

PASSWORD MANAGER > DEVELOPER TOOLS

Personal API Key for CLI Authentication

View in the help center:

<https://bitwarden.com/help/personal-api-key/>

Personal API Key for CLI Authentication

Your Bitwarden personal API key can be used as a method for authenticating into the command line interface (CLI).

Note

Your personal API key is **not the same** as the [organization API key](#) used to access the [Bitwarden Public API](#) or [Directory Connector](#). Personal API keys will have a `client_id` with format `"user.clientId"`, while organization API keys will have a `client_id` with format `"organization.ClientId"`.

Get your personal API key

To get your personal API key:

1. In the Bitwarden web app, navigate to **Settings** → **Security** → **Keys**:

The screenshot shows the Bitwarden web app interface. On the left is a dark blue sidebar with navigation options: Password Manager, Vaults, Send, Tools, Reports, Settings, My account, Security (highlighted), Preferences, Subscription, Domain rules, Emergency access, and Free Bitwarden Famili... The main content area is titled 'Security' and has three tabs: 'Master password', 'Two-step login', and 'Keys' (selected). Under the 'Keys' tab, there is a section for 'Encryption key settings'. A yellow warning box states: 'Warning: Proceeding will log you out of all active sessions. You will need to log back in and complete two-step login, if any. We recommend exporting your vault before changing your encryption settings to prevent data loss.' Below this, text explains that higher KDF iterations protect the master password but may cause performance issues on older devices. Two input fields are shown: 'KDF algorithm (required)' set to 'PBKDF2 SHA-256' and 'KDF iterations' set to '600000'. A note below the iterations field says 'We recommend 600,000 or more'. A 'Change KDF' button is present. Below the encryption settings is the 'API Key' section, which states 'Your API key can be used to authenticate in the Bitwarden CLI.' and contains two buttons: 'View API key' and 'Rotate API key'.

Keys

2. Select the **View API key** button and enter your master password to validate access. Once entered, you will be provided the following:

- `client_id`: `"user.clientId"` (This value is unique to your account and does not change.)
- `client_secret`: `"clientSecret"` (This value is unique and can be rotated).

- `scope`: "api" (This value will always be "api").
- `grant_type`: "client_credentials" (This value will always be "client_credentials").

Rotate your API key

Select the **Rotate API Key** button to rotate your personal API key. Rotating your key will only change your `client_secret`.

Rotating your key will invalidate your previous key and all active sessions using that key.

Authenticate using your API key

Logging in to the CLI with the personal API key is **recommended for automated workflows or providing access to an external application**. To log in with the API key:

Bash

```
bw login --apikey
```

This will initiate a prompt for your personal `client_id` and `client_secret`. Once your session is authenticated using these values, you'll be prompted to use the `unlock` command ([learn more](#)).

Using API key environment variables

In scenarios where automated work is being done with the Bitwarden CLI, you can save environment variables to prevent the need for manual intervention at authentication.

Environment variable name	Required value
BW_CLIENTID	<code>client_id</code>
BW_CLIENTSECRET	<code>client_secret</code>