

SECURING WEB APPLICATION TECHNOLOGIES (SWAT) CHECKLIST

The SWAT Checklist provides an easy-to-reference set of best practices that raise awareness and help development teams create more secure applications. It's a first step toward building a base of security knowledge around web application security. Use this checklist to identify the minimum standard that is required to neutralize vulnerabilities in your critical applications.

Error Handling and Logging		
Best Practice	Description	CWE ID
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Display generic error messages	Error messages should not reveal details about the internal state of the application. For example, file system path and stack information should not be exposed to the user through error messages. For authentication errors, do not indicate that the username exists.	CWE-209
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No unhandled exceptions	Given the languages and frameworks in use for web application development, never allow an unhandled exception to occur. Error handlers should be configured to handle unexpected errors and gracefully return controlled output to the user.	CWE-391
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suppress framework-generated errors	Your development framework or platform may generate default error messages. These should be suppressed or replaced with customized error messages, as framework-generated messages may reveal sensitive information to the user.	CWE-209
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Log all authentication and validation activities	Log any authentication and session management activities along with all input validation failures. Any security-related events should be logged. These may be used to detect past or in-progress attacks.	CWE-778
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Log all privilege changes	Any activities or occasions where the user's privilege level changes should be logged.	CWE-778
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Log administrative activities	Any administrative activities on the application or any of its components should be logged.	CWE-778
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Log access to sensitive data	Any access to sensitive data should be logged. This is particularly important for corporations that have to meet regulatory requirements like HIPAA, PCI, or SOX.	CWE-778
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do not log inappropriate data	While logging errors and auditing access are important, sensitive data should never be logged in an unencrypted form. For example, under HIPAA and PCI, it would be a violation to log sensitive data into the log itself unless the log is encrypted on the disk. Additionally, it can create a serious exposure point should the web application itself become compromised.	CWE-532
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Store logs securely	Logs should be stored and maintained appropriately to avoid information loss or tampering by intruders. Log retention should also follow the retention policy set forth by the organization to meet regulatory requirements and provide enough information for forensic and incident response activities.	CWE-533

Data Protection		
Best Practice	Description	CWE ID
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use HTTPS everywhere	Use HTTPS for all network data transfer for your application. The benefit of encrypting the data is huge, as it can protect the confidentiality and integrity of the transferred data. HTTPS is a pre-requisite for HTTP2 and HTTP3 protocol which offers better security and performance amongst other benefits. EXAMPLE: ssllstrip	CWE-311 CWE-319 CWE-523
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use strong TLS configurations	TLS must be configured to the secure configurations that only support the recent versions of TLS, prefer the use of the strongest cipher suites and avoid the use of any weak ciphers. For example, SSL and TLS protocols prior to TLS 1.2 have known weaknesses and are not considered secure. Additionally, disable the cipher suites using RC4, DES or MD5 and prefer the ciphers that support Perfect Forward Secrecy. EXAMPLE: Qualys SSL Labs , testssl.sh , SSlyze , ssllscan	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use the Strict-Transport-Security header	The Strict-Transport-Security header ensures that the browser does not talk to the server over HTTP. This helps reduce the risk of HTTP downgrade attacks as implemented by the sslniff tool.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Store user passwords using a strong, iterative, salted hash	User passwords must be stored using secure hashing techniques with strong algorithms like PBKDF2, bcrypt, or SHA-512. Simply hashing the password a single time does not sufficiently protect the password. Use adaptive hashing (a work factor), combined with a randomly generated salt for each user to make the hash strong. EXAMPLE: https://haveibeenpwned.com	CWE-257
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Storing key material securely by using key management services	When keys or credentials are stored in your system they must be properly secured and only accessible to the appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis. The modern solution is to leverage a secret/key management solution. EXAMPLE: Hardware Security Modules (HSM) , AWS KMS , Azure Key Vault , GCP Cloud Key Management	CWE-320
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use valid HTTPS certificates from a reputable certificate authority	HTTPS certificates should be signed by a reputable certificate authority. The name on the certificate should match the FQDN of the website. The certificate itself should be valid and not expired. EXAMPLE: Let's Encrypt https://letsencrypt.org	CWE-324
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disable data caching using cache control headers and autocomplete	Browser data caching should be disabled using the cache control HTTP headers or meta tags within the HTML page. Additionally, sensitive input fields, such as the login form, should have the autocomplete attribute set to off in the HTML form to instruct the browser not to cache the credentials.	CWE-524
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encrypt sensitive data at rest	Encrypt sensitive or critical data before storage.	CWE-311 CWE-312
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limit the use and storage of sensitive data	Conduct an evaluation to ensure that sensitive data elements are not being unnecessarily transported or stored. Where possible, use tokenization to reduce data exposure risks.	


