

# RFC-007: Threshold Signature Governance

**Status:** Implemented **Date:** January 2026 **Author:** Derrell Piper ddp@eludom.net **Implementation:** script.scm, cyberspace.scm

---

## Abstract

This RFC specifies the threshold signature system for Cyberspace governance, enabling K-of-N multi-party authorization for critical operations. Democracy in code: no single point of failure, no rogue administrator.

---

## Motivation

Critical operations require collective authorization:

- **Release signing:** Multiple maintainers must approve
- **Deployment:** Operations team quorum required
- **Key ceremonies:** Distributed trust for root keys
- **Emergency response:** Prevent unilateral action

Traditional approaches fail: - **Shared passwords:** Who has it? Who used it?  
- **Sudo access:** Root is root - **Approval workflows:** Soft controls, bypassable

Threshold signatures provide cryptographic enforcement:

**K valid signatures required. Not K-1. Not bypass. Mathematics.**

---

## Specification

### Tiered Signing Model

SIGNING TIERS		
Development	1-of-1	Single developer can iterate
Staging	2-of-2	Peer review required
Production	3-of-5	Governance council quorum
Emergency	5-of-7	Full council for critical ops

### Script Signature Record

```
(define-record-type <script-signature>
  (make-script-signature signer signature timestamp))
```

```

script-signature?
(signer signature-signer)      ; Ed25519 public key (32 bytes)
(signature signature-value)    ; Ed25519 signature (64 bytes)
(timestamp signature-timestamp) ; Unix epoch seconds

```

## Signing a Script

```

(define (sign-script script-content private-key #!optional public-key)
  "Sign script content with a private key"
  ...)

```

**Process:** 1. Convert content to blob if string 2. Derive public key from private (if not provided) 3. Sign content with Ed25519 4. Record timestamp 5. Return script-signature record

## Verifying Single Signature

```

(define (verify-script script-content signature-record)
  "Verify a script signature"
  (ed25519-verify (signature-signer signature-record)
                  content-blob
                  (signature-value signature-record)))

```

## Threshold Verification

```

(define (verify-threshold-script script-content signature-records threshold)
  "Verify threshold signatures on a script
  Returns: #t if at least K signatures are valid"
  (let* ((valid-sigs (filter (lambda (sig)
                              (verify-script script-content sig)
                              signature-records))
                             (valid-count (length valid-sigs)))
         (>= valid-count threshold)))

```

---

## Signature File Format

```

;; deploy.sig
(signature "hex-signature" "hex-pubkey" 1767685100)
(signature "hex-signature" "hex-pubkey" 1767685200)
(signature "hex-signature" "hex-pubkey" 1767685300)

```

Each entry contains: - Signature bytes (hex-encoded) - Signer public key (hex-encoded) - Timestamp (Unix epoch)

---

## CLI Interface

### cyberspace verify

```
$ cyberspace verify deploy.scm deploy.sig \  
  --threshold 3 \  
  --keys alice.pub bob.pub carol.pub dave.pub eve.pub
```

=== Cyberspace Script Verification ===

```
Script:      deploy.scm  
Signatures: deploy.sig  
Threshold:   3  
Keys:        5 provided
```

```
Found 3 signature(s) in file  
  Signature 1: ✓ VALID (signer: cbc9b260da65f6a7...)  
  Signature 2: ✓ VALID (signer: a5f8c9e3d2b1f0e4...)  
  Signature 3: ✓ VALID (signer: 7d3e8b2c1a0f5e4d...)
```

✓ SUCCESS: Script verified with 3-of-3 threshold

### cyberspace run

```
$ cyberspace run deploy.scm deploy.sig \  
  --threshold 3 \  
  --keys alice.pub bob.pub carol.pub dave.pub eve.pub
```

=== Cyberspace Script Verification ===

...

