How ONTAP controls access to files

ONTAP 9

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How ONTAP controls access to files

How ONTAP controls access to files overview

ONTAP controls access to files according to the authentication-based and file-based restrictions that you specify.

When a client connects to the storage system to access files, ONTAP has to perform two tasks:

- Authentication

  ONTAP has to authenticate the client by verifying the identity with a trusted source. In addition, the authentication type of the client is one method that can be used to determine whether a client can access data when configuring export policies (optional for CIFS).

- Authorization

  ONTAP has to authorize the user by comparing the user's credentials with the permissions configured on the file or directory and determining what type of access, if any, to provide.

To properly manage file access control, ONTAP must communicate with external services such as NIS, LDAP, and Active Directory servers. Configuring a storage system for file access using CIFS or NFS requires setting up the appropriate services depending on your environment in ONTAP.

Authentication-based restrictions

With authentication-based restrictions, you can specify which client machines and which users can connect to the storage virtual machine (SVM).

ONTAP supports Kerberos authentication from both UNIX and Windows servers.

File-based restrictions

ONTAP evaluates three levels of security to determine whether an entity is authorized to perform a requested action on files and directories residing on an SVM. Access is determined by the effective permissions after evaluation of the three security levels.

Any storage object can contain up to three types of security layers:

- Export (NFS) and share (SMB) security

  Export and share security applies to client access to a given NFS export or SMB share. Users with administrative privileges can manage export and share-level security from SMB and NFS clients.

- Storage-Level Access Guard file and directory security

  Storage-Level Access Guard security applies to SMB and NFS client access to SVM volumes. Only NTFS access permissions are supported. For ONTAP to perform security checks on UNIX users for access to data on volumes for which Storage-Level Access Guard has been applied, the UNIX user must map to a Windows user on the SVM that owns the volume.

If you view the security settings on a file or directory from an NFS or SMB client, you will not see Storage-Level Access Guard security. Storage-Level Access Guard security cannot be revoked from a client, even by a system (Windows or UNIX) administrator.

- NTFS, UNIX, and NFSv4 native file-level security

  Native file-level security exists on the file or directory that represents the storage object. You can set file-level security from a client. File permissions are effective regardless of whether SMB or NFS is used to access the data.

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