

Executive Summary

Mobile devices typically need to support multiple security objectives: confidentiality, integrity, and availability. To achieve these objectives, mobile devices should be secured against a variety of threats. General security recommendations for any IT technology are provided in NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-53, *Security and Privacy Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations* [SP800-53]. Specific recommendations for securing mobile devices are presented in this publication and are intended to complement the controls specified in SP 800-53. Also, see Government Accountability Office (GAO) report GAO-12-757 [GAO-12-757] for additional information on mobile device security for Federal agencies.

This publication provides recommendations for securing particular types of mobile devices, such as smart phones and tablets. Laptops are specifically excluded from the scope of this publication because the security controls available for laptops today are quite different than those available for smart phones, tablets, and other mobile device types. Mobile devices with minimal computing capability, such as the most basic cell phones, are also out of scope because of the limited security options available and the limited threats they face.

Centralized mobile device management technologies are increasingly used as a solution for controlling the use of both organization-issued and personally-owned mobile devices by enterprise users. In addition to managing the configuration and security of mobile devices, these technologies offer other features, such as providing secure access to enterprise computing resources. There are two basic approaches to centralized mobile device management: use a messaging server's management capabilities (sometimes from the same vendor that makes a particular brand of mobile device operating system), or use a product from a third party, which is designed to manage one or more brands of mobile device operating system. It is outside the scope of this publication to provide any recommendations for one approach over the other; both approaches can provide the necessary centralized management functionality.

Organizations should implement the following guidelines to improve the security of their mobile devices.

Organizations should have a mobile device security policy.

A mobile device security policy should define which types of the organization's resources may be accessed via mobile devices, which types of mobile devices are permitted to access the organization's resources, the degree of access that various classes of mobile devices may have—for example, organization-issued devices versus personally-owned (bring your own device) devices—and how provisioning should be handled. It should also cover how the organization's centralized mobile device management servers are administered, how policies in those servers are updated, and all other requirements for mobile device management technologies. The mobile device security policy should be documented in the system security plan. To the extent feasible and appropriate, the mobile device security policy should be consistent with and complement security policy for non-mobile systems.

Organizations should develop system threat models for mobile devices and the resources that are accessed through the mobile devices.

Mobile devices often need additional protection because their nature generally places them at higher exposure to threats than other client devices (for example, desktop and laptop devices only used within the organization's facilities and on the organization's networks). Before designing and deploying mobile device solutions, organizations should develop system threat models. Threat modeling helps organizations to identify security requirements and to design the mobile device solution to incorporate the controls needed to meet the security requirements. Threat modeling involves identifying resources of interest and

the feasible threats, vulnerabilities, and security controls related to these resources, then quantifying the likelihood of successful attacks and their impacts, and finally analyzing this information to determine where security controls need to be improved or added.

Organizations deploying mobile devices should consider the merits of each provided security service, determine which services are needed for their environment, and then design and acquire one or more solutions that collectively provide the necessary services.

Most organizations do not need all of the possible security services provided by mobile device solutions. Categories of services to be considered include the following:

- **General policy:** enforcing enterprise security policies on the mobile device, such as restricting access to hardware and software, managing wireless network interfaces, and automatically monitoring, detecting, and reporting when policy violations occur.
- **Data communication and storage:** supporting strongly encrypted data communications and data storage, wiping the device before reissuing it, and remotely wiping the device if it is lost or stolen and is at risk of having its data recovered by an untrusted party.
- **User and device authentication:** requiring device authentication and/or other authentication before accessing organization resources, resetting forgotten passwords remotely, automatically locking idle devices, and remotely locking devices suspected of being left unlocked in an unsecured location.
- **Applications:** restricting which app stores may be used and which applications may be installed, restricting the permissions assigned to each application, installing and updating applications, restricting the use of synchronization services, verifying digital signatures on applications, and distributing the organization's applications from a dedicated mobile application store.

Organizations should implement and test a pilot of their mobile device solution before putting the solution into production.

Aspects of the solution that should be evaluated for each type of mobile device include connectivity, protection, authentication, application functionality, solution management, logging, and performance. Another important consideration is the security of the mobile device implementation itself; at a minimum, all components should be updated with the latest patches and configured following sound security practices. Also, use of jailbroken or rooted mobile devices should be automatically detected when feasible. Finally, implementers should ensure that the mobile device solution does not unexpectedly “fall back” to default settings for interoperability or other reasons.

Organizations should fully secure each organization-issued mobile device before allowing a user to access it.

This ensures a basic level of trust in the device before it is exposed to threats. For any already-deployed organization-issued mobile device with an unknown security profile (e.g., unmanaged device), organizations should fully secure them to a known good state (for example, through deployment and use of enterprise mobile device management technologies). Supplemental security controls should be deployed as risk merits, such as antivirus software and data loss prevention (DLP) technologies.

Organizations should regularly maintain mobile device security.

