IEEE STANDARDS ASSOCIATION

IEEE Standard for
Local and metropolitan area networks—

Media Access Control (MAC) Security

IEEE Computer Society

Sponsored by the
LAN/MAN Standards Committee

IEEE
3 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016-5997
USA

IEEE Std 802.1AE™-2018
(Revision of IEEE Std 802.1AE-2006)

IEEE Std 802.1AE™-2018
(Revision of IEEE Std 802.1AE-2006)

IEEE Standard for
Local and metropolitan area networks—

Media Access Control (MAC) Security

Sponsor

LAN/MAN Standards Committee
of the
IEEE Computer Society

Approved 27 September 2018

IEEE-SA Standards Board

Abstract: How all or part of a network can be secured transparently to peer protocol entities that use the MAC Service provided by IEEE 802® LANs to communicate is specified in this standard. MAC security (MACsec) provides connectionless user data confidentiality, frame data integrity, and data origin authenticity.

Keywords: authorized port, confidentiality, data origin authenticity, IEEE 802.1AE™, IEEE 802.1AEbn™, IEEE 802.1AEbw™, IEEE 802.1AEcg™, integrity, LANs, local area networks, MAC Bridges, MAC security, MAC Service, MANs, metropolitan area networks, port-based network access control, secure association, security, transparent bridging

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.
3 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016-5997, USA

PDF: ISBN 978-1-5044-5215-1 STD23339
Print: ISBN 978-1-5044-5216-8 STDPD23339

Important Notices and Disclaimers Concerning IEEE Standards Documents

IEEE documents are made available for use subject to important notices and legal disclaimers. These notices and disclaimers, or a reference to this page, appear in all standards and may be found under the heading "Important Notices and Disclaimers Concerning IEEE Standards Documents." They can also be obtained on request from IEEE or viewed at http://standards.ieee.org/IPR/disclaimers.html.

Notice and Disclaimer of Liability Concerning the Use of IEEE Standards Documents

IEEE Standards documents (standards, recommended practices, and guides), both full-use and trial-use, are developed within IEEE Societies and the Standards Coordinating Committees of the IEEE Standards Association ("IEEE-SA") Standards Board. IEEE ("the Institute") develops its standards through a consensus development process, approved by the American National Standards Institute ("ANSI"), which brings together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve the final product. IEEE Standards are documents developed through scientific, academic, and industry-based technical working groups. Volunteers in IEEE working groups are not necessarily members of the Institute and participate without compensation from IEEE. While IEEE administers the process and establishes rules to promote fairness in the consensus development process, IEEE does not independently evaluate, test, or verify the accuracy of any of the information or the soundness of any judgments contained in its standards.

IEEE Standards do not guarantee or ensure safety, security, health, or environmental protection, or ensure against interference with or from other devices or networks. Implementers and users of IEEE Standards documents are responsible for determining and complying with all appropriate safety, security, environmental, health, and interference protection practices and all applicable laws and regulations.

IEEE does not warrant or represent the accuracy or content of the material contained in its standards, and expressly disclaims all warranties (express, implied and statutory) not included in this or any other document relating to the standard, including, but not limited to, the warranties of: merchantability; fitness for a particular purpose; non-infringement; and quality, accuracy, effectiveness, currency, or completeness of material. In addition, IEEE disclaims any and all conditions relating to: results; and workmanlike effort. IEEE standards documents are supplied "AS IS" and "WITH ALL FAULTS."

Use of an IEEE standard is wholly voluntary. The existence of an IEEE standard does not imply that there are no other ways to produce, test, measure, purchase, market, or provide other goods and services related to the scope of the IEEE standard. Furthermore, the viewpoint expressed at the time a standard is approved and issued is subject to change brought about through developments in the state of the art and comments received from users of the standard.

In publishing and making its standards available, IEEE is not suggesting or rendering professional or other services for, or on behalf of, any person or entity nor is IEEE undertaking to perform any duty owed by any other person or entity to another. Any person utilizing any IEEE Standards document, should rely upon his or her own independent judgment in the exercise of reasonable care in any given circumstances or, as appropriate, seek the advice of a competent professional in determining the appropriateness of a given IEEE standard.

IN NO EVENT SHALL IEEE BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: PROCUREMENT OF SUBSTITUTE GOODS OR SERVICES; LOSS OF USE, DATA, OR PROFITS; OR BUSINESS INTERRUPTION) HOWEVER CAUSED AND ON ANY THEORY OF LIABILITY, WHETHER IN CONTRACT, STRICT LIABILITY, OR TORT (INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE) ARISING IN ANY WAY OUT OF THE PUBLICATION, USE OF, OR RELIANCE UPON ANY STANDARD, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SUCH DAMAGE WAS FORESEEABLE.

