LINUX · OCTOBER 13, 2026 · GUIDE

Common Ubuntu and Kubuntu administrative tasks: updating, users, firewall and release upgrades

Step-by-step guide to four routine admin jobs on Ubuntu or Kubuntu 26.04 LTS: apt updates, user and sudo management, a ufw firewall, and a release upgrade. Every command is taken from Ubuntu or Kubuntu documentation.

9 min read · 10 sources

Kubuntu | Ubuntu | apt | command reference | how-to | release upgrade | sudo | ufw

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By the end of this guide you will have brought an Ubuntu or Kubuntu 26.04 LTS machine up to date, created and managed user accounts, turned on the `ufw` firewall, and know how to move to the next LTS release safely. It is written for anyone administering a single desktop, laptop or server from a terminal. Kubuntu is Ubuntu with the KDE Plasma desktop, so the commands are identical. Where Kubuntu differs, the guide says so.

Before you start

- **A supported release.** These steps follow the documentation for Ubuntu 26.04 LTS “Resolute Raccoon”, released 23 April 2026[7]. Kubuntu 26.04 LTS shipped the same day with Plasma 6.6 and kernel 7.0[5]. Most commands also work on 24.04 LTS.

- **An account in the `sudo` group.** By default the root account has no usable password. The first user the installer creates is a member of the `sudo` group and runs administrative commands with `sudo` [4].
- **A terminal.** On Kubuntu this is Konsole. On Ubuntu Desktop it is Terminal. Over SSH it is your shell.
- **A working internet connection**, and free disk space for the release upgrade (several gigabytes) [1].
- **A backup** of anything you cannot afford to lose, before the upgrade stage in particular [1].
- **If you use SSH:** a second open session before you touch the firewall (see Stage 3).

KEY FINDING

From Ubuntu 25.10 onward `sudo` is provided by `sudo-rs`, a Rust rewrite. Ubuntu says most use cases work unchanged, but it is not 100% compatible with the original `sudo.ws` [4]. Everyday commands in this guide are unaffected.

Support windows at a glance

RELEASE	STANDARD SUPPORT ENDS	NOTES
Ubuntu 26.04 LTS	May 2031	Ubuntu Pro ESM to May 2036 [8]
Ubuntu 24.04 LTS	May 2029	Upgrade path to 26.04 LTS [8]
Ubuntu 22.04 LTS	May 2027	Must go to 24.04 first [8]
Kubuntu 26.04 LTS	April 2029	Flavour support is shorter than Ubuntu main [5] [9]
Kubuntu 24.04 LTS	April 2027	[9]

Ubuntu's own table and Kubuntu's page give different end dates for the same-numbered release. Kubuntu's three-year window is stated by the Kubuntu team [5]. Do not assume the Ubuntu date applies to the flavour.

Stage 1: Update and manage packages

`apt` is the recommended tool for installing `.deb` packages [2]. Run all commands in a terminal.

1. Refresh the package index:

   BASH

   ```
   sudo apt update
   ```

   The index is built from the repositories listed in `/etc/apt/sources.list.d`. Ubuntu's own are in `/etc/apt/sources.list.d/ubuntu.sources`. Releases before 24.04 use `/etc/apt/sources.list` instead [2].

2. Install the available upgrades:

```bash
sudo apt upgrade
```

3. Install a package. The documentation uses `nmap` as its example. You can list several names separated by spaces:

   ```bash
   sudo apt install nmap
   ```

4. Remove a package:

   ```bash
   sudo apt remove nmap
   ```

   Add `--purge` to remove its configuration files too. The docs warn this may not be what you want [2].

5. List installed packages, or find the package that owns a file, with `dpkg`:

   ```bash
   dpkg -l | grep apache2
   dpkg -S /etc/host.conf
   ```

6. Install a downloaded `.deb` file only when no repository offers it:

   ```bash
   sudo dpkg -i zip_3.0-4_amd64.deb
   ```

   Ubuntu advises against `dpkg -r` for removal because it does not handle dependencies. Use `apt remove` instead [2].

7. To review what `apt` did, read `/var/log/dpkg.log` [2]. Kubuntu's release notes say APT 3.2 in 26.04 also adds `apt history-list` and `apt history-rollback` [5]. I did not find a step-by-step official guide for these, so check `apt help` before relying on rollback.