Helpful operational processes for maintenance include checking for upgrades and patches, and acquiring, testing, and deploying them; ensuring that each mobile device infrastructure component has its clock synced to a common time source; reconfiguring access control features as needed; and detecting and documenting anomalies within the mobile device infrastructure, including unauthorized configuration changes to mobile devices. Other helpful maintenance processes are keeping an active inventory of each mobile device, its user, and its applications; revoking access to or deleting an application that has already been installed but has subsequently been assessed as too risky to use; and scrubbing sensitive data from mobile devices before reissuing them to other users.

Also, organizations should periodically perform assessments to confirm that their mobile device policies, processes, and procedures are being followed properly. Assessment activities may be passive, such as reviewing logs, or active, such as performing vulnerability scans and penetration testing.

2. Mobile Device Overview

This section gives an overview of mobile devices, such as smart phones and tablets. Laptops are specifically excluded from the scope of this publication because the security controls available for laptops today are quite different than those available for smart phones, tablets, and other mobile device types. Mobile devices with minimal computing capability, such as the most basic cell phones, are also out of scope because of the limited security options available and the limited threats they face.

This section discusses the features of mobile devices, focusing on what makes mobile devices different from other computing devices, particularly in terms of security risk. This section also presents high-level recommendations for mitigating the risks that these mobile devices currently face.

2.1 Defining Mobile Device Characteristics

Mobile device features are constantly changing, so it is difficult to define the term “mobile device”. However, as features change, so do threats and security controls, so it is important to establish a baseline of mobile device features. The following hardware and software characteristics collectively define the baseline for the purposes of this publication:

- A small form factor
- At least one wireless network interface for network access (data communications). This interface uses Wi-Fi, cellular networking, or other technologies that connect the mobile device to network infrastructures with connectivity to the Internet or other data networks.
- Local built-in (non-removable) data storage
- An operating system that is not a full-fledged desktop or laptop operating system¹
- Applications available through multiple methods (provided with the mobile device, accessed through web browser, acquired and installed from third parties)

The list below details other common, but optional, characteristics of mobile devices. These features do not define the scope of devices included in the publication, but rather indicate features that are particularly important in terms of security risk. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and is merely illustrative of common features of interest as of this writing.

- Network services:
 - One or more wireless personal area network interfaces, such as Bluetooth or near-field communications
 - One or more wireless network interfaces for voice communications, such as cellular
 - Global Positioning System (GPS), which enables location services
- One or more digital cameras/video recording devices
- Microphone

¹ Operating systems are being introduced that will work for both smartphones/tablets and desktops/laptops. However, it is outside the scope of this publication to make recommendations for these devices. Once it has been determined how they should be secured, this publication will be updated accordingly.

- Storage:
 - Support for removable media
 - Support for using the device itself as removable storage for another computing device
- Built-in features for synchronizing local data with a different location (desktop or laptop computer, organization servers, telecommunications provider servers, other third party servers, etc.)

2.2 High-Level Threats and Vulnerabilities

Mobile devices typically need to support multiple security objectives. These can be accomplished through a combination of security features built into the mobile devices and additional security controls applied to the mobile devices and other components of the enterprise IT infrastructure. The most common security objectives for mobile devices are as follows:

- Confidentiality—ensure that transmitted and stored data cannot be read by unauthorized parties
- Integrity—detect any intentional or unintentional changes to transmitted and stored data
- Availability—ensure that users can access resources using mobile devices whenever needed.

To achieve these objectives, mobile devices should be secured against a variety of threats. General security recommendations for any IT technology are provided in NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-53, *Security and Privacy Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations* [SP800-53].² Specific recommendations for securing mobile devices are presented in this publication and are intended to complement the controls specified in SP 800-53. See Appendix A of this document for a summary of SP 800-53 controls most closely related to mobile device security. Also, see Government Accountability Office (GAO) report GAO-12-757 [GAO-12-757] for additional information on mobile device security for Federal agencies.

Mobile devices often need additional protection because their nature generally places them at higher exposure to threats than other client devices (e.g., desktop and laptop devices only used within the organization's facilities and on the organization's networks). Before designing and deploying mobile device solutions, organizations should develop system threat models for the mobile devices and the resources that are accessed through the mobile devices. Threat modeling involves identifying resources of interest and the feasible threats, vulnerabilities, and security controls related to these resources, then quantifying the likelihood of successful attacks and their impacts, and finally analyzing this information to determine where security controls need to be improved or added. Threat modeling helps organizations to identify security requirements and to design the mobile device solution to incorporate the controls needed to meet the security requirements. Major security concerns for these technologies that would be included in most mobile device threat models are listed below.

2.2.1 Lack of Physical Security Controls

Mobile devices are typically used in a variety of locations outside the organization's control, such as employees' homes, coffee shops, hotels, and conferences. Even mobile devices only used within an organization's facilities are often transported from place to place within the facilities. The devices' mobile nature makes them much more likely to be lost or stolen than other devices, so their data is at increased risk of compromise. When planning mobile device security policies and controls, organizations should

² These recommendations are linked to three security categories—low, moderate, and high—based on the potential impact of a security breach involving a particular system, as defined in Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 199, *Standards for Security Categorization of Federal Information and Information Systems* [FIPS199].

assume that mobile devices will be acquired by malicious parties who will attempt to recover sensitive data either directly from the devices themselves or indirectly by using the devices to access the organization's remote resources.

