sudo Run as another user

CONCEPTS

sudo runs one command with another identity (root by default) if the sudoers rules allow it, and asks for your own password, not root's.

You run sudo command + options
↓ checks rules
/etc/sudoers who, where, as whom, what
↓ allowed?
Password cached for a few minutes
↓ runs
Command as target user

Redirections happen in your shell before sudo starts, so sudo echo x > /etc/f still writes as you.

RUNNING COMMANDS

sudo *<command>*
Run a command as root

sudo -u *<user>* *<command>*
Run as another user

sudo -g *<group>* *<command>*
Run with another primary group

sudo -u *<user>* **-g** *<group>* *<command>*
Set user and group

sudo -n *<command>*
Fail instead of asking for a password

sudo !!
Repeat the last command with sudo

SHELLS

sudo -i
Root login shell with root's environment

sudo -s
Root shell keeping your environment

sudo -iu *<user>*
Login shell as another user

sudo -H *<command>*
Set HOME to the target user's home

SHELLS (cont.)

Prefer one-off sudo commands over a root shell: every command stays logged and a typo does less damage.

PRIVILEGES AND PASSWORD CACHE

sudo -l
List what you may run here

sudo -l *<command>*
Check if a command is allowed

sudo -l -U *<user>*
List another user's privileges

sudo -v
Refresh the cache without running anything

sudo -k
Invalidate the cache for this session

sudo -K
Remove all cached credentials

sudo -V
Show sudo and plugin versions

ENVIRONMENT

sudo -E *<command>*
Keep your environment variables

sudo *<VAR>*=*<value>* *<command>*
Set a variable for one command

sudo env *<VAR>*=*<value>* *<command>*
Set a variable via env

PATH is replaced by secure_path on many systems, so tools in your own PATH may not be found under sudo.

EDITING FILES

sudo -e *<file>*
Edit a copy and write it back as root

sudoedit *<file>*
Same as sudo -e

SUDO_EDITOR=*<editor>* **sudoedit** *<file>*
Pick the editor for sudoedit

EDITING FILES (cont.)

sudoedit runs your editor as you, not root, so editor plugins and config are safe to use.

REDIRECTION AND PIPES

echo '*<text>***' | sudo tee** *<file>*
Write a root-owned file

echo '*<text>***' | sudo tee -a** *<file>*
Append to a root-owned file

sudo sh -c '*<command>* **>** *<file>***'**
Redirect inside a root shell

SUDOERS RULES

sudo visudo
Edit /etc/sudoers with a syntax check

sudo visudo -f /etc/sudoers.d/*<name>*
Edit a drop-in file

sudo visudo -c
Check the syntax only

Rule: who where = (as whom) what

Part	Example	Meaning
`user or %group`	`alice, %admin`	who may run it
`host`	`ALL`	on which machine
`(runas)`	`(root), (ALL)`	as which user
`tags: commands`	`NOPASSWD: /usr/bin/apt`	what, and options

%wheel ALL=(ALL) ALL
Full rights for a group

alice ALL=(root) NOPASSWD: /usr/bin/systemctl restart *<svc>*
One command without a password

Never edit /etc/sudoers with a plain editor: one syntax error can lock out every sudo user. Keep a root shell open while testing.