Scripts and automatic updates

`apt` is meant for interactive use. In scripts, use `apt-get` (optionally with `--quiet`). The basic syntax is the same [2]. Ubuntu Server applies security updates automatically by default [2].

Repositories

Universe and multiverse are enabled by default. Packages there get no security patches except through Ubuntu Pro's ESM, which is free for personal use on up to five machines [2]. To disable them, edit `/etc/apt/sources.list.d/ubuntu.sources` and remove `universe` and `multiverse` from the `Components:` line [2].

On Kubuntu, Plasma Discover also shows updates in the system tray, but the commands above work the same.

Stage 2: Manage users, groups and sudo

1. List all local usernames:

```bash
cat /etc/passwd | cut -d : -f 1
```

2. List only regular users (UID 1000 and above, plus `nobody` at 65534):

```bash
cat /etc/passwd | cut -d : -f 1,3 | grep -E ':[0-9]{4,}'
```

   System users use UIDs 0–99 (pre-installed) and 100–999 (created by services). Regular users start at 1000[4].

3. Add a user and answer the prompts for password and full name:

```bash
sudo adduser username
```

   The home directory is created from `/etc/skel`. On Ubuntu 21.10 and later it gets private `0750` permissions[4].

4. Give that user administrator rights by adding them to the `sudo` group:

```bash
sudo adduser username sudo
```

   This is the documented method: “To give any other account full root access through `sudo`, add them to the `sudo` group”[4].

5. Create or remove a custom group:

```bash
sudo addgroup groupname
sudo delgroup groupname
```

6. Temporarily lock or unlock a password:

```bash
sudo passwd -l username
sudo passwd -u username
```

7. Delete a user and its primary group:

```bash
sudo deluser username
```

The home folder is not removed. To keep it but stop a future user with the same UID from reading it, the docs give these steps [4]:

```bash
sudo chown -R root:root /home/username/
sudo mkdir /home/archived_users/
sudo mv /home/username /home/archived_users/
```

Password ageing

1. View a user's current policy:

   ```bash
   sudo chage -l username
   ```

2. Set the policy. This example, from the docs, sets a 5-day minimum age, 90-day maximum, 30 inactive days and a 14-day warning:

   ```bash
   sudo chage -m 5 -M 90 -I 30 -W 14 username
   ```

   The docs' example also sets an account expiry date with `-E`. Add it only if you want the account to expire [4].

3. To raise the minimum password length from the default 6, edit `/etc/pam.d/common-password` and append `minlen=8` to the `pam_unix.so` line. This check does not apply when an administrator creates an account with `sudo` [4].

Restrict SSH to chosen users

1. Open `/etc/ssh/sshd_config` and add `AllowGroups sshlogin`.
2. Add each permitted user to that group, then restart SSH [4]:

   ```bash
   sudo adduser username sshlogin
   sudo systemctl restart ssh.service
   ```

Root account

The docs say you can set a root password with `sudo passwd`, and disable it again with `sudo passwd -l root` [4]. Most people should leave root disabled.

Stage 3: Turn on the firewall with ufw

`ufw` is Ubuntu's default firewall front end and is **disabled by default** [3].

1. If you are connected over SSH, allow SSH first so you are not locked out. Open a second session as a safety net:

```bash
sudo ufw allow 22
```

You can use the service name instead of the number if it is in `/etc/services`, for example `ssh` [3].

2. Optionally preview a rule without applying it:

```bash
sudo ufw --dry-run allow http
```

3. Enable the firewall:

```bash
sudo ufw enable
```

4. Check the result:

```bash
sudo ufw status verbose
```

5. Allow SSH only from one host, or a whole subnet by changing the address to `192.168.0.0/24`:

```bash
sudo ufw allow proto tcp from 192.168.0.2 to any port 22
```

6. Use an application profile instead of port numbers. List the profiles, then allow one:

```bash
sudo ufw app list
sudo ufw allow Samba
```

Profiles live in `/etc/ufw/applications.d`. To see the ports a profile opens, run `sudo ufw app info Samba` [3].

