Most Veeam backup plans use a combination of occasional full backups followed by a sequence of full increments and periodic synthetic fulls. For example, you might employ a four-week cycle that looks something like this:

- **Week 1:** A full backup on Friday, followed by daily forward increments Monday through Thursday
- **Week 2:** A synthetic full backup on Friday, followed by daily forward increments Monday through Thursday
- **Week 3:** A synthetic full backup on Friday, followed by daily forward increments Monday through Thursday
- **Week 4:** A synthetic full backup on Friday, followed by daily forward increments Monday through Thursday

At the end of this cycle, you'll have one full backup, three synthesized full backups, and 20 forward increments. This cycle results in 24 distinct recovery points from which you can restore data.

Veeam also offers a fifth type of backup type, called a *backup copy*. When you run a backup copy, an existing Veeam backup is copied to another location, creating a backup of your backup. Backup copy jobs are used to create off-site backups at a remote location or to cloud storage, and can also be used to create a tape backup.

Verifying Tape Reliability

Speaking of tape, from painful experience I've found that although tape drives are very reliable, they do run amok once in a while. The problem is that they don't always tell you when they're not working. A tape drive can spin along for hours, pretending to back up your data — but in reality, your data isn't being written reliably to the tape. In other words, a tape drive can trick you into thinking that your backups are working just fine. Then, when disaster strikes and you need your backup tapes, you may just discover that the tapes are worthless.


TIP

Don't panic! Here's a simple way to assure yourself that your tape drive is working. Just activate the "compare after backup" feature of your backup software. As soon as your backup program finishes backing up your data, it rewinds the tape, reads each backed-up file, and compares it with the original version on the hard drive. If all files compare, you know that your backups are trustworthy.