The mitigation strategy for this is layered. One layer involves requiring authentication before gaining access to the mobile device or the organization's resources accessible through the device. A mobile device usually has a single authenticator—not a separate account for each user of the device—as it is generally assumed that the device only has one user.³ So there is no username, just a password, which is often a PIN. More robust forms of authentication, such as token-based authentication, network-based device authentication, and domain authentication, can be used instead of or in addition to the built-in device authentication capabilities. A second mitigation layer involves protecting sensitive data—either encrypting the mobile device's storage so that sensitive data cannot be recovered from it by unauthorized parties, or not storing sensitive data on mobile devices. Even if a mobile device is always in the possession of its owner, there are other physical security risks, such as an attacker looking over a teleworker's shoulder at a coffee shop and viewing sensitive data on the mobile device's screen (for example, a password being entered). Finally, another layer of mitigation involves user training and awareness, to reduce the frequency of insecure physical security practices.

2.2.2 Use of Untrusted Mobile Devices

Many mobile devices, particularly those that are personally owned (bring your own device, BYOD), are not necessarily trustworthy. Most current mobile devices lack the root of trust features (e.g., trusted platform modules, TPMs) that are increasingly built into laptops and other types of hosts. There is also frequent jailbreaking and rooting of mobile devices, which means that the built-in restrictions on security, operating system use, etc. have been bypassed. Organizations should assume that all mobile devices are untrusted unless the organization has properly secured them and monitors their security continuously while in use with enterprise applications or data.

There are several possible mitigation strategies related to use of untrusted mobile devices. One option is to restrict or prohibit use of BYOD devices, thus favoring organization-issued devices. Another effective technique is to fully secure each organization-issued mobile device; this gets the mobile device in as trusted a state as possible, and deviations from this secure state can be monitored and addressed. There are also technical solutions for achieving degrees of trust in BYOD devices, such as running the organization's software in a secure, isolated sandbox/secure container on the mobile device, or using device integrity scanning applications.

2.2.3 Use of Untrusted Networks

Because mobile devices primarily use non-organizational networks for Internet access, organizations normally have no control over the security of the external networks the devices use. Communications systems may include wireless mechanisms such as Wi-Fi and cellular networks. These communications systems are susceptible to eavesdropping, which places sensitive information transmitted at risk of compromise. Man-in-the-middle attacks may also be performed to intercept and modify communications. Unless it is absolutely certain that the mobile device will only be used on trusted networks controlled by the organization, organizations should plan their mobile device security on the assumption that the networks between the mobile device and the organization cannot be trusted.

³ Some mobile devices provide support for multiple user accounts on a single device. The assumption in this publication that a mobile device will have a single user is not meant to preclude the use of a single device by multiple users.

Risk from use of untrusted networks can be reduced by using strong encryption technologies (such as virtual private networks, VPNs) to protect the confidentiality and integrity of communications, as well as using mutual authentication mechanisms to verify the identities of both endpoints before transmitting data. Another possible mitigation is to prohibit use of insecure Wi-Fi networks, such as those running known vulnerable protocols. Also, all network interfaces not needed by the device can be disabled, thus reducing the attack surface.

2.2.4 Use of Untrusted Applications

Mobile devices are designed to make it easy to find, acquire, install, and use third-party applications from mobile device application stores. This poses obvious security risks, especially for mobile device platforms and application stores that do not place security restrictions or other limitations on third-party application publishing. Organizations should plan their mobile device security on the assumption that unknown third-party mobile device applications downloadable by users should not be trusted.

Risk from these applications can be reduced in several ways, such as prohibiting all installation of third-party applications, implementing whitelisting to allow installation of approved applications only, verifying that applications only receive the necessary permissions on the mobile device, or implementing a secure sandbox/secure container that isolates the organization's data and applications from all other data and applications on the mobile device. Another possible mitigation is to perform a risk assessment on each third-party application before permitting its use on the organization's mobile devices.

It is important to note that even if these mitigation strategies are implemented for third-party applications, users can still access untrusted web-based applications through browsers built into their mobile devices. The risks inherent in this can be reduced by prohibiting or restricting browser access; by forcing mobile device traffic through secure web gateways, HTTP proxy servers, or other intermediate devices to assess URLs before allowing them to be contacted; or by using a separate browser within a secure sandbox/secure container for all browser-based access related to the organization, leaving the mobile device's built-in browser for other uses.

