# NAME

master - Postfix master process

# SYNOPSIS

**master** [**-Ddtvw**] [**-c** *config_dir*] [**-e** *exit_time*]

# DESCRIPTION

The **master(8)** daemon is the resident process that runs Postfix daemons on demand: daemons to send or receive messages via the network, daemons to deliver mail locally, etc. These daemons are created on demand up to a configurable maximum number per service.

Postfix daemons terminate voluntarily, either after being idle for a configurable amount of time, or after having serviced a configurable number of requests. Exceptions to this rule are the resident queue manager, address verification server, and the TLS session cache and pseudo-random number server.

The behavior of the **master(8)** daemon is controlled by the **master.cf** configuration file, as described in **master(5)**.

Options:

**-c** *config_dir*

> Read the **main.cf** and **master.cf** configuration files in the named directory instead of the default configuration directory. This also overrides the configuration files for other Postfix daemon processes.

**-D**    After initialization, run a debugger on the master process. The debugging command is specified with the **debugger_command** in the **main.cf** global configuration file.

**-d**    Do not redirect stdin, stdout or stderr to /dev/null, and do not discard the controlling terminal. This must be used for debugging only.

**-e** *exit_time*

> Terminate the master process after *exit_time* seconds. Child processes terminate at their convenience.

**-t**    Test mode. Return a zero exit status when the **master.pid** lock file does not exist or when that file is not locked. This is evidence that the **master(8)** daemon is not running.

**-v**    Enable verbose logging for debugging purposes. This option is passed on to child processes. Multiple **-v** options make the software increasingly verbose.

**-w**    Wait in a dummy foreground process, while the real master daemon initializes in a background process. The dummy foreground process returns a zero exit status only if the master daemon initialization is successful, and if it completes in a reasonable amount of time.

> This feature is available in Postfix 2.10 and later.

Signals:

**SIGHUP**

> Upon receipt of a **HUP** signal (e.g., after **postfix reload**), the master process re-reads its configuration files. If a service has been removed from the **master.cf** file, its running processes are terminated immediately. Otherwise, running processes are allowed to terminate as soon as is convenient, so that changes in configuration settings affect only new service requests.

**SIGTERM**

> Upon receipt of a **TERM** signal (e.g., after **postfix abort**), the master process passes the signal on to its child processes and terminates. This is useful for an emergency shutdown. Normally one would terminate only the master (**postfix stop**) and allow running processes to finish what they are doing.

## DIAGNOSTICS

Problems are reported to **syslogd(8)**. The exit status is non-zero in case of problems, including problems while initializing as a master daemon process in the background.

## ENVIRONMENT

**MAIL_DEBUG**

After initialization, start a debugger as specified with the **debugger_command** configuration parameter in the **main.cf** configuration file.

**MAIL_CONFIG**

Directory with Postfix configuration files.

## CONFIGURATION PARAMETERS

Unlike most Postfix daemon processes, the **master(8)** server does not automatically pick up changes to **main.cf**. Changes to **master.cf** are never picked up automatically. Use the **postfix reload** command after a configuration change.

## RESOURCE AND RATE CONTROLS

**default_process_limit (100)**

The default maximal number of Postfix child processes that provide a given service.

**max_idle (100s)**

The maximum amount of time that an idle Postfix daemon process waits for an incoming connection before terminating voluntarily.

**max_use (100)**

The maximal number of incoming connections that a Postfix daemon process will service before terminating voluntarily.

**service_throttle_time (60s)**

How long the Postfix **master(8)** waits before forking a server that appears to be malfunctioning.

Available in Postfix version 2.6 and later:

**master_service_disable (empty)**

Selectively disable **master(8)** listener ports by service type or by service name and type.

## MISCELLANEOUS CONTROLS

**config_directory (see 'postconf -d' output)**

The default location of the Postfix main.cf and master.cf configuration files.

**daemon_directory (see 'postconf -d' output)**

The directory with Postfix support programs and daemon programs.

**debugger_command (empty)**

The external command to execute when a Postfix daemon program is invoked with the -D option.

**inet_interfaces (all)**

The network interface addresses that this mail system receives mail on.

**inet_protocols (all)**

The Internet protocols Postfix will attempt to use when making or accepting connections.

**import_environment (see 'postconf -d' output)**

The list of environment parameters that a Postfix process will import from a non-Postfix parent process.

**mail_owner (postfix)**

The UNIX system account that owns the Postfix queue and most Postfix daemon processes.

**process_id (read-only)**
> The process ID of a Postfix command or daemon process.

**process_name (read-only)**
> The process name of a Postfix command or daemon process.

**queue_directory (see 'postconf -d' output)**
> The location of the Postfix top-level queue directory.

**syslog_facility (mail)**
> The syslog facility of Postfix logging.

**syslog_name (see 'postconf -d' output)**
> The mail system name that is prepended to the process name in syslog records, so that smtpd becomes, for example, postfix/smtpd.

## FILES

To expand the directory names below into their actual values, use the command **postconf config_directory** etc.

$config_directory/main.cf, global configuration file.
$config_directory/master.cf, master server configuration file.
$queue_directory/pid/master.pid, master lock file.
$data_directory/master.lock, master lock file.

## SEE ALSO

qmgr(8),
queue manager
verify(8),
address verification
master(5),
master.cf configuration file syntax
postconf(5),
main.cf configuration file syntax
syslogd(8), system logging

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## AUTHOR(S)

Wietse Venema
IBM T.J. Watson Research
P.O. Box 704
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, USA