Nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB

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Nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB

What nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB means

Nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB refers to the combination of capabilities that enable the application servers and the contained virtual machines or databases to remain online and to provide continuous availability during many administrative tasks. This includes both planned and unplanned downtime of the storage infrastructure.

Supported nondisruptive operations for application servers over SMB include the following:

- Planned takeover and giveback
- Unplanned takeover
- Upgrade
- Planned aggregate relocation (ARL)
- LIF migration and failover
- Planned volume move

Protocols that enable nondisruptive operations over SMB

Along with the release of SMB 3.0, Microsoft has released new protocols to provide the capabilities necessary to support nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB.

ONTAP uses these protocols when providing nondisruptive operations for application servers over SMB:

- SMB 3.0
- Witness

Key concepts about nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB

There are certain concepts about nondisruptive operations (NDOs) that you should understand before you configure your Hyper-V or SQL Server over SMB solution.

- **Continuously available share**

  An SMB 3.0 share that has the continuously available share property set. Clients connecting through continuously available shares can survive disruptive events such as takeover, giveback, and aggregate relocation.

- **Node**

A single controller that is a member of a cluster. To distinguish between the two nodes in an SFO pair, one node is sometimes called the *local node* and the other node is sometimes called the *partner node* or *remote node*. The primary owner of the storage is the local node. The secondary owner, which takes control of the storage when the primary owner fails, is the partner node. Each node is the primary owner of its storage and secondary owner for its partner's storage.

- **Nondisruptive aggregate relocation**

  The ability to move an aggregate between partner nodes within an SFO pair in a cluster without interrupting client applications.

- **Nondisruptive failover**

  See *Takeover*.

- **Nondisruptive LIF migration**

  The ability to perform a LIF migration without interrupting client applications that are connected to the cluster through that LIF. For SMB connections, this is only possible for clients that connect using SMB 2.0 or later.

- **Nondisruptive operations**

  The ability to perform major ONTAP management and upgrade operations as well as withstand node failures without interrupting client applications. This term refers to the collection of nondisruptive takeover, nondisruptive upgrade, and nondisruptive migration capabilities as a whole.

- **Nondisruptive upgrade**

  The ability to upgrade node hardware or software without application interruption.

- **Nondisruptive volume move**

  The ability to move a volume freely throughout the cluster without interrupting any applications that are using the volume. For SMB connections, all versions of SMB support nondisruptive volume moves.

- **Persistent handles**

  A property of SMB 3.0 that allows continuously available connections to transparently reconnect to the CIFS server in the event of a disconnection. Similar to durable handles, persistent handles are maintained by the CIFS server for a period of time after communication to the connecting client is lost. However, persistent handles have more resilience than durable handles. In addition to giving the client a chance to reclaim the handle within a 60-second window after reconnecting, the CIFS server denies access to any other clients requesting access to the file during that 60-second window.

  Information about persistent handles is mirrored on the SFO partner's persistent storage, which allows clients with disconnected persistent handles to reclaim the durable handles after an event where the SFO partner takes ownership of the node's storage. In addition to providing nondisruptive operations in the event of LIF moves (which durable handles support), persistent handles provide nondisruptive operations for takeover, giveback, and aggregate relocation.

- **SFO giveback**

  Returning aggregates to their home locations when recovering from a takeover event.

- **SFO pair**

  A pair of nodes whose controllers are configured to serve data for each other if one of the two nodes stops functioning. Depending on the system model, both controllers can be in a single chassis, or the controllers can be in separate chassis. Known as an HA pair in a two-node cluster.

- **Takeover**

  The process by which the partner takes control of the storage when the primary owner of that storage fails. In the context of SFO, failover and takeover are synonymous.

How SMB 3.0 functionality supports nondisruptive operations over SMB shares

SMB 3.0 provides crucial functionality that enables support for nondisruptive operations for Hyper-V and SQL Server over SMB shares. This includes the `continuously-available` share property and a type of file handle known as a *persistent handle* that allow SMB clients to reclaim file open state and transparently reestablish SMB connections.

Persistent handles can be granted to SMB 3.0 capable clients that connect to a share with the continuously available share property set. If the SMB session is disconnected, the CIFS server retains information about persistent handle state. The CIFS server blocks other client requests during the 60-second period in which the client is allowed to reconnect, thus allowing the client with the persistent handle to reclaim the handle after a network disconnection. Clients with persistent handles can reconnect by using one of the data LIFs on the storage virtual machine (SVM), either by reconnecting through the same LIF or through a different LIF.

Aggregate relocation, takeover, and giveback all occur between SFO pairs. To seamlessly manage the disconnection and reconnection of sessions with files that have persistent handles, the partner node maintains a copy of all persistent handle lock information. Whether the event is planned or unplanned, the SFO partner can nondisruptively manage the persistent handle reconnects. With this new functionality, SMB 3.0 connections to the CIFS server can transparently and nondisruptively fail over to another data LIF assigned to the SVM in what traditionally has been disruptive events.