Translations

The IEEE consensus development process involves the review of documents in English only. In the event that an IEEE standard is translated, only the English version published by IEEE should be considered the approved IEEE standard.

Official statements

A statement, written or oral, that is not processed in accordance with the IEEE-SA Standards Board Operations Manual shall not be considered or inferred to be the official position of IEEE or any of its committees and shall not be considered to be, or be relied upon as, a formal position of IEEE. At lectures, symposia, seminars, or educational courses, an individual presenting information on IEEE standards shall make it clear that his or her views should be considered the personal views of that individual rather than the formal position of IEEE.

Comments on standards

Comments for revision of IEEE Standards documents are welcome from any interested party, regardless of membership affiliation with IEEE. However, IEEE does not provide consulting information or advice pertaining to IEEE Standards documents. Suggestions for changes in documents should be in the form of a proposed change of text, together with appropriate supporting comments. Since IEEE standards represent a consensus of concerned interests, it is important that any responses to comments and questions also receive the concurrence of a balance of interests. For this reason, IEEE and the members of its societies and Standards Coordinating Committees are not able to provide an instant response to comments or questions except in those cases where the matter has previously been addressed. For the same reason, IEEE does not respond to interpretation requests. Any person who would like to participate in revisions to an IEEE standard is welcome to join the relevant IEEE working group.

Comments on standards should be submitted to the following address:

Secretary, IEEE-SA Standards Board
445 Hoes Lane
Piscataway, NJ 08854 USA

Laws and regulations

Users of IEEE Standards documents should consult all applicable laws and regulations. Compliance with the provisions of any IEEE Standards document does not imply compliance to any applicable regulatory requirements. Implementers of the standard are responsible for observing or referring to the applicable regulatory requirements. IEEE does not, by the publication of its standards, intend to urge action that is not in compliance with applicable laws, and these documents may not be construed as doing so.

Copyrights

Photocopies

Updating of IEEE Standards documents

Users of IEEE Standards documents should be aware that these documents may be superseded at any time by the issuance of new editions or may be amended from time to time through the issuance of amendments, corrigenda, or errata. An official IEEE document at any point in time consists of the current edition of the document together with any amendments, corrigenda, or errata then in effect.

Every IEEE standard is subjected to review at least every ten years. When a document is more than ten years old and has not undergone a revision process, it is reasonable to conclude that its contents, although still of some value, do not wholly reflect the present state of the art. Users are cautioned to check to determine that they have the latest edition of any IEEE standard.

In order to determine whether a given document is the current edition and whether it has been amended through the issuance of amendments, corrigenda, or errata, visit the IEEE-SA Website at http://ieeexplore.ieee.org or contact IEEE at the address listed previously. For more information about the IEEE SA or IEEE's standards development process, visit the IEEE-SA Website at http://standards.ieee.org.

Errata

Errata, if any, for all IEEE standards can be accessed on the IEEE-SA Website at the following URL: http://standards.ieee.org/findstds/errata/index.html. Users are encouraged to check this URL for errata periodically.

Patents

Attention is called to the possibility that implementation of this standard may require use of subject matter covered by patent rights. By publication of this standard, no position is taken by the IEEE with respect to the existence or validity of any patent rights in connection therewith. If a patent holder or patent applicant has filed a statement of assurance via an Accepted Letter of Assurance, then the statement is listed on the IEEE-SA Website at http://standards.ieee.org/about/sasb/patcom/patents.html. Letters of Assurance may indicate whether the Submitter is willing or unwilling to grant licenses under patent rights without compensation or under reasonable rates, with reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination to applicants desiring to obtain such licenses.

Essential Patent Claims may exist for which a Letter of Assurance has not been received. The IEEE is not responsible for identifying Essential Patent Claims for which a license may be required, for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of Patents Claims, or determining whether any licensing terms or conditions provided in connection with submission of a Letter of Assurance, if any, or in any licensing agreements are reasonable or non-discriminatory. Users of this standard are expressly advised that determination of the validity of any patent rights, and the risk of infringement of such rights, is entirely their own responsibility. Further information may be obtained from the IEEE Standards Association.