✓ SUCCESS: Script verified with 3-of-5 threshold

=== Executing Script ===

```
(seal-release "2.0.0"  
  message: "Major release with new governance model"  
  preserve: #t)
```

---

## Governance Scenarios

### Production Deployment (3-of-5)

```
;; Governance Council: Alice, Bob, Carol, Dave, Eve  
;; Threshold: 3 signatures required
```

```
(define deployment-script  
  "(seal-release \"2.0.0\""
```

```

    message: \"Major release\"
    preserve: #t)

;; Alice signs
(define sig-alice
  (sign-script deployment-script alice-private alice-public))

;; Carol signs
(define sig-carol
  (sign-script deployment-script carol-private carol-public))

;; Dave signs
(define sig-dave
  (sign-script deployment-script dave-private dave-public))

;; Verify threshold
(verify-threshold-script deployment-script
  (list sig-alice sig-carol sig-dave)
  3)

;; => #t

```

### Insufficient Signatures

```

;; Only 2 signatures
(define insufficient-sigs
  (list sig-alice sig-carol))

(verify-threshold-script deployment-script insufficient-sigs 3)
;; => #f (rejected: need 3, got 2)

```

### Tampered Script Detection

```

;; Attacker modifies script
(define tampered-script
  "(seal-release \"2.0.0\"
    message: \"HACKED - deploying malware\"
    preserve: #t)")

(verify-threshold-script tampered-script sufficient-sigs 3)
;; => #f (signatures don't match modified content)

```

---

## Multi-Signature vs Shamir

Two threshold approaches exist:

## Multi-Signature (This RFC)

Each party: own keypair  
Signing: each signs independently  
Verify: count valid signatures  $\geq K$   
Use case: governance, approvals

**Advantages:** - Each party maintains own key - Clear audit trail (who signed)  
- Simple revocation (by key) - No key reconstruction

## Shamir Splitting (RFC-008)

Single key: split into N shares  
Signing: K parties reconstruct, sign once  
Verify: single signature  
Use case: key backup, recovery

**Advantages:** - Single signature output - Key never fully assembled (in advanced schemes) - Smaller signature files

For governance, multi-signature is preferred: - Accountability (which individuals approved) - No reconstruction ceremony - Works asynchronously

---

## Security Considerations

### Threat Model

**Protected against:** - Single compromised key (need K) - Rogue administrator (need quorum) - Script tampering (signatures fail) - Replay of old scripts (timestamps, context)

**Not protected against:** - K compromised keys - All parties colluding - Side-channel on signing devices

### Key Management

1. **Generation:** Secure random via libsodium
2. **Storage:** Hardware tokens preferred, encrypted files acceptable
3. **Distribution:** Out-of-band verification of public keys
4. **Rotation:** New ceremony, revoke old keys

### Threshold Selection

Scenario	Threshold	Rationale
Development	1-of-1	Fast iteration
Staging	2-of-2	Peer review
Production	3-of-5	Majority quorum

---

Scenario	Threshold	Rationale
Root key	5-of-7	Supermajority
Emergency	N-of-N	Full consensus

---



---

## Audit Integration

Every verified execution records:

```
(audit-append
  actor: (threshold-verifier-list)
  action: (list 'script-execute script-hash)
  motivation: "Production deployment authorized"
  context: (list 'threshold 3 'signatures 3))
```

Audit trail shows: - Which signers authorized - What script was executed -  
When authorization occurred - Threshold requirements met

---

## Implementation Notes

### Dependencies

- crypto-ffi - Ed25519 operations
- cert - SPKI integration
- audit - Trail recording

### Performance

- Signature verification: ~10 s per Ed25519 verify
  - Threshold check:  $O(N)$  where  $N$  = signature count
  - No network round-trips (offline verification)
- 

## References

1. Boneh, D., et al. (2001). Short Signatures from the Weil Pairing.
  2. Gennaro, R., et al. (2016). Threshold-optimal DSA/ECDSA signatures.
  3. NIST SP 800-57. Recommendation for Key Management.
  4. RFC-004: SPKI Authorization Integration
-

## Changelog

- **2026-01-06** - Initial specification

---

**Implementation Status:** Complete **Test Status:** Passing (test-threshold-sig.scm) **CLI Tool:** cyberspace verify/run