2.2.5 Interaction with Other Systems

Mobile devices may interact with other systems in terms of data exchange (including synchronization) and storage. Local system interaction generally involves connecting a mobile device to a desktop or laptop wirelessly or via a cable for syncing. It can also involve tethering, such as using one mobile device to provide network access for another mobile device.⁴ Remote system interaction most often involves automatic backups of data to a cloud-based storage solution. When all of these components are under the organization's control, risk is generally acceptable, but often one or more of these components are external. Examples include connecting a personally-owned mobile device to an organization-issued laptop, connecting an organization-issued mobile device to a personally-owned laptop, connecting an organization-issued mobile device to a remote backup service, and connecting any mobile device to an untrusted charging station. In all of these scenarios, the organization's data is at risk of being stored in an unsecured location outside the organization's control; transmission of malware from device to device is also a possibility. There are also concerns regarding mobile devices exchanging data with each other.

The mitigation strategies depend on the type of attachment. Preventing an organization-issued mobile device from syncing with a personally-owned computer necessitates security controls on the mobile device that restrict what devices it can synchronize with. Preventing a personally-owned mobile device

⁴ Organizations should have policies regarding the use of tethering. If an organization permits tethering, then it should ensure that the network connections involving tethering are strongly protected (e.g., communications encryption). If an organization prohibits tethering, then it should configure mobile devices so that they cannot be used for tethering.

from syncing with an organization-issued computer necessitates security controls on the organization-issued computer, restricting the connection of mobile devices. Preventing the use of remote backup services can possibly be achieved by blocking use of those services (e.g., not allowing the domain services to be contacted) or by configuring the mobile devices not to use such services. Users should be instructed not to connect their mobile devices to unknown charging devices; they should carry and use their own charging devices. Finally, mobile devices can be prevented from exchanging data with each other through logical or physical means (blocking use of services through configuration or physical shielding, etc.)

2.2.6 Use of Untrusted Content

Mobile devices may use untrusted content that other types of devices generally do not encounter. An example is Quick Response (QR) codes. They are specifically designed to be viewed and processed by mobile device cameras. Each QR code is translated to text, typically a URL, so malicious QR codes could direct mobile devices to malicious websites. This could allow for targeted attacking, such as placing malicious QR codes at a location where targeted users gather.

A primary mitigation strategy is to educate users on the risks inherent in untrusted content and to discourage users from accessing untrusted content with any mobile devices they use for work. Another mitigation is to have applications, such as QR readers, display the unobfuscated content (e.g., the URL) and allow users to accept or reject it before proceeding. Depending on the network configuration, it may also be possible to use secure web gateways, HTTP proxy servers, or other intermediate devices to validate URLs before allowing them to be contacted. In high security situations, it is also possible to restrict peripheral use on mobile devices, such as disabling camera use in order to prevent QR codes from being processed.

2.2.7 Use of Location Services

Mobile devices with GPS capabilities typically run what are known as location services. These services map a GPS-acquired location to the corresponding businesses or other entities close to that location. Location services are heavily used by social media, navigation, web browsers, and other mobile-centric applications. In terms of organization security and personal privacy, mobile devices with location services enabled are at increased risk of targeted attacks because it is easier for potential attackers to determine where the user and the mobile device are, and to correlate that information with other sources about who the user associates with and the kinds of activities they perform in particular locations

This situation can be mitigated by disabling location services or by prohibiting use of location services for particular applications such as social networking or photo applications. Users may also be trained to turn off location services when in sensitive areas. However, a similar problem can occur even if GPS capabilities or location services are disabled. It is increasingly common for websites and applications to determine a person's location based on their Internet connection, such as a Wi-Fi hotspot or IP address range. The primary mitigation for this is to opt out of such location services whenever possible.

Organizations should be aware that keeping location services enabled can also have positive effects on information security. For example, different security policies can be enforced depending on whether the mobile device is being used within the organization's facilities or outside the organization's facilities.

3. Technologies for Mobile Device Management

Centralized mobile device management technologies are a growing solution for controlling the use of both organization-issued and personally-owned mobile devices by enterprise users. In addition to managing the configuration and security of mobile devices, these technologies offer other features, such as providing secure access to enterprise computing resources. This section provides an overview of the current state of these technologies, focusing on the technologies' components, architectures, and capabilities.

3.1 Components and Architectures

There are two basic approaches to centralized mobile device management: use a messaging server's management capabilities (often from the same vendor that makes a particular brand of mobile device operating system), or use a product from a third party, which is designed to manage one or more brands of mobile device operating systems.⁵ It may be possible with the latter approach to have a single product that can manage multiple brands of mobile device operating systems desired for use within an enterprise. However, a product provided by a mobile device manufacturer may have more robust support for the mobile devices than third party products. It is outside the scope of this publication to recommend one approach over the other; both approaches can provide the necessary centralized management functionality.

Architecturally, both approaches to centralized mobile device management are quite similar. The typical solution has a straightforward client/server architecture. The enterprise contains one or more servers that provide the centralized management capabilities, and one or more client applications are installed on each mobile device⁶ and configured to run in the background at all times. If the device is organization issued, the client application typically manages the configuration and security of the entire device. If the device is BYOD, the client application typically manages only the configuration and security of itself and its data, not the entire device. The client application and data should be sandboxed from the rest of the device's applications and data in a secure container, both helping to protect the enterprise from a compromised device and helping to preserve the privacy of the device's owner.

