

NAME

alarm – set an alarm clock for delivery of a signal

LIBRARY

Standard C library (*libc*, *-lc*)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <unistd.h>
```

```
unsigned int alarm(unsigned int seconds);
```

DESCRIPTION

alarm() arranges for a **SIGALRM** signal to be delivered to the calling process in *seconds* seconds.

If *seconds* is zero, any pending alarm is canceled.

In any event any previously set **alarm()** is canceled.

RETURN VALUE

alarm() returns the number of seconds remaining until any previously scheduled alarm was due to be delivered, or zero if there was no previously scheduled alarm.

STANDARDS

POSIX.1-2024.

HISTORY

4.3BSD, SVr4, POSIX.1-1988.

NOTES

alarm() and **setitimer(2)** share the same timer; calls to one will interfere with use of the other.

Alarms created by **alarm()** are preserved across **execve(2)** and are not inherited by children created via **fork(2)**.

sleep(3) may be implemented using **SIGALRM**; mixing calls to **alarm()** and **sleep(3)** is a bad idea.

Scheduling delays can, as ever, cause the execution of the process to be delayed by an arbitrary amount of time.

SEE ALSO

gettimeofday(2), **pause(2)**, **select(2)**, **setitimer(2)**, **sigaction(2)**, **signal(2)**, **timer_create(2)**, **timerfd_create(2)**, **sleep(3)**, **time(7)**