

**NAME**

getcwd, getwd, get\_current\_dir\_name – get current working directory

**SYNOPSIS**

```
#include <unistd.h>

char *getcwd(char *buf, size_t size);
char *getwd(char *buf);
char *get_current_dir_name(void);
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see [feature\\_test\\_macros\(7\)](#)):

```
get_current_dir_name():
    _GNU_SOURCE

getwd():
    Since glibc 2.12:
        (_XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500) && !(_POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200809L)
        || /* Glibc since 2.19: */ _DEFAULT_SOURCE
        || /* Glibc versions <= 2.19: */ _BSD_SOURCE
    Before glibc 2.12:
        _BSD_SOURCE || _XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500
```

**DESCRIPTION**

These functions return a null-terminated string containing an absolute pathname that is the current working directory of the calling process. The pathname is returned as the function result and via the argument *buf*, if present.

If the current directory is not below the root directory of the current process (e.g., because the process set a new filesystem root using [chroot\(2\)](#) without changing its current directory into the new root), then, since Linux 2.6.36, the returned path will be prefixed with the string "(unreachable)". Such behavior can also be caused by an unprivileged user by changing the current directory into another mount namespace. When dealing with paths from untrusted sources, callers of these functions should consider checking whether the returned path starts with '/' or '.' to avoid misinterpreting an unreachable path as a relative path. This is no longer true under some C libraries; see **NOTES**.

The **getcwd()** function copies an absolute pathname of the current working directory to the array pointed to by *buf*, which is of length *size*.

If the length of the absolute pathname of the current working directory, including the terminating null byte, exceeds *size* bytes, NULL is returned, and *errno* is set to **ERANGE**; an application should check for this error, and allocate a larger buffer if necessary.

As an extension to the POSIX.1-2001 standard, glibc's **getcwd()** allocates the buffer dynamically using [malloc\(3\)](#) if *buf* is NULL. In this case, the allocated buffer has the length *size* unless *size* is zero, when *buf* is allocated as big as necessary. The caller should [free\(3\)](#) the returned buffer.

**get\_current\_dir\_name()** will [malloc\(3\)](#) an array big enough to hold the absolute pathname of the current working directory. If the environment variable **PWD** is set, and its value is correct, then that value will be returned. The caller should [free\(3\)](#) the returned buffer.

**getwd()** does not [malloc\(3\)](#) any memory. The *buf* argument should be a pointer to an array at least **PATH\_MAX** bytes long. If the length of the absolute pathname of the current working directory, including the terminating null byte, exceeds **PATH\_MAX** bytes, NULL is returned, and *errno* is set to **ENAME\_TOOLONG**. (Note that on some systems, **PATH\_MAX** may not be a compile-time constant; furthermore, its value may depend on the filesystem, see [pathconf\(3\)](#).) For portability and security reasons, use of **getwd()** is deprecated.

**RETURN VALUE**

On success, these functions return a pointer to a string containing the pathname of the current working directory. In the case **getcwd()** and **getwd()** this is the same value as *buf*.

On failure, these functions return `NULL`, and `errno` is set to indicate the error. The contents of the array pointed to by `buf` are undefined on error.

## ERRORS

### EACCES

Permission to read or search a component of the filename was denied.

### EFAULT

`buf` points to a bad address.

### EINVAL

The `size` argument is zero and `buf` is not a null pointer.

### EINVAL

`getwd()`: `buf` is `NULL`.

### ENAMETOOLONG

`getwd()`: The size of the null-terminated absolute pathname string exceeds `PATH_MAX` bytes.

### ENOENT

The current working directory has been unlinked.

### ENOMEM

Out of memory.

### ERANGE

The `size` argument is less than the length of the absolute pathname of the working directory, including the terminating null byte. You need to allocate a bigger array and try again.

## ATTRIBUTES

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see [attributes\(7\)](#).

Interface	Attribute	Value
<code>getcwd()</code> , <code>getwd()</code>	Thread safety	MT-Safe
<code>get_current_dir_name()</code>	Thread safety	MT-Safe env

## CONFORMING TO

`getcwd()` conforms to POSIX.1-2001. Note however that POSIX.1-2001 leaves the behavior of `getcwd()` unspecified if `buf` is `NULL`.

`getwd()` is present in POSIX.1-2001, but marked `LEGACY`. POSIX.1-2008 removes the specification of `getwd()`. Use `getcwd()` instead. POSIX.1-2001 does not define any errors for `getwd()`.

`get_current_dir_name()` is a GNU extension.

## NOTES

Under Linux, the function `getcwd()` is a system call (since 2.1.92). On older systems it would query `/proc/self/cwd`. If both system call and `proc` filesystem are missing, a generic implementation is called. Only in that case can these calls fail under Linux with `EACCES`.

Since a Linux 2.6.36 change that added "(unreachable)", the glibc `getcwd()` has failed to conform to POSIX and returned a relative path when the API contract requires an absolute path. With glibc 2.27 onwards this is corrected; calling `getcwd()` from such a path will now result in failure with `ENOENT`.

These functions are often used to save the location of the current working directory for the purpose of returning to it later. Opening the current directory ("`.`") and calling [fchdir\(2\)](#) to return is usually a faster and more reliable alternative when sufficiently many file descriptors are available, especially on platforms other than Linux.

## SEE ALSO

[pwd\(1\)](#), [chdir\(2\)](#), [fchdir\(2\)](#), [open\(2\)](#), [unlink\(2\)](#), [free\(3\)](#), [malloc\(3\)](#)

## COLOPHON

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