Authentication		
Best Practice	Description	CWE ID
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't hardcode credentials	Never allow credentials to be stored directly within the application code. While it can be convenient to test application code with hardcoded credentials during development, this significantly increases risk and should be avoided. Proper secrets management tools can provide proper encryption and credentials rotation to provide extra resiliency to attacks. EXAMPLE: Hardcoded passwords in networking devices https://www.us-cert.gov/control_systems/pdf/ICSA-12-243-01.pdf	CWE-798
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a strong password reset system	Password reset systems are often the weakest link in an application. These systems are often based on users answering personal questions to establish their identity and in turn reset the password. The system needs to be based on questions that are both hard to guess and brute force. Additionally, any password reset option must not reveal whether or not an account is valid, preventing username harvesting. EXAMPLE: Sarah Palin password hack https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Palin_email_hack	CWE-640
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement a strong password policy	A password policy should be created and implemented so that passwords meet specific strength criteria. EXAMPLE: https://pages.nist.gov/800-63-3/sp800-63-3.html	CWE-521
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement account lockout against brute-force attacks	Account lockout needs to be implemented to prevent brute-force attacks against both the authentication and password reset functionality. After several tries on a specific user account, the account should be locked for a period of time or until it is manually unlocked. Additionally, it is best to continue the same failure message indicating that the credentials are incorrect or the account is locked to prevent an attacker from harvesting usernames.	CWE-307
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't disclose too much information in error messages	Messages for authentication errors must be clear and, at the same time, be written so that sensitive information about the system is not disclosed. For example, error messages that reveal that the user ID is valid but that the corresponding password is incorrect confirm to an attacker that the account does exist on the system.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use secret management solution to store API keys/credentials	Modern web apps often require network resource access, necessitating authentication through application-provided credentials. Safely storing these credentials is a major challenge, as embedding them in the app's code is a well-known security risk. Secrets management solutions address this issue by allowing apps to request credentials on-demand, without the need for storing them on disk. EXAMPLE: AWS Secrets Manager , Hashicorp Vault	CWE-257
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applications and middleware should run with minimal privileges	If an application becomes compromised it is important that the application itself and any middleware services be configured to run with minimal privileges. For instance, while the application layer or business layer need the ability to read and write data to the underlying database, administrative credentials that grant access to other databases or tables should not be provided.	CWE-250

Session Management		
Best Practice	Description	CWE ID
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that session identifiers are sufficiently random	Session tokens must be generated by secure random functions and must be of sufficient length to withstand analysis and prediction.	CWE-6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regenerate session tokens	Session tokens should be regenerated when the user authenticates to the application and when the user privilege level changes. Additionally, should the encryption status change, the session token should always be regenerated.	CWE-384
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement an idle session timeout	When a user is not active, the application should automatically log the user out. Be aware that Ajax applications may make recurring calls to the application, effectively resetting the timeout counter automatically.	CWE-613
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement an absolute session timeout	Users should be logged out after an extensive amount of time (e.g., 4-8 hours) has passed since they logged in. This helps mitigate the risk of an attacker using a hijacked session.	CWE-613
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Destroy sessions at any sign of tampering	Unless the application requires multiple simultaneous sessions for a single user, implement features to detect session cloning attempts. Should any sign of session cloning be detected, the session should be destroyed, forcing the real user to reauthenticate.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invalidate the session after logout	When the user logs out of the application, the session and corresponding data on the server must be destroyed. This ensures that the session cannot be accidentally revived.	CWE-613
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Place a logout button on every page	The logout button or logout link should be easily accessible to users on every page after they have authenticated.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use secure cookie attributes	The session cookie should have the HttpOnly, Secure, and SameSite flags set. This ensures that the session ID will not be accessible to client-side scripts, will only be transmitted over HTTPS, and will only be sent with requests from the same site (mitigates CSRF).	CWE-79 CWE-614
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set the cookie domain and path correctly	The cookie domain and path scope should be set to the most restrictive settings for your application. Any wildcard domain scoped cookie must have a good justification for its existence.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use non-persistent cookies	If a cookie has the "Max-Age" or "Expires" attributes, the browser treats it as a persistent cookie and stores it to disk until the expiration time. Do not do this for session cookies.	

