

## **Libraries**

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# Chapter 1

## Libraries

### 1.1 Amiga® RKM Libraries: 25 Exec Semaphores

Semaphores are a feature of Exec which provide a general method for tasks to arbitrate for the use of memory or other system resources they may be sharing. This chapter describes the structure of Exec semaphores and the various support functions provided for their use. Since the semaphore system uses Exec lists and signals, some familiarity with these concepts is helpful for understanding semaphores.

In any multitasking or multi-processing system there is a need to share data among independently executing tasks. If the data is static (that is, it never changes), then there is no problem. However, if the data is variable, then there must be some way for a task that is about to make a change to keep other tasks from looking at the data.

For example, to add a node to a linked list of data, a task would normally just add the node. However, if the list is shared with other tasks, this could be dangerous. Another task could be walking down the list while the change is being made and pick up an incorrect pointer. The problem is worse if two tasks attempt to add an item to the list at the same time. Exec semaphores provide a way to prevent such problems.

A semaphore is much like getting a key to a locked data item. When you have the key (semaphore), you can access the data item without worrying about other tasks causing problems. Any other tasks that try to obtain the semaphore will be put to sleep until the semaphore becomes available. When you have completed your work with the data, you return the semaphore.

For semaphores to work correctly, there are two restrictions that must be observed at all times:

- 1) All tasks using shared data that is protected by a semaphore must always ask for the semaphore first before accessing the data. If some task accesses the data directly without first going through the semaphore, the data may be corrupted. No task will have safe access to the data.
- 2) A deadlock will occur if a task that owns an exclusive semaphore on some data inadvertently calls another task which tries to get an exclusive semaphore on that same data in blocking mode. Deadlocks

and other such issues are beyond the scope of this manual. For more details on deadlocks and other problems of shared data in a multitasking system and the methods used to prevent them, refer to a textbook in computer science such as Operating Systems by Tannenbaum (Prentice-Hall).

Semaphore Functions      Function Reference

## 1.2 25 Exec Semaphores / Semaphore Functions

Exec provides a variety of useful functions for setting, checking and freeing semaphores. The prototypes for these functions are as follows.

```
VOID AddSemaphore ( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );
ULONG AttemptSemaphore( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );
struct SignalSemaphore *FindSemaphore( UBYTE *sigSem );
VOID InitSemaphore( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );

VOID ObtainSemaphore( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );
VOID ObtainSemaphoreList( struct List *sigSem );
void ObtainSemaphoreShared( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );

VOID ReleaseSemaphore( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );
VOID ReleaseSemaphoreList( struct List *sigSem );
VOID RemSemaphore( struct SignalSemaphore *sigSem );
```

The Signal Semaphore      Multiple Semaphores      Semaphore Example

## 1.3 25 / Semaphore Functions / The Signal Semaphore

Exec semaphores are signal based. Using signal semaphores is the easiest way to protect shared, single-access resources in the Amiga. Your task will sleep until the semaphore is available for use. The SignalSemaphore structure is as follows:

```
struct SignalSemaphore {
    struct Node ss_Link;
    SHORT ss_NestCount;
    struct MinList ss_WaitQueue;
    struct SemaphoreRequest ss_MultipleLink;
    struct Task *ss_Owner;
    SHORT ss_QueueCount;
};
```

ss\_Link

is the node structure used to link semaphores together. The ln\_Pri and ln\_Name fields are used to set the priority of the semaphore in a list and to name the semaphore for public access. If a semaphore is not public the ln\_Name and ln\_Pri fields may be left NULL.

ss\_NestCount

is the count of number of locks the current owner has on the

semaphore.

`ss_WaitQueue`  
is the List header for the list of other tasks waiting for this semaphore.

`ss_MultipleLink`  
is the SemaphoreRequest used by `ObtainSemaphoreList()`.

`ss_Owner`  
is the pointer to the current owning task.

`ss_QueueCount`  
is the number of other tasks waiting for the semaphore.

A practical application of a SignalSemaphore would be to use it as the base of a shared data structure. For example:

```
struct SharedList {
    struct SignalSemaphore sl_Semaphore;
    struct MinList        sl_List;
};
```

Creating a SignalSemaphore Structure  
Making a SignalSemaphore Available to the Public  
Obtaining a SignalSemaphore Exclusively  
Obtaining a Shared SignalSemaphore  
Checking a SignalSemaphore  
Releasing a SignalSemaphore  
Removing a SignalSemaphore Structure

## 1.4 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Creating a SignalSemaphore Structure

To initialize a SignalSemaphore structure use the `InitSemaphore()` function. This function initializes the list structure and the nesting and queue counters. It does not change the semaphore's name or priority fields.

