

How to change hostname on CentOS or RHEL 7

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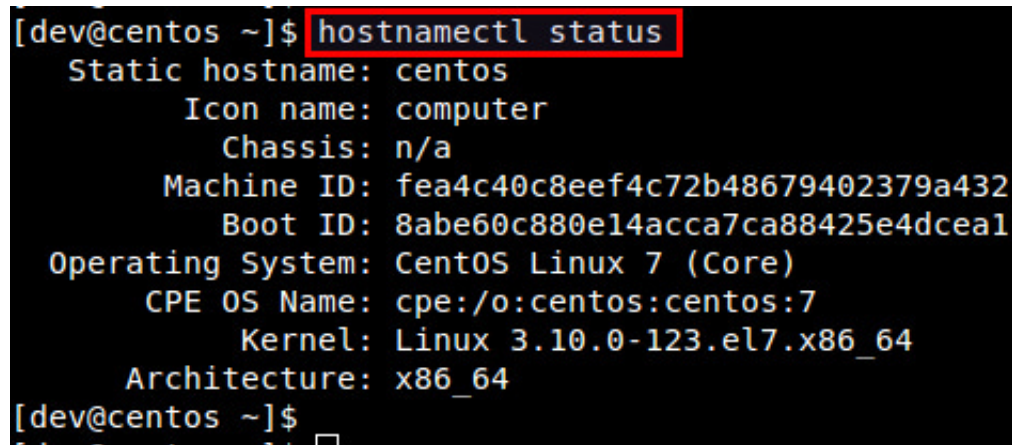
Question: What is a proper way to change hostname on CentOS / RHEL 7 (permanently or temporarily)?

In CentOS or RHEL, there are three kinds of hostnames defined: (1) static, (2) transient, and (3) pretty. The "static" hostname is also known as kernel hostname, which is initialized from `/etc/hostname` automatically at boot time. The "transient" hostname is a temporary hostname assigned at run time, for example, by a DHCP or mDNS server. Both static and transient hostnames follow the same character restriction rules as Internet domain names. On the other hand, the "pretty" hostname is allowed to have a free-form (including special/whitespace characters) hostname, presented to end users (e.g., Dan's Computer).

In CentOS/RHEL 7, there is a command line utility called `hostnamectl`, which allows you to view or modify hostname related configurations.

To view hostname related settings:

```
$ hostnamectl status
```



```
[dev@centos ~]$ hostnamectl status
  Static hostname: centos
        Icon name: computer
        Chassis: n/a
  Machine ID: fea4c40c8eef4c72b48679402379a432
  Boot ID: 8abe60c880e14acca7ca88425e4dcea1
  Operating System: CentOS Linux 7 (Core)
  CPE OS Name: cpe:/o:centos:centos:7
        Kernel: Linux 3.10.0-123.el7.x86_64
  Architecture: x86_64
[dev@centos ~]$
```

To view static, transient or pretty hostname only, use "--static", "--transient" or "--pretty" option, respectively.

```
$ hostnamectl status [--static|--transient|--pretty]
```

To change all three hostnames: static, transient, and pretty, simultaneously:

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```
$ sudo hostnamectl set-hostname
```

```
[dev@centos ~]$ sudo hostnamectl set-hostname "Dan's Computer"
[dev@centos ~]$
[dev@centos ~]$ hostnamectl status --static
danscomputer
[dev@centos ~]$ hostnamectl status --transient
danscomputer
[dev@centos ~]$ hostnamectl status --pretty
Dan's Computer
[dev@centos ~]$
```

As shown above, in case of static/transient hostnames, any special or whitespace character will be removed, and any uppercase letter will automatically be converted to lowercase in the supplied argument. Once the static hostname is changed, `/etc/hostname` will automatically be updated accordingly. However, `/etc/hosts` will not be updated to reflect the change, so you need to update `/etc/hosts` manually.

If you want to change a particular hostname only (static, transient or pretty), you can use `--static`, `--transient` or `--pretty` option.

For example, to change hostname permanently, you can change the static hostname:

```
$ sudo hostnamectl --static set-hostname
```

Note that you do not have to reboot the machine to activate permanent hostname change. The above command will change kernel hostname immediately. Log out, and log back in to see the new static hostname in the command-line prompt.

Final note: the official recommendation by Red Hat is that both static and transient names of a host match the FQDN (fully-qualified domain name) of the host (e.g., `myhost.xmodulo.com`). FQDN is always preferred to avoid any confusion in host naming in any kind of service deployment. Thus, if a host is assigned by DNS `myhost.xmodulo.com` as its FQDN, use the same FQDN as its hostname:

```
$ sudo hostnamectl set-hostname myhost.xmodulo.com
```