SEC540: Cloud Security and DevSecOps Automation

Web Applications are increasingly distributed. What used to be a complex monolithic application hosted on premise has become a distributed set of services incorporating on-premise legacy applications along with interfaces to cloud-hosted and cloud-native components. Because of this coupled with a lack of security knowledge, web applications are exposing sensitive corporate data. Security professionals are asked to provide validated and scalable solutions to secure this content in line with best industry practices using modern web application frameworks. Attending this class will not only raise awareness about common security flaws in modern web applications, but it will also teach students how to recognize and mitigate these flaws early and efficiently. **20 Hands-On Labs + Ctf**


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SEC522: Application Security: Securing Web Apps, APIs & Microservices

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Nine Key Cloud Security Concentrations

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Securing Web Application Technologies (SWAT) CHECKLIST

The most trusted source of cloud security training, certification, and research.

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NINE KEY CLOUD SECURITY CONCENTRATIONS



DevSecOps

CAPABILITY: CI/CD Security				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
CodeBuild CodePipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Azure DevOpsAzure Source Code RepositoriesAzure Branch PoliciesAzure Key Vault Secrets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cloud Build	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GitHub Branch ProtectionsGitHub ActionsGitHub SecretsGitHub Advanced SecurityGitLab Branch ProtectionsGitLab Auto DevOpsGitLab Vault Secrets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">gitsecretstrufflehoggitleaks
CAPABILITY: Infrastructure as Code				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	
AWS CloudFormation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Azure Resource ManagerBICEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cloud Resource Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">HashiCorp Terraform	
CAPABILITY: Configuration Management				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
AWS OpsWorks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Configuration Manager on AzureAzure AutomationAzure App Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GCP – Anthos Config Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AnsibleChefPuppet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SaltstackVagrantPackerinspecOPA
CAPABILITY: Content Delivery and Protection				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	
AWS CloudFront	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Azure Content Delivery Network (CDN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GCP Cloud CDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AkamaiCloudflare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fastly
CAPABILITY: Microservice Security				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	OPEN SOURCE	
API Gateway App Mesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">API ManagementOpen Service Mesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">API GatewayGKE Anthos Service Mesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">OPA	

Infrastructure Security

CAPABILITY: Cloud Security Posture Management		
AZURE	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
▪ Microsoft Defender for Cloud	▪ Palo Alto Prisma Cloud ▪ Palo Alto – Prisma CSPM ▪ Orca ▪ Wiz	▪ Cloud Custodian ▪ GCP Config Validator ▪ GCP Terraform Validator ▪ Prowler
CAPABILITY: Network Security		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ Virtual Private Cloud ▪ AWS Firewall Manager ▪ Network Access Control Lists ▪ Security Groups	▪ Virtual Network ▪ Azure Firewall Manager ▪ Network Security Groups	▪ Virtual Private Cloud ▪ GCP Firewall
CAPABILITY: Private Connectivity		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ AWS Direct Connect ▪ AWS PrivateLink	▪ Azure Express Route ▪ Azure Private Link	▪ Cloud InterConnect ▪ Private Service Connect
CAPABILITY: Private Endpoints		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ VPC Endpoints	▪ Network Service Endpoints	▪ VPC Service Controls
CAPABILITY: Remote Access		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ Session Manager ▪ VPN	▪ Serial Console ▪ VPN Gateway	▪ Cloud SSH ▪ Cloud VPN
CAPABILITY: DDoS Protection		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ AWS Shield	▪ Azure DDoS Protection	▪ Cloud Armor