Participants

At the time this standard was submitted to the IEEE-SA Standards Board for approval, the IEEE 802.1 Working Group had the following membership:

Glenn Parsons, *Chair*
John Messenger, *Vice Chair*
Mick Seaman, *Security Task Group Chair, Editor*

SeoYoung Baek
Shenghua Bao
Jens Bierschenk
Steinar Bjornstad
Christian Boiger
Paul Bottorff
David Chen
Feng Chen
Weiying Cheng
Rodney Cummings
János Farkas
Norman Finn
Geoffrey Garner
Eric W. Gray
Craig Gunther
Marina Gutierrez
Stephen Haddock
Mark Hantel
Patrick Heffernan
Marc Holness
Lu Huang
Tony Jeffree
Michael Johas Teener
Hal Keen
Stephan Kehrer
Philippe Klein
Jouni Korhonen
Yizhou Li
Christophe Mangin
Tom McBeath
James McIntosh
Tero Mustala
Hiroki Nakano
Bob Noseworthy
Donald R. Pannell
Walter Pienciak
Michael Potts
Karen Randall
Maximilian Riegel
Dan Romascanu
Jessy V. Rouyer
Eero Ryytty
Soheil Samii
Behcet Sarikaya
Frank Schewe
Johannes Specht
Wilfried Steiner
Patricia Thaler
Paul Unbehagen
Hao Wang
Karl Weber
Brian Weis
Jordon Woods
Nader Zein
Helge Zinner
Juan Carlos Zuniga

The following members of the individual balloting committee voted on this standard. Balloters may have voted for approval, disapproval, or abstention.

Thomas Alexander
Richard Alfvin
Amelia Andersdotter
Butch Anton
Harry Bims
Demetrio Bucaneg
Stephen Bush
William Byrd
Radhakrishna Canchi
Steven Carlson
Keith Chow
Charles Cook
Richard Doyle
János Farkas
Norman Finn
Michael Fischer
Yukihiro Fujimoto
Randall Groves
Qiang Guo
Stephen Haddock
Marco Hernandez
Werner Hoelzl
Russell Housley
Yasuhiro Hyakutake
Noriyuki Ikeuchi
Atsushi Ito
Raj Jain
Sangkwon Jeong
Piotr Karocki
Stuart Kerry
Yongbum Kim
Hyeong Ho Lee
Suzanne Leicht
Jon Lewis
Elvis Maculuba
Ignacio Marin Garcia
Brett McClellan
Richard Mellitz
John Messenger
Michael Montemurro
Rick Murphy
Nick S. A. Nikjoo
Satoshi Obara
Robert O'hara
Bansi Patel
Clinton Powell
Adee Ran
Karen Randall
R. K. Rannow
Alon Regev
Maximilian Riegel
Robert Robinson
Benjamin Rolfe
Jessy V. Rouyer
Richard Roy
Naotaka Sato
Mick Seaman
Thomas Starai
Walter Struppler
Jasja Tijink
Mark-Rene Uchida
Dmitri Varsanofiev
George Vlantis
Lisa Ward
Stephen Webb
Karl Weber
Chun Yu Charles Wong
Oren Yuen

When the IEEE-SA Standards Board approved this standard on 27 September 2018, it had the following membership:

Jean-Philippe Faure, *Chair*
Gary Hoffman, *Vice Chair*
John D. Kulick, *Past Chair*
Konstantinos Karachalios, *Secretary*

Ted Burse
Guido R. Hiertz
Christel Hunter
Joseph L. Koepfinger*
Thomas Koshy
Hung Ling
Dong Liu
Xiaohui Liu
Kevin Lu
Daleep Mohla
Andrew Myles
Paul Nikolich
Ronald C. Petersen
Annette D. Reilly
Robby Robson
Dorothy Stanley
Mehmet Ulema
Phil Wennblom
Philip Winston
Howard Wolfman
Jingyi Zhou

*Member Emeritus

Introduction

This introduction is not part of IEEE Std 802.1AE-2018, IEEE Standard for Local and metropolitan area networks—Media Access Control (MAC) Security.

The first edition of IEEE Std 802.1AE was published in 2006. The first amendment, IEEE Std 802.1AEbn™-2011, added the option of using the GCM-AES-256 Cipher Suite. The second, IEEE Std 802.1AEbw™-2013, added the GCM-AES-XPN-128 and GCM-AES-XPN-256 Cipher Suites. These extended packet numbering Cipher Suites allow more than 2^{32} frames to be protected with a single Secure Association Key (SAK) and so ease the timeliness requirements on key agreement protocols for very high speed (100 Gb/s plus) operation. The third amendment, IEEE Std 802.1AEcg™-2017, specified Ethernet Data Encryption devices (EDEs) that provide transparent secure connectivity while supporting provider network service selection and provider backbone network selection as specified in IEEE Std 802.1Q™.