Although the use of persistent handles allows the CIFS server to transparently fail over SMB 3.0 connections, if a failure causes the Hyper-V application to fail over to another node in the Windows Server cluster, the client has no way to reclaim the file handles of these disconnected handles. In this scenario, file handles in the disconnected state can potentially block access of the Hyper-V application if it is restarted on a different node. “Failover Clustering” is a part of SMB 3.0 that addresses this scenario by providing a mechanism to invalidate stale, conflicting handles. Using this mechanism, a Hyper-V cluster can recover quickly when Hyper-V cluster nodes fail.

What the Witness protocol does to enhance transparent failover

The Witness protocol provides enhanced client failover capabilities for SMB 3.0 continuously available shares (CA shares). Witness facilitates faster failover because it bypass the LIF failover recovery period. It notifies applications servers when a node is unavailable without needing to wait for the SMB 3.0 connection to time out.

The failover is seamless, with applications running on the client not being aware that a failover occurred. If Witness is not available, failover operations still occur successfully, but failover without Witness is less efficient.

Witness enhanced failover is possible when the following requirements are met:

- It can only be used with SMB 3.0-capable CIFS servers that have SMB 3.0 enabled.
- The shares must use SMB 3.0 with the continuous availability share property set.
- The SFO partner of the node to which the application servers are connected must have at least one operational data LIF assigned to the storage virtual machine (SVM) hosting data for the application servers.

> The Witness protocol operates between SFO pairs. Because LIFs can migrate to any node within the cluster, any node might need to be the witness for its SFO partner. The Witness protocol cannot provide rapid failover of SMB connections on a given node if the SVM hosting data for the application servers does not have an active data LIF on the partner node. Therefore, every node in the cluster must have at least one data LIF for each SVM hosting one of these configurations.

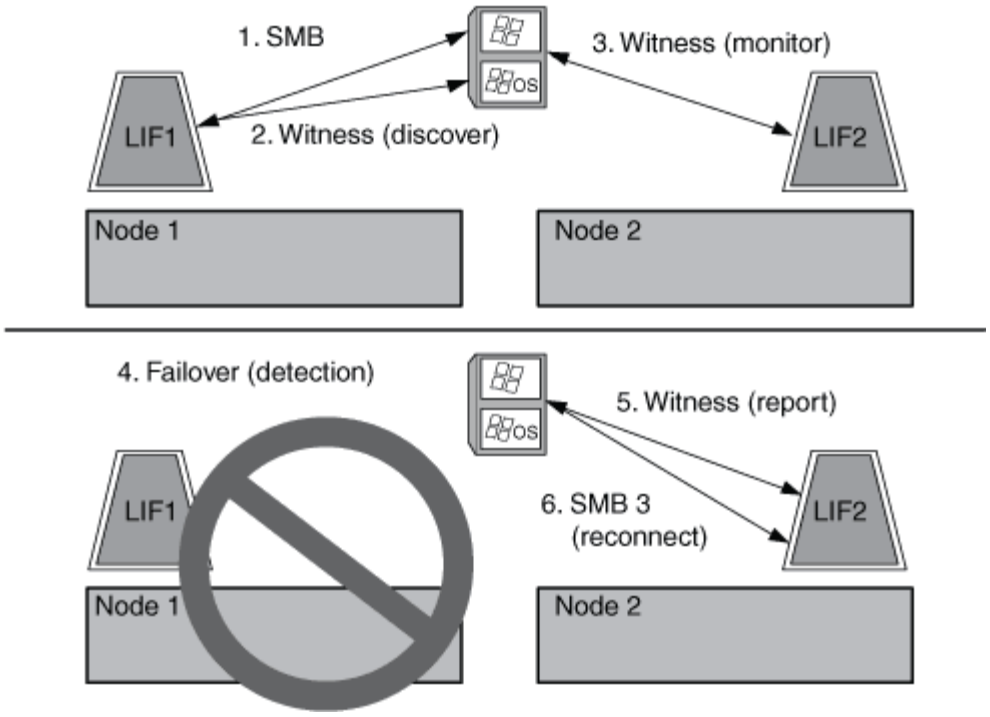
- The application servers must connect to the CIFS server by using the CIFS server name that is stored in DNS instead of by using individual LIF IP addresses.

How the Witness protocol works

ONTAP implements the Witness protocol by using a node's SFO partner as the witness. In the event of a failure, the partner quickly detects the failure and notifies the SMB client.

The Witness protocol provides enhanced failover using the following process:

1. When the application server establishes a continuously available SMB connection to Node1, the CIFS server informs the application server that Witness is available.
2. The application server requests the IP addresses of the Witness server from Node1 and receives a list of Node2 (the SFO partner) data LIF IP addresses assigned to the storage virtual machine (SVM).
3. The application server chooses one of the IP addresses, creates a Witness connection to Node2, and registers to be notified if the continuously available connection on Node1 must move.
4. If a failover event occurs on Node1, Witness facilitates failover events, but is not involved with giveback.
5. Witness detects the failover event and notifies the application server through the Witness connection that the SMB connection must move to Node2.
6. The application server moves the SMB session to Node2 and recovers the connection without interruption to client access.


1. SMB
3. Witness (monitor)
LIF1
2. Witness (discover)
LIF2
Node 1
Node 2
4. Failover (detection)
5. Witness (report)
LIF1
6. SMB 3
(reconnect)
LIF2
Node 1
Node 2

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