

AWS CloudTrail S3 Bucket Deletion Investigation

This document walks through an incident investigation conducted via Kibana (ELK) using CloudTrail logs ingested from AWS.

Objective

Investigate unauthorized or unusual S3 bucket deletion using CloudTrail logs parsed via Filebeat into Kibana.

Initial Setup

- CloudTrail logs were delivered to S3
 - Filebeat forwarded logs into Elasticsearch (via `filebeat-aws` module)
 - Kibana used to search within `filebeat-*` index
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KQL Query for Investigation

`event.dataset: aws.cloudtrail and event.provider: "s3.amazonaws.com" and aws.cloudtrail.request_parameters: *appbackupfilesbuk* and event.action : *`

Findings Summary

- Action: `DeleteBucket`

- **Bucket Name:** `appbackupfilesbuk`
 - **Time of Deletion:** `2025-01-30T10:20:19Z`
 - **User Involved:** `HelpdeskAdmin`
 - **Source IP:** `36.255.87.7`
 - **Region:** `ap-south-1`
 - **Tool Used:** `aws-cli` on Windows 10
-



Log Summary Extract (Simplified)

```
{
  "event.action": "DeleteBucket",
  "user.name": "HelpdeskAdmin",
  "source.ip": "36.255.87.7",
  "event.outcome": "success",
  "aws.cloudtrail.read_only": false,
  "aws.cloudtrail.request_parameters.bucketName": "appbackupfilesbuk"
}
```



Why Bucket Name Matters

`appbackupfilesbuk` was identified in the CloudTrail logs as the target of the `DeleteBucket` API call. Investigating this bucket confirms whether sensitive data or backups were removed maliciously or unintentionally.



Artifact

CloudTrail Log Location:

https://aws-cloudtrail-logs-010928207857-58476b9d.s3.ap-south-1.amazonaws.com/AWSLogs/010928207857/CloudTrail/ap-south-1/2025/01/30/010928207857_CloudTrail_ap-south-1_20250130T1025Z_vSPPLosclyebdNwq.json.gz

✓ Conclusion

The IAM user **HelpdeskAdmin** deleted the S3 bucket **appbackupfilesbuk** from a suspicious external IP using AWS CLI. This activity is suspicious and should be flagged for further review and potential IAM role review.

[PICS:](#)

The screenshot displays the Kibana interface for viewing a single document. On the left, a sidebar shows 'Popular fields' (1) and 'Available fields' (206). The main panel is titled 'Documents (1)' and shows a summary of the document. The document is an AWS CloudTrail event with the following fields:

Field	Value
event.action	DeleteBucket
@timestamp	2025-01-30T10:20:19.000
agent.ephemeral_id	ec4a9875-d15f-4bd0-b4ea-3135fe1c021
agent.id	698adc2f-b448-4f91-a8a0-faf76c25416a
agent.name	elk...

On the right, the 'JSON' tab shows the full document structure:

```
{
  "_index": "aws",
  "_id": "ee7ecb21d7-000000017259",
  "_version": 1,
  "_ignored": [
    "event.original"
  ],
  "_source": {
    "name": "elk-VirtualBox",
    "id": "698adc2f-b448-4f91-a8a0-faf76c25416a",
```