

7 System Maintenance

Recommendations in this section are intended as maintenance and are intended to be checked on a frequent basis to ensure system stability. Many recommendations do not have quick remediations and require investigation into the cause and best fix available and may indicate an attempted breach of system security.

7.1 System File Permissions

This section provides guidance on securing aspects of system files and directories.

7.1.1 Ensure permissions on /etc/passwd are configured (Automated)

Profile Applicability:

- Level 1 - Server
- Level 1 - Workstation

Description:

The `/etc/passwd` file contains user account information that is used by many system utilities and therefore must be readable for these utilities to operate.

Rationale:

It is critical to ensure that the `/etc/passwd` file is protected from unauthorized write access. Although it is protected by default, the file permissions could be changed either inadvertently or through malicious actions.

Audit:

Run the following command to verify `/etc/passwd` is mode 644 or more restrictive, `Uid` is `0/root` and `Gid` is `0/root`:

```
# stat -Lc 'Access: (%#a/%A)  Uid: ( %u/ %U) Gid: ( %g/ %G)' /etc/passwd
Access: (0644/-rw-r--r--)  Uid: ( 0/ root) Gid: ( 0/ root)
```

Remediation:

Run the following commands to remove excess permissions, set owner, and set group on `/etc/passwd`:

```
# chmod u-x,go-wx /etc/passwd
# chown root:root /etc/passwd
```







Default Value:

Access: (0644/-rw-r--r--) Uid: (0/ root) Gid: (0/ root)

References:

1. NIST SP 800-53 Rev. 5: AC-3, MP-2

CIS Controls:

Controls Version	Control	IG 1	IG 2	IG 3
v8	3.3 <u>Configure Data Access Control Lists</u> Configure data access control lists based on a user's need to know. Apply data access control lists, also known as access permissions, to local and remote file systems, databases, and applications.			
v7	14.6 <u>Protect Information through Access Control Lists</u> Protect all information stored on systems with file system, network share, claims, application, or database specific access control lists. These controls will enforce the principle that only authorized individuals should have access to the information based on their need to access the information as a part of their responsibilities.			

MITRE ATT&CK Mappings:

Techniques / Sub-techniques	Tactics	Mitigations
T1003, T1003.008, T1222, T1222.002	TA0005	M1022

7.1.2 Ensure permissions on /etc/passwd- are configured (Automated)

Profile Applicability:

- Level 1 - Server
- Level 1 - Workstation

Description:

The `/etc/passwd-` file contains backup user account information.

Rationale:

It is critical to ensure that the `/etc/passwd-` file is protected from unauthorized access. Although it is protected by default, the file permissions could be changed either inadvertently or through malicious actions.

Audit:

Run the following command to verify `/etc/passwd-` is mode 644 or more restrictive, `Uid` is `0/root` and `Gid` is `0/root`:

```
# stat -Lc 'Access: (%#a/%A)  Uid: ( %u/ %U) Gid: { %g/ %G)' /etc/passwd-  
Access: (0644/-rw-r--r--)  Uid: ( 0/ root) Gid: { 0/ root)
```

Remediation:

Run the following commands to remove excess permissions, set owner, and set group on `/etc/passwd-`:

```
# chmod u-x,go-wx /etc/passwd-  
# chown root:root /etc/passwd-
```

Default Value:

Access: (0644/-rw-r--r--) Uid: (0/ root) Gid: { 0/ root)

References:

1. NIST SP 800-53 Rev. 5: AC-3, MP-2