This fragment creates and initializes a semaphore for a data item such as the SharedList structure above.

```
struct SharedList *slist;

if (slist=(struct SharedList *)
    AllocMem(sizeof(struct SharedList),MEMF_PUBLIC|MEMF_CLEAR))
{
    NewList(&slist->sl_List);          /* Initialize the MinList      */
    InitSemaphore((struct SignalSemaphore *)slist);
                                     /* And initialize the semaphore */

    /* The semaphore can now be used. */
}
else printf("Can't allocate structure\n");
```

## 1.5 25 /// Making a SignalSemaphore Available to the Public

A semaphore should be used internally in your program if it has more than one task operating on shared data structures. There may also be cases when you wish to make a data item public to other applications but still need to restrict its access via semaphores. In that case, you would give your semaphore a unique name and add it to the public SignalSemaphore list maintained by Exec. The AddSemaphore() function does this for you. This works in a manner similar to AddPort() for message ports.

To create and initialize a public semaphore for a data item and add it to the public semaphore list maintained by Exec, the following function should be used. (This will prevent the semaphore from being added or removed more than once by separate programs that use the semaphore).

```

UBYTE *name;    /* name of semaphore to add */
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;

Forbid();
/* Make sure the semaphore name is unique */
if (!FindSemaphore(name)) {
    /* Allocate memory for the structure */
    if (sema=(struct SignalSemaphore *)
        AllocMem(sizeof(struct SignalSemaphore),MEMF_PUBLIC|MEMF_CLEAR))
    {
        sema->ss_Link.ln_Pri=0;          /* Set the priority to zero */
        sema->ss_Link.ln_Name=name;
        /* Note that the string 'name' is not copied. If that is
        /* needed, allocate memory for it and copy the string. And
        /* add the semaphore the the system list
        AddSemaphore(semaphore);
    }
}
Permit();

```

A value of NULL for semaphore means that the semaphore already exists or that there was not enough free memory to create it.

Before using the data item or other resource which is protected by a semaphore, you must first obtain the semaphore. Depending on your needs, you can get either exclusive or shared access to the semaphore.

## 1.6 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Obtaining a SignalSemaphore Exclusively

The ObtainSemaphore() function can be used to get an exclusive lock on a semaphore. If another task currently has an exclusive or shared lock(s) on the semaphore, your task will be put to sleep until all locks on the the semaphore are released.

Semaphore Nesting.

-----  
SignalSemaphores have nesting. That is, if your task already owns the semaphore, it will get a second ownership of that semaphore. This simplifies the writing of routines that must own the semaphore

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but do not know if the caller has obtained it yet.

To obtain a semaphore use:

```
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;  
ObtainSemaphore(semaphore);
```

To get an exclusive lock on a public semaphore, the following code should be used:

```
UBYTE *name;  
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;  
  
Forbid(); /* Make sure the semaphore will not go away if found. */  
if (semaphore=FindSemaphore(name))  
    ObtainSemaphore(semaphore);  
Permit();
```

The value of semaphore is NULL if the semaphore does not exist. This is only needed if the semaphore has a chance of going away at any time (i.e., the semaphore is public and might be removed by some other program). If there is a guarantee that the semaphore will not disappear, the semaphore address could be cached, and all that would be needed is a call to the ObtainSemaphore() function.

## 1.7 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Obtaining a Shared SignalSemaphore

For read-only purposes, multiple tasks may have a shared lock on a signal semaphore. If a semaphore is already exclusively locked, all attempts to obtain the semaphore shared will be blocked until the exclusive lock is released. At that point, all shared locks will be obtained and the calling tasks will wake up.

To obtain a shared semaphore, use:

```
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;  
ObtainSemaphoreShared(semaphore);
```

To obtain a public shared semaphore, the following code should be used:

```
UBYTE *name;  
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;  
  
Forbid();  
if (semaphore = FindSemaphore(name))  
    ObtainSemaphoreShared(semaphore);  
Permit();
```

## 1.8 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Checking a SignalSemaphore

When you attempt to obtain a semaphore with ObtainSemaphore(), your task will be put to sleep if the semaphore is not currently available. If you

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do not want to wait, you can call `AttemptSemaphore()` instead. If the semaphore is available for exclusive locking, `AttemptSemaphore()` obtains it for you and returns `TRUE`. If it is not available, the function returns `FALSE` immediately instead of waiting for the semaphore to be released.