The centralized mobile device management may make use of other enterprise services, such as domain authentication services and VPN services. See Section 3.2 for additional information.

If there is not a centralized management solution, or certain mobile devices cannot use it, then mobile devices have to be managed individually and manually. In addition to the additional resources expended, there are two major security problems with this:

- The security controls provided by a mobile device often lack the rigor of those provided by a centralized mobile device management client application. For example, a mobile device often supports only a short passcode for authentication and may not support strong storage encryption. This will necessitate acquiring, installing, configuring, and maintaining a variety of third-party security controls that provide the missing functionality.
- It may not be possible to manage the security of the device when it is not physically present within the enterprise. It is possible to install utilities that manage devices remotely, but it will require significantly more effort to use such utilities to manually apply updates and perform other maintenance and management tasks with out-of-office mobile devices.

⁵ Some mobile device management solutions also support the management of laptops, not just smart phones and tablets.

⁶ The client applications may have been preinstalled by the vendor. Also, in some cases, no agent is needed because the OS provides APIs that can be leveraged to collect all of the necessary information and manage policies.

To avoid these problems, organizations may choose to prohibit the use of any mobile devices that are not centrally managed.

3.2 Capabilities

This section describes security services commonly needed for security management of mobile devices. These services may be provided by the mobile device operating system, enterprise mobile device management (MDM) software, or other security controls. These services apply to the entire mobile device (if it is fully managed) or to the mobile device's secure sandbox/secure container (as explained in Section 3.1), unless explicitly noted otherwise. These services are equally relevant for centrally managed or individually managed mobile devices.

Most organizations will not need all of the security services listed in this section. Organizations deploying mobile devices should consider the merits of each security service, determine which services are needed for their environment, and then design and acquire one or more solutions that collectively provide the necessary services.

1. **General policy.** The centralized technology can enforce enterprise security policies on the mobile device, including (but not limited to) other policy items listed throughout Section 3.2. General policy restrictions of particular interest for mobile device security include the following:
 - Restrict user and application access to hardware, such as the digital camera, GPS, Bluetooth interface, USB interface, and removable storage.
 - Restrict user and application access to native OS services, such as the built-in web browser, email client, calendaring, contacts, application installation services, etc.
 - Manage wireless network interfaces (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, etc.)
 - Automatically monitor, detect, and report when policy violations occur, such as changes from the approved security configuration baseline, and automatically take action when possible and appropriate
 - Limit or prevent access to enterprise services based on the mobile device's operating system version (including whether the device has been rooted/jailbroken), vendor/brand, model, or mobile device management software client version (if applicable). Note that this information may be spoofable.
2. **Data Communication and Storage**
 - Strongly encrypt data communications between the mobile device and the organization. This is most often in the form of a VPN, although it can be established through other uses of secure protocols and encryption.
 - Strongly encrypt stored data on both built-in storage and removable media storage. Removable media can also be "bound" to particular devices such that encrypted information can only be decrypted when the removable media is attached to the device, thereby mitigating the risk of offline attacks on the media.
 - Wipe the device (to scrub its stored data) before reissuing it to another user, retiring the device, etc.

- Remotely wipe the device (to scrub its stored data) if it is suspected that the device has been lost, stolen, or otherwise fallen into untrusted hands and is at risk of having its data recovered by an untrusted party.⁷ See Section 4.5 for more information on data scrubbing.
- A device often can also be configured to wipe itself after a certain number of incorrect authentication attempts.

3. User and Device Authentication

- Require a device password/passcode and/or other authentication (e.g., token-based authentication, network-based device authentication, domain authentication) before accessing the organization's resources. This includes basic parameters for password strength and a limit on the number of retries permitted without negative consequences (e.g., locking out the account, wiping the device).
- If device account lockout is enabled or the device password/passcode is forgotten, an administrator can reset this remotely to restore access to the device.
- Have the device automatically lock itself after it is idle for a period (e.g., 5 minutes).
- Under the direction of an administrator, remotely lock the device if it is suspected that the device has been left in an unlocked state in an unsecured location.

4. Applications

- Restrict which app stores may be used.
- Restrict which applications may be installed through whitelisting (preferable) or blacklisting.
- Restrict the permissions (e.g., camera access, location access) assigned to each application.
- Install, update, and remove applications. Safeguard the mechanisms used to perform these actions. Keep a current inventory of all applications installed on each device.
- Restrict the use of operating system and application synchronization services (e.g., local device synchronization, remote synchronization services and websites).
- Verify digital signatures on applications to ensure that only applications from trusted entities are installed on the device and that code has not been modified.
- Distribute the organization's applications from a dedicated mobile application store.

⁷ Remote wipe is a fundamentally unreliable security control; for example, an attacker could access information on a device before it is wiped, or an attacker could power off a device to prevent it from receiving a remote wipe signal. Organizations should not rely on remote wipe as the sole security control for protecting sensitive data, but instead consider it to be one layer of a multi-layered approach to protection.

