nixcraf	t-nuc02:	~\$ sudo ss	s -tulwn	
Netid	State	Recv-Q	Send-Q	Local Address:Port	Peer Address:Port
udp	UNCONN	0	0	192.168.122.1:53	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	Θ	0	0.0.0.0%virbr0:67	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.0:631	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.34651	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	Θ	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	ŏ	ŏ	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0.*
udp	UNCONN	ő	Ö	224.0.0.251:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.0:5353	0.0.0.0:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	0.0.0.0:59020	0.0.0.0.*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	[::]:5353	[::]:*
udp	UNCONN	0	0	[::]:45569	[::]:*
	LISTEN		32	192.168.122.1:53	0.0.0.0:*
tcp				0.0.0.0:22	
tcp	LISTEN	0	128		0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	5	127.0.0.1:631	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	128	127.0.0.1:5432	0.0.0.0:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	128	[::]:22	[::]:*
tcp	LISTEN	0	5	[::1]:631	[::]:*
vivek	gnlxcraf	t-nuc02:	~\$	@ x	www.cyborcitibiz
				© v	www.cyberciti.biz

Where, ss command options are as follows:

- -t : Show only TCP sockets on Linux
- (-u): Display only UDP sockets on Linux
- -1 : Show listening sockets. For example, TCP port 22 is opened by SSHD server.
- (-p): List process name that opened sockets
- [-n]: Don't resolve service names i.e. don't use DNS

Related: Linux Find Out Which Process Is Listening Upon a Port

# FreeBSD/macOS (OS X) netstat syntax

The syntax is as follows:

```
$ netstat -anp tcp | grep LISTEN
$ netstat -anp udp | grep LISTEN
```

You can use the sockstat command on macOS or FreeBSD to display open TCP

### or UDP ports too. For example:

```
{vivek@freebsd13-server:~}$ sudo sockstat -4 -6 -l
```

### Outputs from my <a href="FreeBSD server version"><u>FreeBSD server version</u></a> 13.xx:

USER	COMMAND	PID	FD PROTO	LOCAL ADDRESS	FOREIGN
root	master	1723	13 tcp4	127.0.0.1:25	* * *
root	master	1723	14 tcp4	192.168.2.20:25	* * *
root	sshd	1627	3 tcp6	*:22	* * *
root	sshd	1627	4 tcp4	*:22	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	20 udp6	*:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	21 udp4	*:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	22 udp4	192.168.2.20:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	23 udp6	::1:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	24 udp6	fe80::1%lo0:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	25 udp4	127.0.0.1:123	* * *
ntpd	ntpd	1615	26 udp4	172.16.0.5:123	* * *
root	syslogd	1085	6 udp6	*:514	* * *
root	syslogd	1085	7 udp4	*:514	* * *

? ?	?	?	?	udp4	*:17890	* * *
?	?	?	?	udp6	*:17890	* : *

### OpenBSD netstat syntax

```
$ netstat -na -f inet | grep LISTEN
$ netstat -nat | grep LISTEN
```

# Option #3: nmap command

#### The syntax is:

```
$ sudo nmap -sT -0 localhost
# search for open port IP address 192.168.2.13
$ sudo nmap -sU -0 192.168.2.13 ##[ list open UDP ports ]
$ sudo nmap -sT -0 192.168.2.13 ##[ list open TCP ports ]
```

```
Starting Nmap 7.31 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2016-11-10 23:56 IST
Nmap scan report for nas04 (192.168.2.13)
Host is up (0.0062s latency).
Not shown: 993 closed ports
PORT
        STATE SERVICE
22/tcp open ssh
80/tcp open http
111/tcp open rpcbind
139/tcp open netbios-ssn
445/tcp open microsoft-ds
548/tcp open afp
2049/tcp open nfs
MAC Address: D0:50:99:79:30:49 (ASRock Incorporation)
No exact OS matches for host (If you know what OS is running on it, see htt
TCP/IP fingerprint:
OS:SCAN(V=7.31%E=4%D=11/10%OT=22%CT=1%CU=36901%PV=Y%DS=1%DC=D%G=Y%M=D050999
OS:TM=5824BBF6%P=x86_64-apple-darwin16.0.0)SEQ(SP=102%GCD=1%ISR=10A%TI=I%I
OS:=I%SS=S%TS=21)SEQ(SP=102%GCD=1%ISR=109%TI=I%II=I%TS=21)SEQ(II=I)OPS(01=
OS:5B4NW6ST11%02=M578NW6ST11%O3=M280NW6NNT11%O4=M5B4NW6ST11%O5=M218NW6ST11
OS:06=M109ST11)WIN(W1=FFFF%W2=FFFF%W3=FFFF%W4=FFFF%W5=FFFF%W6=FFFF)ECN(R=Y
OS:DF=Y%T=40%W=FFFF%0=M5B4NW6SLL%CC=Y%Q=)ECN(R=N)T1(R=Y%DF=Y%T=40%S=0%A=S+
OS:F=AS%RD=0%Q=)T2(R=N)T3(R=Y%DF=Y%T=40%W=FFFF%S=0%A=S+%F=AS%O=M109NW6ST11
OS:RD=0%Q=)T3(R=N)T4(R=N)T5(R=Y%DF=Y%T=40%W=0%S=Z%A=S+%F=AR%O=%RD=0%Q=)T6(|
OS:=N)T7(R=N)U1(R=Y%DF=N%T=40%IPL=38%UN=0%RIPL=G%RID=G%RIPCK=G%RUCK=G%RUD=G
OS:)IE(R=Y%DFI=S%T=40%CD=S)
Network Distance: 1 hop
OS detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap
Wmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 21.30 seconds
```