7. To remove a rule, list them with numbers, then delete by rule:

```bash
sudo ufw status numbered
sudo ufw delete deny 22
```

`sudo ufw insert 1 allow 80` places a rule at position 1 [3]. To close a port, `sudo ufw deny 22` is the documented form. Turn the firewall off entirely with `sudo ufw disable` [3].

CAUTION

The Ubuntu documentation page I read does not say what happens to existing SSH sessions when you run `ufw enable`, and I did not test it. Allow your SSH port before enabling.

Stage 4: Upgrade to the next release

This is different from routine updates. The upgrade tool moves you to the next major release[1].

Know your path

You can upgrade from one LTS only to the next sequential LTS. You cannot skip one[1]. Ubuntu's 26.04 notes add that anyone on 22.04 or 25.04 must first move to 24.04 LTS or 25.10[7]. LTS-to-LTS upgrades are normally offered only after the first point release. The `-d` flag forces an earlier upgrade but is not recommended for production[1]. Kubuntu 26.04.1 is already published[9], so the normal route is open.

- Apr 2024 — **24.04 LTS**
  Noble Numbat; standard support to May 2029 (Ubuntu)[8]
- Oct 2025 — **25.10**
  sudo-rs becomes the default sudo[4]
- 23 Apr 2026 — **26.04 LTS**
  Ubuntu and Kubuntu release; Plasma 6.6, kernel 7.0[5][7]
- Apr 2027 — **Kubuntu 24.04 ends**
  Support date on kubuntu.org[9]

Prepare

1. Read the release notes for the version you are moving to[1][7].
2. Fully update the current system. Phased packages can block the release upgrade, so include them[1]:

   BASH

   ```
   sudo apt update
   sudo apt dist-upgrade -o APT::Get::Always-Include-Phased-Updates=true
   ```

3. Check whether a reboot is needed. If this file exists, reboot first[1]:

   BASH

   ```
   ls /run/reboot-required
   ```

4. Confirm there is enough free disk space, and set aside time. The upgrade is interactive and may take hours[1].
5. Back up your data. Third-party repositories and PPAs are disabled during the upgrade, and they are the most common cause of problems[1].

6. **Kubuntu only:** back up your KDE settings. This command comes from a third-party guide, not Kubuntu's own [10]:

```bash
tar -czf ~/kde-config-backup-$(date +%Y%m%d).tar.gz ~/.config ~/.local/share
```

Run the upgrade

1. Start the tool:

```bash
sudo do-release-upgrade
```

2. Read the summary of packages to be removed, installed and upgraded, plus the download size, then answer `y` to continue. After the download finishes, the process cannot be cancelled [1].
3. When asked about a modified configuration file, press `D` to see the differences. The default, `N`, keeps your version. The docs say accepting the maintainer's version is sometimes required, for example `/boot/grub/menu.lst`, for the system to boot with the new kernel [1].
4. When asked, choose whether to remove obsolete packages.
5. Answer `y` to the restart prompt. The system is not considered upgraded until it reboots [1].

On Kubuntu, a third-party guide says the 24.04 to 26.04 upgrade also uses `do-release-upgrade`, and says NVIDIA driver 470 and older are incompatible with kernel 7.0 [10]. That claim is not in Kubuntu's own notes, so check your driver before upgrading.

After the upgrade (Kubuntu)

Kubuntu warns that upgraders may see visual glitches, broken panel layouts or misbehaving themes. Its fix [5]:

1. Open **System Settings**, then choose **Colors & Themes**.
2. Reapply your preferred global theme.
3. When prompted, tick both **Desktop Layout** and **Window Layout**.

If that fails, Kubuntu's last resort is to back up and remove `~/.config`, which resets all Plasma settings [5]. Also note that the Plasma Wayland session is the default, and `plasma-session-x11` is available but not installed by default and not supported by the Kubuntu team [5].

Common problems

PROBLEM	FIX
`apt upgrade` says "packages have been kept back"	Usually phased updates. The docs say you can safely ignore this and the update arrives automatically. Security updates are never phased [6].
Release upgrade refuses or stalls	Run `sudo apt update` and the `dist-upgrade` command in Stage 4 again. Check `/run/reboot-required` [1].

