

NAME

ssh-add — adds private key identities to the authentication agent

SYNOPSIS

```
ssh-add [-cDdkLlXx] [-E fingerprint_hash] [-t life] [file ...]
ssh-add -s pkcs11
ssh-add -e pkcs11
```

DESCRIPTION

ssh-add adds private key identities to the authentication agent, [ssh-agent\(1\)](#). When run without arguments, it adds the files `~/.ssh/id_rsa`, `~/.ssh/id_dsa`, `~/.ssh/id_ecdsa`, `~/.ssh/id_ed25519` and `~/.ssh/identity`. After loading a private key, **ssh-add** will try to load corresponding certificate information from the filename obtained by appending `-cert.pub` to the name of the private key file. Alternative file names can be given on the command line.

If any file requires a passphrase, **ssh-add** asks for the passphrase from the user. The passphrase is read from the user's tty. **ssh-add** retries the last passphrase if multiple identity files are given.

The authentication agent must be running and the `SSH_AUTH_SOCK` environment variable must contain the name of its socket for **ssh-add** to work.

The options are as follows:

- c** Indicates that added identities should be subject to confirmation before being used for authentication. Confirmation is performed by [ssh-askpass\(1\)](#). Successful confirmation is signaled by a zero exit status from [ssh-askpass\(1\)](#), rather than text entered into the requester.
- D** Deletes all identities from the agent.
- d** Instead of adding identities, removes identities from the agent. If **ssh-add** has been run without arguments, the keys for the default identities and their corresponding certificates will be removed. Otherwise, the argument list will be interpreted as a list of paths to public key files to specify keys and certificates to be removed from the agent. If no public key is found at a given path, **ssh-add** will append `.pub` and retry.
- E *fingerprint_hash***
Specifies the hash algorithm used when displaying key fingerprints. Valid options are: “md5” and “sha256”. The default is “sha256”.
- e *pkcs11***
Remove keys provided by the PKCS#11 shared library *pkcs11*.
- k** When loading keys into or deleting keys from the agent, process plain private keys only and skip certificates.
- L** Lists public key parameters of all identities currently represented by the agent.
- l** Lists fingerprints of all identities currently represented by the agent.
- s *pkcs11***
Add keys provided by the PKCS#11 shared library *pkcs11*.
- t *life***
Set a maximum lifetime when adding identities to an agent. The lifetime may be specified in seconds or in a time format specified in [sshd_config\(5\)](#).
- X** Unlock the agent.

- x** Lock the agent with a password.

ENVIRONMENT

DISPLAY and SSH_ASKPASS

If **ssh-add** needs a passphrase, it will read the passphrase from the current terminal if it was run from a terminal. If **ssh-add** does not have a terminal associated with it but DISPLAY and SSH_ASKPASS are set, it will execute the program specified by SSH_ASKPASS (by default “ssh-askpass”) and open an X11 window to read the passphrase. This is particularly useful when calling **ssh-add** from a `.xsession` or related script. (Note that on some machines it may be necessary to redirect the input from `/dev/null` to make this work.)

SSH_AUTH_SOCK

Identifies the path of a UNIX-domain socket used to communicate with the agent.

FILES

`~/.ssh/identity`

Contains the protocol version 1 RSA authentication identity of the user.

`~/.ssh/id_dsa`

Contains the protocol version 2 DSA authentication identity of the user.

`~/.ssh/id_ecdsa`

Contains the protocol version 2 ECDSA authentication identity of the user.

`~/.ssh/id_ed25519`

Contains the protocol version 2 Ed25519 authentication identity of the user.

`~/.ssh/id_rsa`

Contains the protocol version 2 RSA authentication identity of the user.

Identity files should not be readable by anyone but the user. Note that **ssh-add** ignores identity files if the y are accessible by others.

EXIT STATUS

Exit status is 0 on success, 1 if the specified command fails, and 2 if **ssh-add** is unable to contact the authentication agent.

SEE ALSO

[ssh\(1\)](#), [ssh-agent\(1\)](#), [ssh-askpass\(1\)](#), [ssh-keygen\(1\)](#), [sshd\(8\)](#)

AUTHORS

OpenSSH is a derivative of the original and free ssh 1.2.12 release by Tatu Ylonen. Aaron Campbell, Bob Beck, Markus Friedl, Niels Provos, Theo de Raadt and Dug Song removed many bugs, re-added newer features and created OpenSSH. Markus Friedl contributed the support for SSH protocol versions 1.5 and 2.0.