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Can't get ssh-agent working #1133

**Closed**

altano opened this issue on Apr 14, 2018 · 34 comments



altano commented on Apr 14, 2018

Please answer the following

"OpenSSH for Windows" version

7.6.0.0

Windows 10 Pro

What is failing

```
C:\src> ssh-add C:\Users\alan\.ssh\ripper\ripper_id_rsa
```

Expected output

shrug

Actual output

```
Error connecting to agent: No such file or directory
```

Diagnostics

I used procmon to discover that the failed file open operation is on a file called 'C:\tmp\ssh-DEhw9URW70Jz\agent.24500' which does NOT exist. In fact, the c:\tmp directory doesn't exist.

I installed OpenSSH using `choco install -y openssh -params '"/SSHAgentFeature"'` and I verified that ssh-agent service is installed AND running.

What was supposed to create 'C:\tmp\ssh-DEhw9URW70Jz\agent.24500' and how can I diagnose why it didn't?



coldacid commented on Apr 16, 2018

I assume that `%SSH_AUTH_SOCK%` is set, and/or you're using a different `ssh-add` than the one that comes with Win32-OpenSSH. This port uses named pipes rather than files or sockets to communicate with `ssh-agent`, so anything that doesn't start with `\\.pipe\` is suspect.

Make sure you're using the correct `ssh-add.exe` and that the `%SSH_AUTH_SOCK%` environment variable is unset, and it should work then.



altano commented on Apr 16, 2018 • edited ▼

Author

UPDATE: Oh, you said UNSET `%SSH_AUTH_SOCK%`. Yeah, that did the trick. I'll figure out what is setting it and take care of that. Thanks :)

I'm definitely using the `ssh` from this OpenSSH port:

```
C:\WINDOWS\system32> Get-Command ssh-add
```

CommandType	Name	Version	Source
-----	----	-----	-----
Application	ssh-add.exe	7.6.1.0	C:\Program
	Files\OpenSSH-Win64\ssh-add.exe		

```
C:\WINDOWS\system32> Get-Command ssh
```

CommandType	Name	Version	Source
-----	----	-----	-----
Application	ssh.exe	7.6.1.0	C:\Program
	Files\OpenSSH-Win64\ssh.exe		

But interestingly,

```
C:\WINDOWS\system32> gci Env: | grep -i ssh
SSH_AGENT_PID          8072
SSH_AUTH_SOCK           /tmp/ssh-nxsdvBS2drI3/agent.24336
```

Which appears to be a valid path (in PowerShell) to `c:\tmp`, but still empty:

```
C:\WINDOWS\system32> gci -Recurse /tmp
```

Directory: C:\tmp

Mode	LastWriteTime	Length	Name
----	-----	-----	----
d-----	4/14/2018 6:42 PM		ssh-DEhw9URW70Jz



altano commented on Apr 17, 2018

Author

It was coming from posh-git. There's an effort to separate out ssh from posh-git[0] which maybe will make the two play well together, but for now I just uninstalled posh-git.

[0] [dahlbyk/posh-git#526](#)



JeremySkinner commented on May 22, 2018 • edited ▼

For anyone who also comes across this issue who wants to use the ssh agent service that ships as part of the Win10 spring update and is using posh-git, a simple fix is just to delete the environment variables inside your profile after importing the posh-git module. Eg:

```
Import-Module "$mydir\posh-git\src\posh-git"
remove-item env:\SSH_AGENT_PID
remove-item env:\SSH_AUTH_SOCK
```



2



davclark commented on Jun 2, 2018 • edited ▼

I just came to this issue after a fresh install (last night) of Win 10 Edu 1803. I don't have either SSH_AGENT_PID or SSH_AUTH_SOCK set, but still get:

```
PS> ssh-agent.exe
unable to start ssh-agent service, error :1058
```