4. Security for the Enterprise Mobile Device Solution Life Cycle

This section explains how the concepts presented in the previous sections of the guide should be incorporated throughout the entire life cycle of enterprise mobile device solutions, involving everything from policy to operations. The section references a five-phase life cycle model to help organizations determine at what point in their mobile device solution deployments a recommendation may be relevant. Organizations may follow a project management methodology or life cycle model that does not directly map to the phases in the model presented here, but the types of tasks in the methodology and their sequencing are probably similar. The phases of the life cycle are as follows:

- **Phase 1: Initiation.** This phase involves the tasks that an organization should perform before it starts to design a mobile device solution. These include identifying needs for mobile devices, providing an overall vision for how mobile device solutions would support the mission of the organization, creating a high-level strategy for implementing mobile device solutions, developing a mobile device security policy, and specifying business and functional requirements for the solution.
- **Phase 2: Development.** In this phase, personnel specify the technical characteristics of the mobile device solution and related components. These include the authentication methods and the cryptographic mechanisms used to protect communications and stored data. The types of mobile devices (brands, operating systems, etc.) to be authorized for use should also be considered, since they can affect the desired policies. Care should be taken to ensure that the mobile device security policy can be employed and enforced by all authorized clients. At the end of this phase, solution components are procured.
- **Phase 3: Implementation.** In this phase, equipment is configured to meet operational and security requirements, including the mobile device security policy documented in the system security plan, installed and tested as a pilot, and then activated on a production network. Implementation includes integration with other security controls and technologies, such as security event logging and authentication servers.
- **Phase 4: Operations and Maintenance.** This phase includes security-related tasks that an organization should perform on an ongoing basis once the mobile device solution is operational, including patching, log reviews, and attack detection.
- **Phase 5: Disposal.** This phase encompasses tasks that occur when a mobile device solution or its components are being retired, including preserving information to meet legal requirements, sanitizing media, and disposing of equipment properly.

This section highlights security considerations of particular interest for mobile device solutions. These considerations are not intended to be comprehensive, nor is there any implication that security elements not listed here are unimportant or unnecessary.

4.1 Initiation

The initiation phase involves many preparatory actions, such as identifying current and future needs, and specifying requirements for performance, functionality, and security. A critical part of the initiation phase is the development of a mobile device security policy for an organization. The section lists elements that a mobile device security policy should contain and, where relevant, describes some of the factors that should be considered when making the decisions behind each element. A mobile device security policy should define which types of the organization's resources may be accessed via mobile devices, which types of mobile devices are permitted to access the organization's resources, the degree of access that various classes of mobile devices may have (for example, organization-issued devices versus personally-

owned devices), and how provisioning should be handled. It should also cover how the organization's centralized mobile device management servers are administered, how policies in those servers are updated, and all other requirements for mobile device management technologies. The mobile device security policy should be documented in the system security plan. To the extent feasible and appropriate, the mobile device security policy should be consistent with and complement security policy for non-mobile systems.

4.1.1 Restrictions on Mobile Devices and Access Levels

An organization's mobile device security policy often limits the types of mobile devices that may be used for enterprise access; this is done for a variety of reasons, including security concerns and technology limitations. For example, an organization might permit only organization-owned mobile devices to be used. Some organizations have tiered levels of access, such as allowing organization-issued mobile devices to access many resources, BYOD mobile devices running the organization's mobile device management client software to access a limited set of resources, and all other BYOD mobile devices to access only a few web-based resources, such as email. This allows an organization to limit the risk it incurs by permitting the most-controlled devices to have the most access and the least-controlled devices to have only minimal access. Some organizations also maintain lists of approved mobile devices (by operating system version, by brand/model of phone, etc.)

Each organization should make its own risk-based decisions about what levels of access should be permitted from which types of mobile devices. Factors that organizations should consider when setting mobile device security policy for this include the following:

- **Sensitivity of work.** Some work involves access to sensitive information or resources, while other work does not. Organizations may have more restrictive requirements for work involving sensitive information, such as permitting only organization-issued devices to be used. Organizations should also be concerned about the issues involved in remotely scrubbing sensitive information from BYOD mobile devices (see Section 4.5 for more information on data scrubbing).
- **The level of confidence in security policy compliance.** Meeting many of an organization's security requirements can typically be ensured only if the organization controls the configuration of the mobile devices. For devices not running the organization's mobile device management client software, some requirements can possibly be verified by automated security health checks conducted by the mobile device management server when mobile devices attempt to connect, but other requirements cannot be verified. Organizations may decide to require mobile devices to run the specified mobile device management software.
- **Cost.** Costs associated with mobile devices will vary based on policy decisions. The primary direct cost from a security perspective is issuing mobile devices and client software. There are also indirect costs in maintaining the security of mobile devices and in providing security-related technical support for users.
- **Work location.** Risks will generally be lower for devices used only in the enterprise environment than for devices used in a variety of locations.
- **Technical limitations.** Certain types of mobile devices or operating systems may be needed, such as for running a particular application. Also, an organization's mobile device management client software may only support certain types of mobile devices (e.g., particular operating system versions).

