

visudo tutorial

[visudo](#) is a tool for safely updating the `/etc/sudoers` file, found in most Linux systems ([Ubuntu](#) for example). This is the file that is required for allowing regular users run commands with superuser privileges – using [sudo command](#).

Here's what the Ubuntu man page says about it, I think it's a great summary:

visudo edits the sudoers file in a safe fashion, analogous to vipw(8). visudo locks the sudoers file against multiple simultaneous edits, provides basic sanity checks, and checks for parse errors. If the sudoers file is currently being edited you will receive a message to try again later.

Attention: due to the sensitive content of the `/etc/sudoers` file, you can only run [visudo](#) as root.

Using visudo to edit the `/etc/sudoers`

This is the default behavior of the [visudo command](#): simply run it without any parameters, and it will open the contents of the `/etc/sudoers` file in a vi editor, allow you to edit it, and will then apply the changes.

The reason I'm highlighting the fact of applying the changes is because `vi` session will not be editing the actual `/etc/sudoers` file, but a temporary copy of it created by [visudo](#). After you make the changes and exit the `vi`, **visudo** will do the syntax checks on the file before replacing the actual `/etc/sudoers` file.

Hint: if you're using a different text editor, you can easily override it by setting the `EDITOR` variable in your shell, [visudo](#) is intelligent enough to respect it and use the specified editor.

Using visudo to check the /etc/sudoers syntax

Sometimes you don't want to update the file using this command, but would like to verify that the syntax of `/etc/sudoers` is correct. That's when the `-c` option for [visudo](#) comes in:

```
root@ubuntu:~# visudo -c
/etc/sudoers file parsed OK
```

See also:

- [visudo](#)
- [Grant User Privileges in Ubuntu](#)
- [sudo tutorial](#)