Or

```
PS> Get-Service ssh-agent
```

Status	Name	DisplayName
-----	----	-----
Stopped	ssh-agent	OpenSSH Authentication Agent

```
PS> Start-Service ssh-agent
```

```
Start-Service : Service 'OpenSSH Authentication Agent (ssh-agent)' cannot be started due to the following error: Cannot start service ssh-agent on computer '.'.
```

```
At line:1 char:1
```

```
+ Start-Service ssh-agent
```

```
+ ~~~~~
```

```
+ CategoryInfo          : OpenError:
(System.ServiceProcess.ServiceController:ServiceController) [Start-Service],
ServiceCommandException
+ FullyQualifiedErrorId :
CouldNotStartService,Microsoft.PowerShell.Commands.StartServiceCommand
```

Note that the SSH client was also NOT installed by default, and after installation didn't show up in my path right away (though seems to have done so eventually?).

EDIT: nevermind, worked this time when I ran in an administrative shell (it wasn't working before). I guess there is some async stuff that Windows 10 is doing in the background?



6



kevmul commented on Jun 13, 2018 • edited ▼

For anyone else looking to fix this issue that uses Scoop.

I had this error thrown when I had pshazz installed using Scoop.

I ran

```
~ $ gci Env: | grep -i ssh
SSH_ASKPASS      C:\Users\{me}\scoop apps\pshazz\curren...
```

Uninstalled, and error went away.

Hope this helps!

UPDATE:

I saw this error over on pshazz [lukesampson/pshazz#70](#) and @myty had a comment that solved this for me too, without uninstalling pshazz. Go take a look, and if it works give him a well deserved thumbs up!



2



rageshkrishna commented on Jun 16, 2018

Just ran in to this myself and found that the "Startup Type" for the ssh-agent service was set to "Disabled". I changed that to "Manual" and was able to start the service normally.



49



18



11



2



manojampalam commented on Jun 16, 2018

Collaborator

@rageshkrishna what's your openssh version?



rageshkrishna commented on Jun 17, 2018

I don't have an exact version number at the moment, but it was whatever came with the "OpenSSH Server" feature in Windows 10 (build 1803).



manojampalam commented on Jun 17, 2018

Collaborator

If so, this is expected, ssh-agent was set to disabled in the recent Windows 10 update. You'll have to enable it explicitly if you need it.



jmegevand commented on Jun 28, 2018

Hey that was my issue too:

1. Check the current status of ssh-agent: "**Get-Service | select -property name,starttype**"
2. Set the new type : "**Set-Service -Name ssh-agent -StartupType Manual**"
3. Start it: "**Start-Service ssh-agent**"
- 4 Add simply your key as before: "**ssh-add**"



65



13



17



egbertn commented on Jul 2, 2018 • edited ▼

On my Windows there is even no ssh-agent service.

SshDBroker service exists

SSH Server Proxy

SSH Server Broker

Therefore, I cannot add users from the commandline...

Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.137]



manojampalam commented on Jul 2, 2018 • edited ▼

Collaborator

Looks like you may have Developer mode on. Can you disable those legacy services and see if you have ssh.exe and ssh-agent.exe installed under %windir%\system32\openssh ?

If you dont see them there - can you try installing OpenSSH using steps similar to what's detailed here (these were for Beta, your entries wouldn't have "Beta" in them) -

<https://blogs.msdn.microsoft.com/powershell/2017/12/15/using-the-openssh-beta-in-windows-10-fall-creators-update-and-windows-server-1709/>



egbertn commented on Jul 2, 2018

Ok, developer mode is removed, those files exist but still the same message.

And starting it using PowerShell gives this:

Start-Service : Service 'OpenSSH Authentication Agent (ssh-agent)' cannot be started due to the following error: Cannot

start service ssh-agent on computer '.'.

At line:1 char:1

- Start-Service ssh-agent
- + CategoryInfo : OpenError:
(System.ServiceProcess.ServiceController:ServiceController) [Start-Service],
ServiceCommandException
+ FullyQualifiedErrorId :
CouldNotStartService,Microsoft.PowerShell.Commands.StartServiceCommand



manojampalam commented on Jul 2, 2018

Collaborator

You could do the following to set ssh-agent back to "auto" on-demand start:

```
sc.exe config sshd start= auto
```



egbertn commented on Jul 2, 2018

Thanks. This also helped. Set-Service -name "ssh-agent" -startuptype "automatic"



4



TUTUBIG commented on Jul 17, 2018

@egbertn I have the same problems



frankfuu commented on Jul 29, 2018

For some reason it was disabled, just had to flick it to manual

```
Get-Service ssh-agent | Set-Service -StartupType Manual  
Get-service ssh-agent | Start-Service
```

Then to make sure it's running

```
> Get-Service ssh-agent | select *
```

```
Name                : ssh-agent
RequiredServices    : {}
CanPauseAndContinue : False
CanShutdown         : False
CanStop             : True
DisplayName         : OpenSSH Authentication Agent
DependentServices   : {}
MachineName         : .
ServiceName         : ssh-agent
ServicesDependedOn  : {}
ServiceHandle       : SafeServiceHandle
Status              : Running
ServiceType         : Win32OwnProcess
StartType           : Manual
```



4



3



4



1

 **manojampalam** mentioned this issue on Aug 16, 2018**Can't add keys to ssh-agent, communication with agent failed #1234** Closed**TCB13** commented on Aug 26, 2018

This works to start the service and I can successfully add keys, however, when trying to ssh to some server it seems to ignore the keys added and always asks for password :(



1

**manojampalam** commented on Aug 26, 2018

Collaborator

Are you sure? Its quite likely that your server is rejecting the key and asking for password.



2

**TCB13** commented on Aug 27, 2018

I'm sure, server has password login disabled. Also, I tried other servers / keys and they work fine on a Ubuntu box.



 manojampalam commented on Aug 27, 2018

Collaborator

can you try ssh with -vvv flags and confirm from its traces that the key is indeed picked up/not ?



1

 TCB13 mentioned this issue on Aug 29, 2018

**win32-openssh@7.7.2.0p1-Beta + pshazz@0.2018.04.22: = Ignoring Agent
+ System.IndexOutOfRangeException #2537**

 Open TCB13 commented on Aug 29, 2018

@manojampalam here is my debug and an everything I tried:

```
ssh -V
OpenSSH_for_Windows_7.7p1, LibreSSL 2.6.4
```

Installed via scoop with:

```
sudo scoop install 7zip git win32-openssh
[environment]::setenvironmentvariable('GIT_SSH', (resolve-path (scoop which ssh)), 'USER')
cd "C:\Users\TAD BNT\scoop\apps\win32-openssh\current\"
sudo .\install-sshd.ps1
sudo Set-Service ssh-agent -StartupType Automatic
```

Started the service:

```
Start-Service ssh-agent
Get-Service ssh-agent
```

Status	Name	DisplayName
Running	ssh-agent	OpenSSH Authentication Agent

Added the key:

```
ssh-add.exe "C:\Users\TAD BNT/.ssh/svpd4895"
Enter passphrase for C:\Users\TAD BNT/.ssh/svpd4895:
Identity added: C:\Users\TAD BNT/.ssh/svpd4895 (C:\Users\TAD BNT/.ssh/svpd4895)
```

Now the ssh command:

```
ssh pd4895
(....)
debug1: Authentications that can continue: publickey
debug3: start over, passed a different list publickey
debug3: preferred publickey,keyboard-interactive,password
debug3: authmethod_lookup publickey
debug3: remaining preferred: keyboard-interactive,password
debug3: authmethod_is_enabled publickey
debug1: Next authentication method: publickey
debug1: Trying private key: C:\\Users\\TAD BNT\\.ssh/svdpd4895
debug3: failed to open file:/dev/tty error:3
debug1: read_passphrase: can't open /dev/tty: No such file or directory
Enter passphrase for key 'C:\\Users\\TAD BNT\\.ssh/svdpd4895':
```

In my config file this server is set as:

```
host pd4895
  hostname svpd4895---
  user ---
  port ---
  IdentitiesOnly yes
  IdentityFile ~/.ssh/svdpd4895
```

If I add `AddKeysToAgent yes` to my config file keys get automatically added to `ssh-agent` instead of me having to issue `ssh-add path\key`, but I still get the `Enter passphrase for key` message. It looks like there is some communication failure between the ssh client and the agent.

Also, I was reading previous comments again, and I don't have an `SSH_AUTH_SOCK` set:

```
gci env:SSH_AUTH_SOCK
gci : Cannot find path 'SSH_AUTH_SOCK' because it does not exist.
At line:1 char:1
+ gci env:SSH_AUTH_SOCK
```

However, when I'm using `AddKeysToAgent yes` my keys get added to the agent (I can see that with ``ssh-add -L`), so, apparently, the ssh client is somehow communicating with the agent.

I also tried to use only windows directory separators `\` and `.ssh\svpd4895` and the issue is the same.

What am I missing here?

The full output of the `ssh -vvv` is available here:

<https://gist.github.com/TCB13/aa582b24a08dead443d1179811831d92>

Many thanks.



TCB13 commented on Aug 29, 2018

I've finally found the cause of my problem!

In my `config` file I had some global options:

```
Host *
  IdentitiesOnly yes
  AddKeysToAgent yes
  PreferredAuthentications publickey
```

Apparently, if one sets `IdentitiesOnly yes` the SSH client will not ask the ssh-agent for keys. Maybe this is expected behavior, however, I was unaware of it and under macOS, that option doesn't cause this (maybe a bug in macOS?).

Setting `IdentitiesOnly no` in the global `Hosts *` section fixed everything! Many thanks for the previous comments.



manojampalam commented on Sep 6, 2018

Collaborator

Thanks for following up. This is something that I was unaware of too.

As per http://man.openbsd.org/OpenBSD-current/man5/ssh_config.5 looks like this is expected behavior.



1



manojampalam closed this on Sep 6, 2018



NiKiZe commented on Oct 8, 2018 • edited ▼

The included version of OpenSSH in windows is mainly causing issues, and it is not clear how this ssh client is installed (When did Microsoft stop checking compability before releasing.)

I had to spend half a day to get my workflow with poshgit running again.

Fix for me: uninstall the windows OpenSSH client which is causing issues:

```
Get-WindowsCapability -Online | Where Name -like "*OpenSSH*" | Remove-WindowsCapability -Online
```

Posting here for anyone else that this causes issues for.



pawel-majczyk commented on Oct 9, 2018

Fix for me: uninstall the windows OpenSSH client which is causing issues:

```
Get-WindowsCapability -Online | Where Name -like "*OpenSSH*" | Remove-WindowsCapability -Online
```

Are you using different ssh-agent/ssh,exe client then? Is it the one provided with Git for Windows? Or maybe the Linux native installation?

I am browsing for answers everywhere to get my VSCode connect Git by ssh under windows and nothing helps.



musm commented on Apr 17, 2019

Ugh, so I had everything working for a very long time and now suddenly

```
Start-Service : Service 'OpenSSH Authentication Agent (ssh-agent)' cannot be started due to the following error: Cannot start service ssh-agent on computer '.'.
```

```
At line:1 char:1
```

```
+ Start-Service ssh-agent
```

```
+ ~~~~~
```

```
+ CategoryInfo          : OpenError:
```

```
(System.ServiceProcess.ServiceController:ServiceController) [Start-Service],  
ServiceCommandException
```

```
+ FullyQualifiedErrorId :
```

```
CouldNotStartService,Microsoft.PowerShell.Commands.StartServiceCommand
```



zakur0 commented on Jun 6, 2019

My solution was found randomly on a Linux forum.