This revision, IEEE Std 802.1AE-2018, incorporates the text of IEEE Std 802.1AE-2006 and amendments IEEE Std 802.1AEbn-2011, IEEE Std 802.1AEbw-2013, and IEEE Std 802.1AEcg-2017.

Relationship between IEEE Std 802.1AE and other IEEE 802® standards

IEEE Std 802.1X™-2010 specifies Port-based Network Access Control, provides a means of authenticating and authorizing devices attached to a Local Area Network (LAN), and includes the MACsec Key Agreement protocol (MKA) necessary to make use of IEEE Std 802.1AE.

IEEE Std 802.1AE is not intended for use with IEEE Std 802.11™. That standard also uses IEEE Std 802.1X, thus facilitating the use of a common authentication and authorization framework for LAN media to which this standard applies and for Wireless LANs.

Contents

Figures

Tables

IEEE Standard for
Local and metropolitan area networks—

Media Access Control (MAC) Security

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

IEEE 802® Local Area Networks (LANs) are often deployed in networks that support mission-critical applications. These include corporate networks of considerable extent, and public networks that support many customers with different economic interests. The protocols that configure, manage, and regulate access to these networks typically run over the networks themselves. Preventing disruption and data loss arising from transmission and reception by unauthorized parties is highly desirable, since it is not practical to secure the entire network against physical access by determined attackers.

MAC Security (MACsec), as defined by this standard, allows authorized systems that attach to and interconnect LANs in a network to maintain confidentiality of transmitted data and to take measures against frames transmitted or modified by unauthorized devices.

MACsec facilitates

a) Maintenance of correct network connectivity and services
b) Isolation of denial of service attacks
c) Localization of any source of network communication to the LAN of origin
d) The construction of public networks, offering service to unrelated or possibly mutually suspicious customers, using shared LAN infrastructures
e) Secure communication between organizations, using a LAN for transmission
f) Incremental and non-disruptive deployment, protecting the most vulnerable network components.

To deliver these benefits, MACsec has to be used in conjunction with appropriate policies for higher-level protocol operation in networked systems, an authentication and authorization framework, and network management. IEEE Std 802.1X™ provides authentication and cryptographic key distribution.[1]

MACsec protects communication between trusted components of the network infrastructure, thus protecting the network operation. MACsec cannot protect against attacks facilitated by the trusted components themselves, and is complementary to, rather than a replacement for, end-to-end application-to-application

[1] Information on other references can be found in Clause 2.

security protocols. The latter can secure application data independent of network operation, but cannot necessarily defend the operation of network components, or prevent attacks using unauthorized communication from reaching the systems that operate the applications.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this standard is to specify provision of connectionless user data confidentiality, frame data integrity, and data origin authenticity by media access independent protocols and entities that operate transparently to MAC Clients.

NOTE—The MAC Clients are as specified in IEEE Std 802®, IEEE Std 802.1Q™, and IEEE Std 802.1X.[2]

To this end, it

a) Specifies the requirements to be satisfied by equipment claiming conformance to this standard.
b) Specifies the requirements for MACsec in terms of provision of the MAC Service and the preservation of the semantics and parameters of service requests and indications.
c) Describes the threats, both intentional and accidental, to correct provision of the service.
d) Specifies security services that prevent, or restrict, the effect of attacks that exploit these threats.
e) Examines the potential impact of both the threats and the use of MACsec on the Quality of Service (QoS), specifying constraints on the design and operation of MAC Security entities and protocols.
f) Models support of the secure MAC Service in terms of the operation of media access control method independent MAC Security Entities (SecYs) within the MAC Sublayer.
g) Specifies the format of the MACsec Protocol Data Unit (MPDUs) used to provide secure service.
h) Identifies the functions to be performed by each SecY, and provides an architectural model of its internal operation in terms of Processes and Entities that provide those functions.
i) Specifies each SecY's use of an associated and collocated Port Access Entity (PAE, IEEE Std 802.1X) to discover and authenticate MACsec protocol peers and its use of that PAE's Key Agreement Entity (KaY) to agree and update cryptographic keys.
j) Specifies performance requirements and recommends default values and applicable ranges for the operational parameters of a SecY.
k) Specifies how SecYs are incorporated within the architecture of end stations, bridges, and two-port Ethernet Data Encryption devices (EDEs).
l) Establishes the requirements for management of MAC Security, identifying the managed objects and defining the management operations for SecYs.
m) Specifies the Management Information Base (MIB) module for managing the operation of MAC Security in TCP/IP networks.
n) Specifies requirements, criteria, and choices of Cipher Suites for use with this standard.

[2] Notes in text, tables, and figures are given for information only and do not contain requirements needed to implement the standard.