BSD licenses

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  (Redirected from [BSD license](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_license&redirect=no))

*for the BSD license template for use on Wikipedia, see [Template:BSD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:BSD" \o "Template:BSD).*

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| [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/9/99/Question_book-new.svg/50px-Question_book-new.svg.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Question_book-new.svg) | This article **needs additional citations for**[**verification**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability). Please help [improve this article](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit) by [adding citations to reliable sources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Introduction_to_referencing_with_Wiki_Markup/1). Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. *(February 2008)* *(*[*Learn how and when to remove this template message*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Maintenance_template_removal)*)* |

**BSD licenses** are a family of [permissive free software licenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permissive_free_software_license), imposing minimal restrictions on the redistribution of covered software. This is in contrast to [copyleft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft" \o "Copyleft) licenses, which have reciprocity [share-alike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Share-alike) requirements. The original BSD license was used for its namesake, the [Berkeley Software Distribution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berkeley_Software_Distribution) (BSD), a [Unix-like](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unix-like) [operating system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operating_system). The original version has since been revised and its descendants are more properly termed modified BSD licenses.

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  + [1.24-clause license (original "BSD License")](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#4-clause_license_.28original_.22BSD_License.22.29)
  + [1.33-clause license ("Revised BSD License", "New BSD License", or "Modified BSD License")](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#3-clause_license_.28.22Revised_BSD_License.22.2C_.22New_BSD_License.22.2C_or_.22Modified_BSD_License.22.29)
  + [1.42-clause license ("Simplified BSD License" or "FreeBSD License")](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#2-clause_license_.28.22Simplified_BSD_License.22_or_.22FreeBSD_License.22.29)
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Terms[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: Terms)]

In addition to the original (4-clause) license used for BSD, several derivative licenses have emerged that are also commonly referred to as a "BSD license". Today, the typical BSD license is the 3-clause version, which is revised from the original 4-clause version.

In all BSD licenses as following, <organization> is the organization of the <copyright holder> or just the <copyright holder>, and <year> is the year of the copyright. As published in BSD, <copyright holder> is "Regents of the University of California", and <organization> is "University of California, Berkeley".

**Previous license**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Previous license)]

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| **Author** | [Regents of the University of California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regents_of_the_University_of_California) |
| [**Publisher**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publishing) | [Public Domain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Domain) |
| **Published** | 1988 |
| [**DFSG**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debian_Free_Software_Guidelines)**compatible** | Yes |
| [**FSF**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | Yes |
| [**OSI**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Source_Initiative)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | No |
| [**GPL compatible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPL_compatible) | No |
| [**Copyleft**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft) | No |
| [**Linking from code with a different license**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPL_linking_exception) | Yes |

Some releases of BSD prior to the adoption of the 4-clause BSD license used a license that is clearly ancestral to the 4-clause BSD license. These releases include 4.3BSD-Tahoe (1988) and Net/1 (1989). Though largely replaced by the 4-clause license, this license can be found in 4.3BSD-Reno, Net/2, and 4.4BSD-Alpha.

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| [**Publisher**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publishing) | [Public Domain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Domain) |
| **Published** | 1990 |
| [**DFSG**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debian_Free_Software_Guidelines)**compatible** | Yes[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-DFSG-licences-1) |
| [**FSF**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | Yes[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-OriginalBSD-2) |
| [**OSI**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Source_Initiative)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | No[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-osi-3) |
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| [**Copyleft**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft) | No[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-OriginalBSD-2) |
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The original BSD license contained a clause not found in later licenses, known as the "advertising clause". This clause eventually became controversial, as it required authors of all works deriving from a BSD-licensed work to include an acknowledgment of the original source in all advertising material. This was clause number 3 in the original license text:[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses" \l "cite_note-update-4)

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This clause was objected to on the grounds that as people changed the license to reflect their name or organization it led to escalating advertising requirements when programs were combined together in a software distribution: every occurrence of the license with a different name required a separate acknowledgment. In arguing against it, Richard Stallman has stated that he counted 75 such acknowledgments in a 1997 version of [NetBSD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NetBSD" \o "NetBSD).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-GNU-5) In addition, the clause presented a legal problem for those wishing to publish BSD-licensed software which relies upon separate programs using the [GNU GPL](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_General_Public_License): the advertising clause is [incompatible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/License_compatibility) with the GPL, which does not allow the addition of restrictions beyond those it already imposes; because of this, the GPL's publisher, the [Free Software Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation), recommends developers not use the license, though it states there is no reason not to use software already using it.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-OriginalBSD-2)

Today, this original license is now sometimes called "*BSD-old*" or "*4-clause BSD*".

