

NAME

timerfd, **timerfd_create**, **timerfd_gettime**, **timerfd_settime** - timers with file descriptor semantics

LIBRARY

Standard C Library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

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

int

```
timerfd_create(int clockid, int flags);
```

int

```
timerfd_gettime(int fd, struct itimerspec *curr_value);
```

int

```
timerfd_settime(int fd, int flags, const struct itimerspec *new_value, struct itimerspec *old_value);
```

DESCRIPTION

The **timerfd** system calls operate on timers, identified by special **timerfd** file descriptors. These calls are analogous to **timer_create()**, **timer_gettime()**, and **timer_settime()** per-process timer functions, but use a **timerfd** descriptor in place of *timerid*.

All **timerfd** descriptors possess traditional file descriptor semantics; they may be passed to other processes, preserved across `fork(2)`, and monitored via `kevent(2)`, `poll(2)`, or `select(2)`. When a **timerfd** descriptor is no longer needed, it may be disposed of using `close(2)`.

timerfd_create() Initialize a **timerfd** object and return its file descriptor. The *clockid* argument specifies the clock used as a timing base and may be:

CLOCK_REALTIME	Increments as a wall clock should.
CLOCK_MONOTONIC	Increments monotonically in SI seconds.

The *flags* argument may contain the result of *or*'ing the following values:

TFD_CLOEXEC	The newly generated file descriptor will close-on-exec.
TFD_NONBLOCK	Do not block on read/write operations.

timerfd_gettime() Retrieve the current state of the timer denoted by *fd*. The result is stored in *curr_value* as a `struct itimerspec`. The *it_value* and *it_interval* members of

curr_value represent the relative time until the next expiration and the interval reload value last set by **timerfd_settime()**, respectively.

timerfd_settime() Update the timer denoted by *fd* with the struct *itimerspec* in *new_value*. The *it_value* member of *new_value* should contain the amount of time before the timer expires, or zero if the timer should be disarmed. The *it_interval* member should contain the reload time if an interval timer is desired.

The previous timer state will be stored in *old_value* given *old_value* is not NULL.

The *flags* argument may contain the result of *or*'ing the following values:

TFD_TIMER_ABSTIME	Expiration will occur at the absolute time provided in <i>new_value</i> . Normally, <i>new_value</i> represents a relative time compared to the timer's <i>clockid</i> clock.
TFD_TIMER_CANCEL_ON_SET	If <i>clockid</i> has been set to CLOCK_REALTIME and the realtime clock has experienced a discontinuous jump, then the timer will be canceled and the next read(2) will fail with ECANCELED .

File operations have the following semantics:

read(2)

Transfer the number of timer expirations that have occurred since the last successful **read(2)** or **timerfd_settime()** into the output buffer of size *uint64_t*. If the expiration counter is zero, **read(2)** blocks until a timer expiration occurs unless **TFD_NONBLOCK** is set, where **EAGAIN** is returned.

poll(2)

The file descriptor is readable when its timer expiration counter is greater than zero.

ioctl(2)

FIOASYNC int

A non-zero input will set the **FASYNC** flag. A zero input will clear the **FASYNC** flag.

FIONBIO int

A non-zero input will set the `FNONBLOCK` flag. A zero input will clear the `FNONBLOCK` flag.

RETURN VALUES

The **`timerfd_create()`** system call creates a **`timerfd`** object and returns its file descriptor. If an error occurs, -1 is returned and the global variable *errno* is set to indicate the error.

The **`timerfd_gettime()`** and **`timerfd_settime()`** system calls return 0 on success. If an error occurs, -1 is returned and the global variable *errno* is set to indicate the error.

ERRORS

The **`timerfd_create()`** system call fails if:

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|----------|--|
| [EINVAL] | The specified <i>clockid</i> is not supported. |
| [EINVAL] | The provided <i>flags</i> are invalid. |
| [EMFILE] | The per-process descriptor table is full. |
| [ENFILE] | The system file table is full. |
| [ENOMEM] | The kernel failed to allocate enough memory for the timer. |

Both **`timerfd_gettime()`** and **`timerfd_settime()`** system calls fail if:

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|----------|---|
| [EBADF] | The provided <i>fd</i> is invalid. |
| [EFAULT] | The addresses provided by <i>curr_value</i> , <i>new_value</i> , or <i>old_value</i> are invalid. |
| [EINVAL] | The provided <i>fd</i> is valid, but was not generated by <code>timerfd_create()</code> . |

The following errors only apply to **`timerfd_settime()`**:

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|-------------|--|
| [EINVAL] | The provided <i>flags</i> are invalid. |
| [EINVAL] | A nanosecond field in the <i>new_value</i> argument specified a value less than zero, or greater than or equal to 10^9 . |
| [ECANCELED] | The timer was created with the clock ID <code>CLOCK_REALTIME</code> , was configured with the <code>TFD_TIMER_CANCEL_ON_SET</code> flag, and the system realtime clock |

experienced a discontinuous change without being read.

A read from a **timerfd** object fails if:

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|-------------|--|
| [EAGAIN] | The timer's expiration counter is zero and the timerfd object is set for non-blocking I/O. |
| [ECANCELED] | The timer was created with the clock ID <code>CLOCK_REALTIME</code> , was configured with the <code>TFD_TIMER_CANCEL_ON_SET</code> flag, and the system realtime clock experienced a discontinuous change. |
| [EINVAL] | The size of the read buffer is not large enough to hold the <code>uint64_t</code> sized timer expiration counter. |

SEE ALSO

`eventfd(2)`, `kqueue(2)`, `poll(2)`, `read(2)`, `timer_create(2)`, `timer_gettime(2)`, `timer_settime(2)`

STANDARDS

The **timerfd** system calls originated from Linux and are non-standard.

HISTORY

The **timerfd** facility was originally ported to FreeBSD's Linux compatibility layer by Dmitry Chagin <dchagin@FreeBSD.org> in FreeBSD 12.0. It was revised and adapted to be native by Jake Freeland <jfree@FreeBSD.org> in FreeBSD 14.0.