

**NAME**

ioctl - control device

**SYNOPSIS**

```
#include <sys/ioctl.h>
```

```
int ioctl(int d, unsigned long request, ...);
```

**DESCRIPTION**

The **ioctl()** function manipulates the underlying device parameters of special files. In particular, many operating characteristics of character special files (e.g., terminals) may be controlled with **ioctl()** requests. The argument *d* must be an open file descriptor.

The second argument is a device-dependent request code. The third argument is an untyped pointer to memory. It's traditionally **char \*argp** (from the days before **void \*** was valid C), and will be so named for this discussion.

An **ioctl()** *request* has encoded in it whether the argument is an *in* parameter or *out* parameter, and the size of the argument *argp* in bytes. Macros and defines used in specifying an **ioctl()** *request* are located in the file *<sys/ioctl.h>*.

**RETURN VALUE**

Usually, on success zero is returned. A few **ioctl()** requests use the return value as an output parameter and return a nonnegative value on success. On error, -1 is returned, and *errno* is set appropriately.

**ERRORS**

**EBADF** *d* is not a valid descriptor.

**EFAULT** *argp* references an inaccessible memory area.

**EINVAL** *request* or *argp* is not valid.

**ENOTTY**

*d* is not associated with a character special device.

**ENOTTY**

The specified request does not apply to the kind of object that the descriptor *d* references.

**CONFORMING TO**

No single standard. Arguments, returns, and semantics of **ioctl()** vary according to the device driver in question (the call is used as a catch-all for operations that don't cleanly fit the UNIX stream I/O model). See [ioctl\\_list\(2\)](#) for a list of many of the known **ioctl()** calls. The **ioctl()** function call appeared in Version 7 AT&T UNIX.

**NOTES**

In order to use this call, one needs an open file descriptor. Often the [open\(2\)](#) call has unwanted side effects, that can be avoided under Linux by giving it the **O\_NONBLOCK** flag.

**SEE ALSO**

[execve\(2\)](#), [fcntl\(2\)](#), [ioctl\\_list\(2\)](#), [open\(2\)](#), [sd\(4\)](#), [tty\(4\)](#)

**COLOPHON**

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