**3-clause license ("Revised BSD License", "New BSD License", or "Modified BSD License")**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: 3-clause license (\"Revised BSD License\", \"New BSD License\", or \"Modified BSD License\"))]

*See also:*[*University of Illinois/NCSA Open Source License*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Illinois/NCSA_Open_Source_License)

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| [**Publisher**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publishing) | [Public Domain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Domain) |
| **Published** | 22 July 1999[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-update-4) |
| [**DFSG**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debian_Free_Software_Guidelines)**compatible** | Yes[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-DFSG-licences-1) |
| [**FSF**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | Yes[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-ModifiedBSD-6) |
| [**OSI**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Source_Initiative)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | Yes[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-osi-3) |
| [**GPL compatible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPL_compatible) | Yes[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-ModifiedBSD-6) |
| [**Copyleft**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft) | No[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-ModifiedBSD-6) |
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The advertising clause was removed from the license text in the official BSD on 22 July 1999 by William Hoskins, Director of the Office of Technology Licensing for UC Berkeley.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-update-4)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-7) Other BSD distributions removed the clause, but many similar clauses remain in BSD-derived code from other sources, and unrelated code using a derived license.

While the original license is sometimes referred to as "**BSD-old**", the resulting 3-clause version is sometimes referred to by "**BSD-new**." Other names include "New BSD", "revised BSD", "BSD-3", or "3-clause BSD". This version has been [vetted](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetting) as an Open source license by the OSI as "The BSD License".[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-osi-3) The Free Software Foundation, which refers to the license as the "Modified BSD License", states that it is compatible with the GNU GPL. The FSF encourages users to be specific when referring to the license by name (i.e. not simply referring to it as "a BSD license" or "BSD-style") to avoid confusion with the original BSD license.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-ModifiedBSD-6)

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*"FreeBSD License" redirects here. For documentation, see*[*FreeBSD Documentation License*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FreeBSD_Documentation_License)*.*

*See also:*[*ISC license*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISC_license)*and*[*MIT License*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIT_License)

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| **Published** | ? |
| [**DFSG**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debian_Free_Software_Guidelines)**compatible** | Yes |
| [**FSF**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation)[**approved**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_free_and_open-source_software_licenses#Approvals) | Yes[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-FreeBSD-8) |
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| [**GPL compatible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GPL_compatible) | Yes[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-FreeBSD-8) |
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An even more simplified version has come into use, primarily known for its usage in [FreeBSD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FreeBSD).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FreeBSD-9) The primary difference between it and the New BSD (3-clause) License is that it omits the non-endorsement clause. It also adds a further disclaimer about views and opinions expressed in the software. The Free Software Foundation, which refers to the license as the FreeBSD License, states that it is compatible with the GNU GPL. In addition, the FSF encourages users to be specific when referring to the license by name (i.e. not simply referring to it as "a BSD license" or "BSD-style"), as it does with the modified/new BSD license, to avoid confusion with the original BSD license.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-FreeBSD-8)

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License compatibility[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: License compatibility)]

*Main article:*[*License compatibility*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/License_compatibility)

**Commercial license compatibility**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Commercial license compatibility)]

The [FreeBSD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FreeBSD) project argues on the advantages of BSD-style licenses for companies and commercial use-cases due to their [license compatibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/License_compatibility) with [proprietary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proprietary_software) licenses and general flexibility. The BSD-style licenses place only *"minimal restrictions on future behavior"* and aren't *"legal time-bombs"*, unlike [copyleft licenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyleft_license" \o "Copyleft license).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-11) The BSD License allows proprietary use and allows the software released under the license to be incorporated into proprietary products. Works based on the material may be released under a proprietary license as closed source software, allowing usual commercial usages under.

**FOSS compatibility**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: FOSS compatibility)]

The 3-clause BSD license has, like most [permissive licenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permissive_licenses), an excellent license compatibility and is compatible with almost all FOSS licenses (and as well proprietary licenses).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-13)

Two variants of the license, the New BSD License/Modified BSD License (3-clause),[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-ModifiedBSD-6) and the Simplified BSD License/FreeBSD License (2-clause)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-FreeBSD-8) have been verified as [GPL](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_General_Public_License)-[compatible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/License_compatibility) [free software licenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_software_license) by the [Free Software Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_Software_Foundation), and have been [vetted](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetting) as [open source licenses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source_license) by the [Open Source Initiative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Source_Initiative).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-osi-3) The [original, 4-clause BSD license](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#4-clause) has not been accepted as an open source license and, although the original is considered to be a free software license by the FSF, the FSF does not consider it to be compatible with the GPL due to the advertising clause.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-FSF-OriginalBSD-2)

Reception and usage[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=BSD_licenses&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Reception and usage)]

The BSD license family is one of the oldest and broadly used license family in the [FOSS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open_source_software) ecosystem. Also, many new licenses were derived or inspired by the BSD licenses. Many FOSS software projects use a BSD license, for instance the BSD OS family ([FreeBSD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FreeBSD) etc.), [Google](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google)'s [Bionic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bionic_(software)) or [Toybox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toybox" \o "Toybox). As of 2015 the BSD 3-clause license ranked in popularity number five according to [Black Duck Software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Duck_Software)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-blackduck2015-14) and sixth according to [GitHub](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GitHub) data.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BSD_licenses#cite_note-github2015-15)