To attempt to obtain a semaphore, use the following:

```
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;
AttemptSemaphore(semaphore);
```

To make an attempt to obtain a public semaphore, the following code should be used:

```
UBYTE *name;
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;

Forbid();
if (semaphore = FindSemaphore(name)) AttemptSemaphore(semaphore);
Permit();
```

## 1.9 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Releasing a SignalSemaphore

Once you have obtained the semaphore and completed any operations on the semaphore protected object, you should release the semaphore. The `ReleaseSemaphore()` function does this. For each successful `ObtainSemaphore()`, `ObtainSemaphoreShared()` and `AttemptSemaphore()` call you make, you must have a matching `ReleaseSemaphore()` call.

## 1.10 25 // The Signal Semaphore / Removing a SignalSemaphore Structure

Semaphore resources can only be freed if the semaphore is not locked. A public semaphore should first be removed from the system semaphore list with the `RemSemaphore()` function. This prevents other tasks from finding the semaphore and trying to lock it. Once the semaphore is removed from the system list, the semaphore should be locked exclusively so no other task can lock it. Once the lock is obtained, it can be released again, and the resources can be deallocated.

The following code should be used to remove a public semaphore:

```
UBYTE *name;
struct SignalSemaphore *semaphore;

Forbid();
if (semaphore=FindSemaphore(name))
{
    RemSemaphore(semaphore);          /* So no one else can find it... */
    ObtainSemaphore(semaphore);       /* Wait for us to be last user...*/
    ReleaseSemaphore(semaphore);      /* Ready for cleanup...          */
}
FreeMem(semaphore, sizeof(struct SignalSemaphore));
Permit();
```

## 1.11 25 / Semaphore Functions / Multiple Semaphores

The semaphore system has the ability to ask for ownership of a complete list of semaphores. This can help prevent deadlocks when there are two or more tasks trying to get the same set of semaphores. If task A gets semaphore 1 and tries to obtain semaphore 2 after task B has obtained semaphore 2 but before task B tries to obtain semaphore 1 then both tasks will hang. Exec provides `ObtainSemaphoreList()` and `ReleaseSemaphoreList()` to prevent this problem.

A semaphore list is a list header to a list that contains `SignalSemaphore` structures. The semaphore list must not contain any public semaphores. This is because the semaphore list functions use the standard node structures in the semaphore.

To arbitrate access to a semaphore list use another semaphore. Create a public semaphore and use it to arbitrate access to the list header of the semaphore list. This also gives you a locking semaphore, protecting the `ObtainSemaphoreList()` call. Once you have gained access to the list with `ObtainSemaphoreList()`, you may obtain all the semaphores on the list via `ObtainSemaphoreList()` (or get individual semaphores with `ObtainSemaphore()`). When you are finished with the protected objects, release the semaphores on the list with `ReleaseSemaphoreList()`, and then release the list semaphore via `ReleaseSemaphore()`.

For example:

```
ObtainSemaphore((struct SignalSemaphore *)SemaphoreList);
ObtainSemaphoreList(SemaphoreList->sl_List);

/* At this point the objects are protected, and can be manipulated */

ReleaseSemaphoreList(SemaphoreList->sl_List);
ReleaseSemaphore((struct SignalSemaphore *)SemaphoreList);
```

See the `SharedList` structure above for an example of a semaphore structure with a list header.

## 1.12 25 Exec Semaphores / Function Reference

The following charts give a brief description of the Exec semaphore functions. See the *Amiga ROM Kernel Reference Manual: Includes and Autodocs* for details about each call.

Table 25-1: Exec Semaphore Functions

Exec Semaphore Function	Description
<code>AddSemaphore()</code>	Initialize and add a signal semaphore to the system.
<code>AttemptSemaphore()</code>	Try to get an exclusive lock on a signal semaphore without blocking.

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	FindSemaphore()	Find a given system signal semaphore.	
	InitSemaphore()	Initialize a signal semaphore.	
	ObtainSemaphore()	Try to get exclusive access to a signal semaphore.	
	ObtainSemaphoreList()	Try to get exclusive access to a list of signal semaphores.	
	ObtainSemaphoreShared()	Try to get shared access to a signal semaphore (V36).	
	ReleaseSemaphore()	Release the lock on a signal semaphore.	
	ReleaseSemaphoreList()	Release the locks on a list of signal semaphores.	
	RemSemaphore()	Remove a signal semaphore from the system.	

---