- **Compliance with mandates and other policies.** Organizations may need to comply with mobile device-related requirements from mandates and other sources, such as a Federal department issuing policy requirements to its member agencies. An example of a possible requirement is restrictions on using mobile devices in foreign countries that have strong known threats against Federal agency systems; in such cases, it may be appropriate to issue “loaner” mobile devices or to prohibit mobile device use altogether.

Organizations may choose to specify additional security requirements that are tied to factors such as the sensitivity of work. Many organizations require more stringent security controls for work situations that are particularly high-risk, such as permitting the work only from organization-issued and secured mobile devices, and requiring the use of multi-factor authentication for access to the mobile device and to enterprise resources. Another possible security control is to migrate high-risk resources to servers that assume responsibility for protecting them; for example, a mobile device could connect to a server that holds sensitive data that the user needs to access, instead of the sensitive data being stored locally on the mobile device. In high-risk situations, organizations may also choose to reduce risk by prohibiting mobile devices from accessing particular types of information, such as sensitive personally identifiable information (PII).⁸

There are frequent changes in mobile device capabilities, the security controls available to organizations, the types of threats made to different types of devices, and so on. Therefore, organizations should periodically reassess their policies for mobile devices and consider changing which types of mobile devices are permitted, what levels of access they may be granted, and which security controls are required. Organizations should also be aware of the emergence of new types of mobile device solutions and of major changes to existing mobile device management technologies, and ensure that the organization’s policies are updated accordingly as needed.

4.1.2 Additional User Requirements

Organizations often have additional security considerations for mobile devices that, while helpful in mitigating threats, cannot necessarily be directly enforced by the organization. Organizations should educate users on the importance of these additional security measures and define users’ responsibilities for implementing these measures in policy and mobile device agreements.

One possible security consideration involves wireless personal area networks (WPAN), which are small-scale wireless networks that require no infrastructure to operate. Examples of WPAN technologies are using a wireless keyboard or mouse with a computer, printing wirelessly, synchronizing a mobile device with a computer wirelessly, and using a wireless headset or earpiece with a smart phone. Commonly used types of WPAN technologies include Bluetooth and near-field communications. For devices within proximity of significant threats, mobile device users should enable these technologies only when needed to prevent misuse by unauthorized parties. Additional information on these security considerations is available from NIST SP 800-114, *User’s Guide to Securing External Devices for Telework and Remote Access* [SP800-114], and NIST SP 800-121 Revision 1, *Guide to Bluetooth Security* [SP800-121].

4.2 Development

Once the organization has established a mobile device security policy, identified mobile device needs, and completed other preparatory activities, the next steps are to determine which types of mobile device management technologies should be used and to design a solution to deploy. There are many considerations for designing a solution, most of which are generally applicable to any IT technology;

⁸ For more information on protecting PII, see NIST SP 800-122, *Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)* [SP800-122].

some of these are covered in Section 3 of this document and others in NIST SP 800-53 [SP800-53]. This section focuses on the technical security considerations that are most important for designing mobile device management solutions. Major considerations include the following:

- **Architecture.** Designing the architecture includes the selection of mobile device management server and client software, the placement of the mobile device management server and other centralized elements, and the architecture of any virtual private network (VPN) solutions.
- **Authentication.** Authentication involves selecting device and/or user authentication methods, including determining procedures for issuing and resetting authenticators and for provisioning users and/or client devices with authenticators (see “Device provisioning” below). Authentication includes access to or integration with existing enterprise authentication systems.
- **Cryptography.** Decisions related to cryptography include selecting the algorithms for encryption and integrity protection of mobile device communications, and setting the key strength for algorithms that support multiple key lengths.⁹ Federal agencies must use FIPS-approved algorithms contained in validated cryptographic modules when using cryptography to protect information.¹⁰
- **Configuration requirements.** This involves setting minimum security standards for mobile devices, such as mandatory host hardening measures and patch levels, and specifying additional security controls that must be employed on the mobile device, such as a VPN client.
- **Device provisioning.** It is important to determine how both new and existing devices will be provisioned with client software, authenticators, configuration settings, etc.
- **Application vetting and certification requirements.** This sets security, performance, and other requirements that applications must meet and determines how proof of compliance with requirements must be demonstrated.

The security aspects of the mobile device solution design should be documented in the system security plan. The organization should also consider how incidents involving the mobile device solutions should be handled and document those plans as well.¹¹

4.3 Implementation

After the mobile device solution has been designed, the next step is to implement and test a pilot of the design, before putting the solution into production. Aspects of the solution that should be evaluated for each type of mobile device include the following:

- **Connectivity.** Users can establish and maintain connections from the mobile device to the organization from the locations they are expected to use. Users can connect to all of the organization’s resources that they are permitted to and cannot connect to any other organization resources.