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Identity and Access Management

CAPABILITY: Groups, Roles, Policies, Permissions			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
IAM IAM	▪ Microsoft Entra ID	▪ Cloud IAM ▪ Resource Manager	
CAPABILITY: Single Sign On (SSO)			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY
IAM Identity Center	▪ Microsoft Entra ID	▪ Cloud Identity	▪ Okta ▪ Ping ▪ Sailpoint ▪ Oracle IDCS
CAPABILITY: Service Accounts			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
Instance Profile	▪ Managed Identity ▪ Service Principals ▪ User-Based Service Accounts	▪ Service Account	
CAPABILITY: Customer IAM (CIAM)			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
Amazon Cognito User Pools	▪ Entra ID for Customers	▪ Cloud Identity for Customers and Partners ▪ Firebase Authentication ▪ Managed Service for Microsoft Active Directory	
CAPABILITY: Least Privilege			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
IAM Access Analyzer	▪ Azure RBAC	▪ Cloud IAM	

Security Architecture

CAPABILITY: Best Practices		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ AWS Well-Architected Framework	▪ Azure Well-Architected Framework	▪ Google Cloud Architecture Framework
CAPABILITY: Account Management		
AWS	AZURE	GCP
▪ AWS Organizations ▪ Service Control Policies ▪ Azure Bastion	▪ Azure Tenants ▪ Subscriptions ▪ Azure Policy	▪ Google Cloud Folders and Projects ▪ Organizational Policies
CAPABILITY: Hybrid Cloud		
AWS	AZURE	OPEN SOURCE
▪ AWS Outposts	▪ Azure Arc	▪ OpenStack

Threat Detection and Response

CAPABILITY: Logging & Monitoring				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	OPEN SOURCE	
▪ AWS CloudTrail ▪ Amazon CloudWatch	▪ Azure Monitor ▪ Azure Log Analytics Workspace ▪ Microsoft Sentinel	▪ GCP StackDriver	▪ Logstash ▪ OpenTelemetry ▪ fluentbit/ fluentd	
CAPABILITY: SIEM				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
▪ AWS SecurityHub	▪ Microsoft Sentinel	▪ Google Chronicle	▪ Splunk ▪ Exabeam ▪ LogRhythm	▪ AlienVault OSSIM ▪ SIEM Monster ▪ Wazuh
CAPABILITY: Network Flow				
AWS	AZURE	GCP		
▪ VPC Flow Logs	▪ NSG Flow Logs	▪ VPC Flow Logs ▪ Firewall Logging		
CAPABILITY: Threat Monitoring				
AWS	AZURE	GCP		
▪ GuardDuty ▪ Detective	▪ Microsoft Defender ▪ Microsoft Sentinel	▪ Security Command Center		
CAPABILITY: Vulnerability Scanning				
AWS	AZURE	GCP		
▪ Amazon Inspector	▪ Microsoft Defender for Cloud	▪ Web Security Scanner		
CAPABILITY: Security Cockpit				
AWS	AZURE	GCP		
▪ AWS Security Hub	▪ Microsoft Defender for Cloud	▪ Security Command Center		
CAPABILITY: Security Orchestration Automation & Response (SOAR)				
		AZURE	3RD PARTY	
		▪ Microsoft Sentinel	▪ Cortex XSOAR	

Governance

CAPABILITY: Best Practices				
AWS		AZURE	GCP	
AWS Cloud Adoption Framework		Azure Cloud Adoption Framework	GCP Cloud Adoption Framework	
CAPABILITY: Oversight				
AWS		AZURE	GCP	
Security Hub		Microsoft Defender for Cloud	Security Command Center	
CAPABILITY: Compliance				
AWS		AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY
AWS Audit Manager		Microsoft Defender for Cloud	Security Command Center	CIS Benchmarks
AWS Artifact				
AWS Config				
CAPABILITY: Asset Inventory				
AWS				
AWS Resource Explorer				
CAPABILITY: Data Residency				

