

## Man Page - exim\_lock - Mailbox maintenance

### - NAME

exim\_lock - Mailbox maintenance

### - SYNOPSIS

exim\_lock [ options ] mailbox-file

### - DESCRIPTION

The `exim_lock` utility locks a mailbox file using the same algorithm as Exim. For a discussion of locking issues, see section 25.2. `exim_lock` can be used to prevent any modification of a mailbox by Exim or a user agent while investigating a problem. The utility requires the name of the file as its first argument. If the locking is successful, the second argument is run as a command (using C's "system()" function); if there is no second argument, the value of the SHELL environment variable is used; if this is unset or empty, /bin/sh is run. When the command finishes, the mailbox is unlocked and the utility ends. The following options are available:

- fcntl Use "fcntl()" locking on the open mailbox.
- interval This must be followed by a number, which is a number of seconds; it sets the interval to sleep between retries (default 3).
- lockfile Create a lock file before opening the mailbox.
- mbx Lock the mailbox using MBX rules.
- q Suppress verification output.
- retries This must be followed by a number; it sets the number of times to try to get the lock (default 10).
- timeout This must be followed by a number, which is a number of seconds; it sets a timeout to be used with a blocking "fcntl()" lock. If it is not set (the default), a non-blocking call is used.
- v Generate verbose output.

If none of `-fcntl`, `-lockfile` or `-mbx` are given, the default is to create a lock file and also use "fcntl()" locking on the mailbox, which is the same as Exim's default. The use of `-fcntl` requires that the file be writeable; the use of `-lockfile` requires that the directory containing the file be writeable. Locking by lock file does not last for ever; Exim assumes that a lock file is expired if it is more than 30 minutes old.

The `-mbx` option is mutually exclusive with `-fcntl`. It causes a shared lock to be taken out on the open mailbox, and an exclusive lock on the file /tmp/.n.m where n and m are the device number and inode number of the mailbox file. When the locking is released, if an exclusive lock can be obtained for the mailbox, the file in /tmp is deleted.

The default output contains verification of the locking that takes place. The `-v` option causes some additional information to be given. The `-q` option suppresses all output except error messages.

A command such as

```
exim_lock /var/spool/mail/spqr
```

runs an interactive shell while the file is locked, whereas

```
exim_lock -q /var/spool/mail/spqr <<End <some commands> End
```

runs a specific non-interactive sequence of commands while the file is locked, suppressing all verification output. A single command can be run by a command such as

```
exim_lock -q /var/spool/mail/spqr "cp /var/spool/mail/spqr /some/where"
```

Note that if a command is supplied, it must be entirely contained within the second argument - hence the quotes.