SS64	macOS >	How-to >		Search

chflags

Change a file or folder's flags.

```
Syntax
      chflags [-fhvx] [-R [-H | -L | -P]] flags file-or-folder ...

Options
   -R       Recurse: Change the file flags of file-or-folder hierarchies rooted in the files
            instead of just the file-or-folder themselves.
            So if the given folder contains files or sub-folders, apply the change to them all.

            Beware of unintentionally matching the .. hard link to
            the parent directory when using wildcards like ".*".

   -R -H    Follow symbolic links on the command line
            by default Symbolic links within the tree are not followed.

   -R -L    All symbolic links are foll

   -R -P    No symbolic links are follo

   -f       Do not display a diagnostic                                          or-folder, nor modify
            the exit status to reflect

   -h       If the file-or-folder is a                                           rather than the file to which it points.

   -v       Cause chflags to be verbose
            If the -v option is specifi                                          . also
            be printed, in octal notati

   -x       Do not cross mount points.
```

The flags are specified as an octal number or a c

```
            hidden           Set the
```

Keywords and keyword aliases - Owner or Super-

```
            opaque           Set the
            nodump           Set the
            uappnd, uappend  Set the
  uchg, uchange, uimmutable  Set the
            uunlnk, uunlink  Set the
```

Keywords and keyword aliases - Super-user only:

```
            arch, archived   Set the
            sappnd, sappend  Set the
  schg, schange, simmutable  Set the
            sunlnk, sunlink  Set the system undeletable flag
```

The immutable flag makes the file/folder Locked/Protected and is equivalent to locking the file in Finder's Show Info box.

Putting the letters no before an option causes the flag to be turned off.

```
  For example:
      uchg     Means the file cannot be changed
    nouchg     Means the file can be changed (immutable bit cleared)
      hidden   Will set the hidden flag
    nohidden   Will remove the hidden flag
```

In early versions of macOS locked/immutable files could not be deleted from the trashcan. In Mac OS X 10.1 and later locked files can easily be deleted by pressing press Shift-Option or Option key combination while emptying the Trash.

Symbolic links do not have flags, so unless the -H or -L option is set, chflags on a symbolic link always succeeds and has no effect. The -H, -L and -P options are ignored unless the -R option is specified. In addition, these options override each other and the command's actions are determined by the last one specified.

The sappnd and schg flags can only be unset when the system is in single-user mode. chflags(2).

Use `ls -lO` to see the flags of existing files.

The return status is zero if the mode is successfully changed,and >0 if an error occurs.

Examples

Lock the folder "finance" against changes:

    $ chflags uchg finance

Unlock the folder named "finance" and allow changes to all the contents:

    $ chflags -R nouchg finance

Make the folder `~/Library` visible (this was the default setting prior to OS X Lion):

    $ chflags nohidden ~/Library

An alternative method to view the library is to use the 'Go' drop down menu in Finder and hold down the `option` key:

Hide the folder ~/Library from finder:

    $ chflags hidden ~/Library

Make the file `MyLogs.txt` append-only:

    $ chflags uappnd MyLogs.txt

Unlock your Documents directory and everything i

    $ chflags -R nouchg ~/Documents

"Fifteen referees. I want fifteen referees to be a   ce I'm gonna set
except me. There's not a man alive who can wh   stamp. That's the
only way I'll ever get licked" ~ Muhammad Ali

Related macOS commands

Local man page: chflags - Command line help pa
HT1526 - Empty the (locked) trash with chflags.
ln - Make links between files (hard links, symbolic
ls - List information about file(s).
setfile - Set attributes of HFS+ files.