Fig.02: Determines which ports are listening for TCP connections using nmap

You can combine TCP/UDP scan in a single command:

```
$ sudo nmap -sTU -0 192.168.2.13
```

### A note about Windows users

You can check port usage from Windows operating system using following command:

```
$ netstat -bano | more
$ netstat -bano | grep LISTENING
$ netstat -bano | findstr /R /C:"[LISTEING]"
```

# Testing if a port is open from a bash script

One can use the "/dev/tcp/{HostName}\_OR\_{IPAddrress}>/{port}" syntax to check if a TCP port is open on a Linux or Unix machine when using Bash. In other words, the following is Bash specific feature. Let us see if TCP port 22 is open on localhost and 192.168.2.20:

```
$ (echo >/dev/tcp/localhost/23) &>/dev/null && echo "open" ||
echo "close"
$ (echo >/dev/tcp/192.168.2.20/22) &>/dev/null && echo "open"
|| echo "close"
```

Now we can build some logic as follows:

```
#!/bin/bash
dest_box="aws-prod-server-42"
echo "Testing the ssh connectivity ... "
if ! (echo >/dev/tcp/$dest_box/22) &>/dev/null
then
echo "$0 cannot connect to the $dest_box. Check your
else
echo "Running the ansible playboook ..."
ansible-playbook -i hosts --ask-vault-pass --extra-va
fi
```

### What if I'm not using Bash...

Try the nc command as follows:

```
$ nc -w {timeout} -zv {server_IP_hostname} {tcp_port}
&>/dev/null && echo "Open" || echo "Close"
$ nc -w 5 -zv 192.168.2.20 23 &>/dev/null && echo "TCP/23
Open" || echo "TCP/23 Close"
```

The updated Bash script:

```
#!/bin/bash
dest_box="aws-prod-server-42"
timeout="5" # timeouts in seconds
echo "Testing the ssh connectivity in $timeout seconds ...
# make sure 'nc' is installed, else die ..
if ! type -a nc &>/dev/null
```

```
then
 8
         echo "$0 - nc command not found. Please install nc ar
 9
         exit 1
    fi
10
11
    if ! nc -w "$timeout" -zv "${dest_box}" 22 &>/dev/null
12
    then
13
         echo "$0 cannot connect to the $dest_box. Check your
14
         exit 1
15
    else
         echo "Running the ansible playboook ..."
16
         ansible-playbook -i hosts --ask-vault-pass --extra-va
17
18
    fi
```

# Using Perl to check if a TCP port is open in Linux or Unix

second timeout using IO::Socket::INET:

```
#!/usr/bin/perl -w
use IO::Socket::INET;

# Set server name and port here
smy_server="192.168.2.20";
smy_server_tcp_port="22";

# make a new object
my $server_test = IO::Socket::INET->new(
PeerAddr => "$my_server",
PeerPort => "$my_server_tcp_port",
Proto => 'tcp',
```

```
13
       Timeout => 5
14
    );
15
16
    # test it and die or continue as per your needs
17
    if ($server test) {
18
      print "TCP port $my_server_tcp_port is open for the $my
19
      print "Now doing something ...\n";
      close $server test:
21
22
    else {
23
      print "TCP port $my_server_tcp_port is closed or timed
24
```

# Python example to check if a TCP port is open in Linux or Unix

Try thise simple code that uses <u>low level socket</u> networking feature. For example:

```
#!/usr/bin/python3
# Tested on Python 3.6.xx and 3.8.xx only (updated from F
import socket

# Create a new function
def check_server_tcp_port(my_host_ip_name, my_tcp_port, t
    s = socket.socket(socket.AF_INET, socket.SOCK_STREAM)
    s.settimeout(timeout)
    try:
```

```
s.connect((my host ip name, my tcp port))
10
11
             print(f"TCP port {my tcp port} is open for the {n
12
             s.close()
13
             return True
14
         except socket.timeout:
15
             print(f"TCP port {my_tcp_port} is closed or time(
             return False
16
17
18
    # Test it
    check_server_tcp_port("localhost", 22)
19
    check server tcp port("192,168,2,20", 22)
20
```