⁹ NIST SP 800-21, Second Edition, *Guideline for Implementing Cryptography in the Federal Government*, presents guidelines for selecting, specifying, employing, and evaluating cryptographic protection mechanisms in Federal information systems. It defines a process for selecting cryptographic products and discusses implementation issues, including solution management, key management, and authentication. [SP800-21]

¹⁰ The Cryptographic Module Validation Program (CMVP) at NIST coordinates FIPS 140-2 testing; the CMVP Web site is located at <http://csrc.nist.gov/cryptval/>. See <http://csrc.nist.gov/cryptval/des.htm> for information on FIPS-approved symmetric key algorithms, and <http://csrc.nist.gov/cryptval/dss.htm> for information on digital signature algorithms. See FIPS 140-2, *Security Requirements for Cryptographic Modules*, for more information. [FIPS140-2]

¹¹ For more information on incident handling, see [SP800-61].

- **Protection.** Information stored on the mobile device and communications between the mobile device and the organization are protected in accordance with the established requirements.
- **Authentication.** Authentication is required and cannot be readily compromised or circumvented. All device, user, and domain authentication policies are enforced.
- **Applications.** The applications to be supported by the mobile device solution function properly. All restrictions on installing applications are enforced. All restrictions on uninstalling applications (such as enterprise mobile device management software) are enforced.
- **Management.** Administrators can configure and manage all components of the solution effectively and securely. The ease of deployment and configuration is particularly important. Another concern is the ability of users to alter device/client software settings, which could weaken mobile device security.
- **Logging.** The mobile device solution logs security events in accordance with the organization's policies. See NIST SP 800-92, *Guide to Computer Security Log Management*, for additional information on logging. Note that the security logging capabilities of mobile devices vary widely.
- **Performance.** All components of the solution provide adequate performance during normal and peak usage. It is important to also consider the performance of intermediate devices, such as routers and firewalls.
- **Security of the Implementation.** The mobile device implementation itself may contain vulnerabilities and weaknesses that attackers could exploit. Organizations with high security needs may choose to perform extensive vulnerability assessments against the mobile device solution components. At a minimum, all components should be updated with the latest available patches and configured following sound security practices. The organization should also take basic measures to prevent the user from circumventing the device's security features. Also, jailbroken or rooted mobile devices should be automatically detected to prohibit their use, for cases in which detection is feasible.
- **Default Settings.** On a per-OS version basis, implementers should carefully review the default values for each mobile device setting and alter the settings as necessary to support security requirements. Implementers should also ensure that the mobile device solution does not unexpectedly "fall back" to insecure default settings for interoperability or other reasons.

Organizations should fully secure each organization-issued mobile device before allowing a user to access it. Any already-deployed mobile device with an unknown security profile (e.g., unmanaged device) should be fully secured to a known good state (for example, through deployment and use of enterprise mobile device management technologies). Supplemental security controls should be deployed as risk merits, such as antivirus software and data loss prevention (DLP) technologies.

4.4 Operations and Maintenance

Operational processes that are particularly helpful for maintaining mobile device security, and thus should be performed regularly, include the following:

- Checking for upgrades and patches to the mobile device solution components (including mobile device infrastructure components, mobile device operating systems, and mobile device applications), and acquiring, testing, and deploying the updates¹²

¹² Some mobile devices do not offer OS upgrades; even though a newer OS version might be generally available, it cannot be installed on a particular mobile device, often due to hardware limitations. This can significantly negatively impact the

- Ensuring that each mobile device infrastructure component (mobile device management servers, authentication servers, etc.) has its clock synced to a common time source so that its timestamps will match those generated by other systems
- Reconfiguring access control features as needed based on factors such as policy changes, technology changes, audit findings, and new security needs
- Detecting and documenting anomalies within the mobile device infrastructure through continuous monitoring, including unauthorized configuration changes to mobile devices. Such anomalies might indicate malicious activity or deviations from policy and procedures. Anomalies should be reported to other systems' administrators as appropriate.
- Keeping an active inventory of each mobile device, its user(s), and its applications
- Providing training and awareness activities for mobile device users on threats and recommended security practices
- Revoking access to or deleting an application that has already been installed but has subsequently been assessed as too risky to use
- Scrubbing sensitive data from mobile devices before reissuing them to other users (see Section 4.5 for more information on data scrubbing)

Organizations should also periodically perform assessments to confirm that the organization's mobile device policies, processes, and procedures are being followed properly. Assessment activities may be passive, such as reviewing logs, or active, such as performing vulnerability scans and penetration testing. More information on technical assessments is available from NIST SP 800-115, *Technical Guide to Information Security Testing and Assessment* [SP800-115].

4.5 Disposal

Before a mobile device component permanently leaves an organization (such as when a leased server's lease expires or when an obsolete mobile device is being recycled) or is reassigned to another user, the organization should remove any sensitive data from the mobile device. The task of scrubbing all sensitive data from storage devices such as hard drives and memory cards is often surprisingly difficult because of all the places where such data resides and the increasing reliance on flash memory instead of magnetic disks. See NIST SP 800-88, *Guidelines for Media Sanitization* [SP800-88], for additional information and recommendations on removing data from mobile devices.