PROBLEM	FIX
Software from a PPA vanished after upgrade	PPAs are disabled during upgrade. Re-enable them or find newer versions [1].
Release upgrade says no new release	LTS upgrades are offered after the first point release. The `-d` flag forces it but is not for production [1].
Config-file prompt during upgrade	Use `D` to compare. Keep yours by default, but accept the maintainer's file where it is needed to boot [1].
Locked a user's password but they still log in over SSH	Locking the password does not stop key-based SSH login. Remove or rename `~/.ssh/` and kill live sessions [4].
Deleted user's files are exposed to a new user with the same UID	`deluser` leaves the home folder. Use the `chown` and `mv` steps in Stage 2 [4].
Someone else's files are readable on an older install	Pre-21.10 homes were `0755`. Run `sudo chmod 0750 /home/username` and set `DIR_MODE=0750` in `/etc/adduser.conf` [4].
`sudo` behaves differently from old tutorials	25.10+ uses `sudo-rs`. Switch back with `update-alternatives --config sudo`, though this is not recommended [4].
Broken Plasma panels or themes after upgrading Kubuntu	Reapply the global theme as in Stage 4. Only then consider resetting `~/.config` [5].
Spectacle OCR gives no text in your language	Install the Tesseract language pack, for example `sudo apt install tesseract-ocr-deu` [5].

<details>
<summary>Alternatives not covered here</summary>

- **Aptitude:** a text-menu front end. Install it with `sudo apt install aptitude`. The docs describe `+`, `-`, `u`, `U` and `g` keys [2].
- **IP masquerading with ufw:** needs edits to `/etc/default/ufw` and `/etc/ufw/sysctl.conf` [3]. It is not a routine task.
- **Kubuntu graphical upgrade:** I saw a Kubuntu community wiki snippet for an older release (`pkexec do-release-upgrade -m desktop -f DistUpgradeViewKDE`) but could not open the page, and no current Kubuntu 26.04 page confirms it. It is not included as a step.
</details>

Checked against

- **Ubuntu 26.04 LTS (Resolute Raccoon)** release notes, dated 23 April 2026 [7], and Kubuntu 26.04 LTS release notes, dated 23 April 2026 (Plasma 6.6, kernel 7.0, APT 3.2) [5].
- **Ubuntu Server documentation** pages for package management, firewalls, user management and release upgrades, as live on 13 October 2026. Search results dated two of them 26 June 2026 and the upgrade page 6 July 2026 [1] [2] [3] [4].
- Ubuntu's release-cycle page [8] and the Kubuntu download page, which lists 26.04.1 [9]. One third-party guide [10] was used only for the KDE backup command and the NVIDIA warning, which are marked as such.
- Commands were taken from the pages above. I did not run them on a live system.

SOURCES

1 How to upgrade your Ubuntu release - Ubuntu Server documentation
https://ubuntu.com/server/docs/how-to/software/upgrade-your-release/

2 Install and manage packages - Ubuntu Server documentation
https://ubuntu.com/server/docs/how-to/software/package-management/

3 Firewall - Ubuntu Server documentation
https://ubuntu.com/server/docs/how-to/security/firewalls/

4 User management - Ubuntu Server documentation
https://ubuntu.com/server/docs/how-to/security/user-management/

5 Kubuntu 26.04 LTS Resolute Raccoon Released
https://kubuntu.org/news/kubuntu-26-04-release-notes/

6 About apt upgrade and phased updates - Ubuntu Server documentation
https://ubuntu.com/server/docs/explanation/software/about-apt-upgrade-and-phased-updates/

7 Ubuntu 26.04 LTS release notes
https://documentation.ubuntu.com/release-notes/26.04/

8 Ubuntu release cycle
https://ubuntu.com/about/release-cycle

9 Download | Kubuntu
https://kubuntu.org/download/

10 Upgrade to Kubuntu 26.04 LTS, Step-by-Step Guide - Ubuntu Free (third party)
https://www.ubuntufree.com/upgrade-to-kubuntu-26-04-lts/

Researched and written with claude-sonnet-5-5, from the sources listed above. Figures are as reported by those sources. Exported November 29, 2026 from https://intel.innerpulse.net/doc/common-ubuntu-and-kubuntu-administrative-tasks-updating-users-firewall-and, where the current version lives.