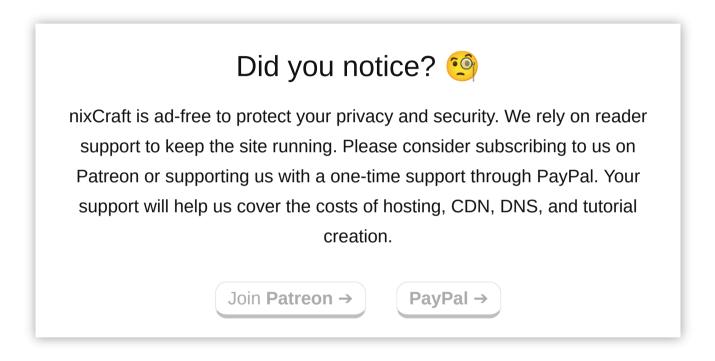
# Conclusion

This page explained command to determining if a port is in use on Linux or Unix-like server. For more information see the <a href="mailto:nmap command">nmap command</a> and Isof command page online here or by typing the <a href="mailto:man command">man command</a> as follows:

```
$ man lsof
$ man ss
$ man netstat
$ man nmap
$ man 5 services
$ man nc
```

### See also

- How to ping and test for a specific port from Linux or Unix command line
- 30 Handy Bash Shell Aliases For Linux / Unix / MacOS
- Linux and Unix Port Scanning With netcat {nc} Command
- Nmap Command Examples For Linux Users / Admins



**About the author:** Vivek Gite is the founder of nixCraft, the oldest running blog about Linux and open source. He wrote more than 7k+ posts and helped numerous readers to master IT topics. Join the nixCraft community via RSS Feed or Email Newsletter.

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**KEM** • Nov 10, 2016 @ 18:57

For Windows users, grep doesnt exist, so that will not work

**←** ∞

Masoud • Nov 10, 2016 @ 19:08

For Windows, pipe netstat result to findstr command.

 $\leftarrow$   $\propto$ 

**Aram Iskenderian •** Nov 17, 2016 @ 9:42

The article title clearly says "How to check if port is in use on Linux or Unix" so Windows was not really the focus of this article.

Now I got that out of the way, there are multiple grep builds on Windows if you don't want to use findstr like others suggested.

∞ د

janc1c1 • Nov 16, 2016 @ 9:12

netstat is replacing by ss command

 $\leftarrow$   $\infty$ 

**Anon •** Nov 23, 2016 @ 14:17

Fix LISTING -> LISTENING

**←** ∞

Glenn Reavis • Dec 20, 2016 @ 12:04

help me find out why my METROPCS ZTE Z820 won't allow me to download from the Google play app on my phone and it won't let me log in to gmail app on phone.

**←** ∞

wat • Feb 23, 2021 @ 2:56

wat

**←** ∞

Phil H • May 16, 2017 @ 6:01

Isof -i:

works to show you the attached process



Sandy • Feb 19, 2021 @ 17:33

We can use to list ppen ports on Linux:

```
netstat -lntu
netstat -atu
```

Sadly netstat is missing on the latest Debian, Arch and other Linux version. So we use ss:

ss -lntu

ss -atu

There is also

```
sudo lsof -i
sudo nmap -sT -p- $ip_address

↔ ∞
```

### 1 Chocolate • Jan 24, 2022 @ 13:34

Thnak you, very well useful guide for me.

**←** ∞

Anand • Jan 30, 2022 @ 15:26

Perfect and precise, thanks

 $\leftarrow$   $\infty$ 

**DrCrave •** May 11, 2022 @ 13:46

Thank You:)

← ∞

Raphael • Jan 30, 2023 @ 20:03

What would be the best way to finding an application or process opening a connection on a specific port from the client machine to a remote server? Ideally how to monitor activity on a specific port on the client side.

**←** ∞



Vivek Gite • Jan 30, 2023 @ 20:33

On the client machine, you use Isof to list much of info. For example, the following will list all IPv4 or IPv6 connections on the system:

```
sudo lsof -i4
sudo lsof -i6
sudo lsof -i4 | more
sudo watch -c lsof -i4
```

For remote server say 192.168.2.20 show all connections:

```
lsof -i @192.168.2.20
lsof -i @192.168.2.20:22 #host:port
```

Does this helps? If you need further help please post it on the forum @ <a href="https://www.nixcraft.com/">https://www.nixcraft.com/</a>

 $\leftarrow$   $\infty$ 

#### **Anonymous •** Mar 29, 2023 @ 8:40

I thank you for Perl and Python code. I needed those samples for my IT school Unix class work.

**←** ∞

### **Anonymous •** May 26, 2023 @ 20:56

Thank you

**←** ∞

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