Data Protection

CAPABILITY: Key Management			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ Key Management Service (KMS)	▪ Azure Key Vault	▪ Cloud Key Management Service (KMS)	
▪ Cloud HSM	▪ Azure Dedicated HSM	▪ Google Cloud HSM	
CAPABILITY: Secrets Management			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY
▪ AWS Secrets Manager	▪ Azure Key Vault	▪ Secret Manager	▪ HashiCorp Vault
▪ Parameter Store			
CAPABILITY: Encryption at Rest			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ AWS KMS	▪ Azure Key Vault	▪ Google Cloud KMS	
CAPABILITY: Encryption in Transit			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ AWS Certificate Manager	▪ Azure Key Vault	▪ Certificate Manager	
CAPABILITY: Certificate Management			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ AWS Certificate Manager	▪ Azure Key Vault	▪ Certificate Authority Service	
		▪ Certificate Manager	
CAPABILITY: Data Loss Prevention			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ Amazon Macie	▪ Microsoft Purview	▪ Cloud Data Loss Prevention	
CAPABILITY: Cloud Access Security Broker			
			AZURE
			▪ Microsoft Defender for Cloud Apps
CAPABILITY: Data Backup, Restore and Recovery			
AWS	AZURE	GCP	
▪ AWS Backup	▪ Azure Backup	▪ GCP Backup & Disaster Recovery	

Compute Security

CAPABILITY: Cloud Workload Protection Platform				
AZURE		3RD PARTY		
▪ Defender for Cloud		▪ Aqua Security ▪ Palo Alto Prisma Cloud		
CAPABILITY: Container Orchestration				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
▪ AWS Elastic Container Service ▪ AWS Elastic Kubernetes Service ▪ AWS Fargate	▪ Azure Kubernetes Service	▪ Google Kubernetes Engine	▪ Red Hat OpenShift	▪ Kubernetes
CAPABILITY: Serverless Security				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	OPEN SOURCE	
▪ AWS Lambda	▪ Azure Functions	▪ Cloud Functions	▪ Security-Guard	
CAPABILITY: Container Registry (CR)				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	
▪ Amazon Elastic CR	▪ Azure CR	▪ GCP CR	▪ DockerHub ▪ GitHub CR ▪ Gitlab CR	

Application Security

CAPABILITY: Static Application Security Testing				
>>> 3RD PARTY			OPEN SOURCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Veracode▪ Synopsys▪ Checkmarx▪ GitHub Advanced Security			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ semgrep▪ Betterscan▪ Horusec▪ Automated Security Helper	
CAPABILITY: Software Composition Analysis				
>>> 3RD PARTY			OPEN SOURCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Veracode▪ Synopsys▪ Checkmarx▪ GitHub SCA▪ Snyk			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ OWASP Dependency-Check▪ retire.js▪ OSS Review Toolkit	
CAPABILITY: Dynamic Application Security Testing				
>>> 3RD PARTY			OPEN SOURCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Veracode▪ Synopsys▪ Acunetix			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ZAP▪ w3af▪ Nuclei	
CAPABILITY: Web Application Firewall				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
▪ AWS WAF	▪ Azure WAF	▪ Cloud WAF	▪ Akamai ▪ Cloudflare	▪ ModSecurity ▪ Imperva
CAPABILITY: Web App and API Protection				
AWS	AZURE	GCP	3RD PARTY	OPEN SOURCE
API Gateway	▪ API Management ▪ Application Gateway	▪ Web App API Protection	▪ Akamai ▪ Cloudflare ▪ Imperva ▪ NoName ▪ Salt Security	▪ Curiefence
CAPABILITY: Runtime Application Self-Protection				
>>> 3RD PARTY			OPEN SOURCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Imperva▪ Signal Sciences▪ Contrast Security			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ OpenRASP	
CAPABILITY: Application Security Posture Management				
>>> 3RD PARTY				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Crowdstrike▪ Snyk▪ Synopsys				

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