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Keeping your API key in an environment variable on Linux, macOS and Windows

Choosing a Tool & Fixing Errors

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Keeping your API key in an environment variable on Linux, macOS and Windows

Choosing a Tool & Fixing Errors Created on **November 28, 2026** 2 min read



An environment variable keeps the key out of your configuration files. That way the key is not written in `config.toml` or `opencode.jsonc`, and it does not end up in a repository by mistake. In our examples the variable is called `MOZOUT_API_KEY`, and that is the name Codex, OpenCode and Kilo Code look for.

Linux

For the terminal you have open, type (with your key in quotes):

```
export MOZOUT_API_KEY="prod_..."
```

To have the variable in every new terminal, add the same line at the end of `~/.bashrc`:

```
echo 'export MOZOUT_API_KEY="prod_..."' >> ~/.bashrc
```

Then open a new terminal.

macOS

Since macOS 10.15 (Catalina), Terminal uses zsh. So the file is `~/.zshrc`:

```
echo 'export MOZOUT_API_KEY="prod_..."' >> ~/.zshrc
```

Close Terminal and open it again. To use the key only in the terminal you have open, without saving it, `export` is enough, as on Linux.

Windows

In Command Prompt or PowerShell:

```
setx MOZOUT_API_KEY "prod_..."
```

`setx` saves the variable in your Windows account, but only for the windows you open **afterwards**: the window where you typed the command does not see it. Close the terminal and the tool (VS Code, for example) and open them again.

To use the key only in the PowerShell window you have open, without saving it:

```
$env:MOZOUT_API_KEY = "prod_..."
```

This is lost when you close the window.

Check that the variable works

Ask the API for the key details. It spends no credits and shows straight away whether the variable is right.

On Linux and macOS:

```
curl "https://api.mozout.co.mz/v1/token" -H "Authorization: Bearer $MOZOUT_API_KEY"
```

In Windows PowerShell:

```
curl.exe "https://api.mozout.co.mz/v1/token" -H "Authorization: Bearer $env:MOZOUT_API_KEY"
```

If the answer is `401 unauthorized`, the variable is empty or holds the wrong key. On Windows, the usual cause is a window opened before `setx`.

Which tools read the variable

Tool	How it uses the key
Codex CLI	`env_key = "MOZOUT_API_KEY"` in `~/.codex/config.toml`. It reads the variable at start.
OpenCode	`"apiKey": "{env:MOZOUT_API_KEY}"` in `opencode.jsonc`. If the variable does not exist, the value is empty and the API answers `401`.
Kilo Code (command line)	`{env:MOZOUT_API_KEY}` in the global `kilo.jsonc`, in `~/.config/kilo/`. A project file does not read variables.
Claude Code	`ANTHROPIC_AUTH_TOKEN="$MOZOUT_API_KEY"` in the terminal. In `~/.claude/settings.json` the key is written out, because Claude Code does not read variables in that file.
Aider	It uses its own variables, `OPENAI_API_BASE` and `OPENAI_API_KEY`.
Cursor, Cline and Kilo Code in VS Code	You paste the key in the tool's settings.

Changed your key?

Run the same command with the new key and open the terminals again. If the old one was exposed, revoke it and see **what to do, in the right order**.

RECOMMENDED

Want to code with All in One AI models? Visit the Coding with AI page.

See Coding with AI →

SEE ALSO

- Before you set up a coding tool →
- An API key has leaked →
- Using Claude Code with All in One AI →
- OpenCode with All in One AI →
- Coding with AI in All in One AI →

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