Had the issue :

I was running

```
ssh-add "C:\sshKeys\Key"
```

Could not open a connection to your authentication agent.

and the solution was to run it like:

```
ssh-agent.exe ssh-add "C:\sshKeys\Key"
```



1



5



bittikettu commented on Aug 20, 2019

I'm having similar issue, but the agent is running correctly and can be seen from the services that it is really running.

Trying to add the keys, but it says "Could not open a connection to your authentication agent."

I was able to solve this issue by connecting my laptop back to our company's domain. This is really annoying feature. We have a script which makes a network-drive as a home directory. I tried to put an environmental variable which points to local drive but it does not work. Only workaround is to connect machine physically to company's network on with a VPN.

I don't have any issues at my home PC which is not bound to any Domain service active directory shitty-shitty. Starting to feel that I need to make some sort of a Docker-based workaround.

I think I am reasonably good at googling information, but in this case the terminology (mostly issues in Linux) distracts the searching a lot.



1



SQLHorizons commented on Sep 1, 2019

I just came to this issue after a fresh install (last night) of Win 10 Edu 1803. I don't have either SSH_AGENT_PID or SSH_AUTH_SOCK set, but still get:

```
PS> ssh-agent.exe
unable to start ssh-agent service, error :1058
```

or

```
PS> Get-Service ssh-agent
```

Status	Name	DisplayName
Stopped	ssh-agent	OpenSSH Authentication Agent

```
PS> Start-Service ssh-agent
```

```
Start-Service : Service 'OpenSSH Authentication Agent (ssh-agent)' cannot be started  
due to the following error: Cannot start service ssh-agent on computer '.'.
```

```
At line:1 char:1
```

```
+ Start-Service ssh-agent
```

```
+ ~~~~~
```

```
+ CategoryInfo          : OpenError:  
(System.ServiceProcess.ServiceController:ServiceController) [Start-Service],  
ServiceCommandException  
+ FullyQualifiedErrorId :  
CouldNotStartService,Microsoft.PowerShell.Commands.StartServiceCommand
```

Note that the SSH client was also NOT installed by default, and after installation didn't show up in my path right away (though seems to have done so eventually?).

EDIT: nevermind, worked this time when I ran in an administrative shell (it wasn't working before). I guess there is some async stuff that Windows 10 is doing in the background?

In my case I found the service disabled, not sure how that happened but running following fix it:

```
Set-Service ssh-agent -StartupType Manual
```



bakgaard commented on Oct 27, 2019

My solution was found randomly on a Linux forum.

Had the issue:

```
ssh-agent.exe ssh-add "C:\sshKeys\Key"
```

I had to make a minor change, but that helped me too:

```
.'C:\Program Files\Git\usr\bin\ssh-agent.exe' 'C:\Program Files\Git\usr\bin\ssh-add.exe' $env:
```



 **rztprog** commented on Nov 9, 2019

If the command don't work (in vscode for my case), change the StartType by the Gui

1. Search with the windows explorer "Services.msc" (Or go to %windir%\system32\services.msc)
2. Search for "OpenSSH Authentication Agent"
3. Change mod for "auto" and apply
4. Its worked :)



★  **CCA-Physics** mentioned this issue on Dec 26, 2019

SSH Key managment on Windows 10 #649

 Open

 **bersbersbers** commented on Jan 7

@manojampalam can you explain why you think this is expected behavior?

As per http://man.openbsd.org/OpenBSD-current/man5/ssh_config.5 looks like this is expected behavior.

The link you posted states this:

IdentityFile may be used in conjunction with IdentitiesOnly to select which identities in an agent are offered during authentication.

So in my reading, `IdentitiesOnly` can have an effect on which identities an agent offers, but should still enable offering the one represented by `IdentityFile`. Or am I misreading this?



★  **bersbersbers** mentioned this issue 2 days ago

ssh-agent is ignored when with "IdentitiesOnly yes" config file setting #1550

 Open

Assignees

No one assigned

Labels

None yet

Projects

None yet

Milestone

No milestone

Linked pull requests

Successfully merging a pull request may close this issue.

None yet

21 participants

