<https://www.linux.com/community/blogs/133-general-linux/283637>

## [Troubleshooting connection problems with TCPDUMP: DHCP](https://www.linux.com/community/blogs/133-general-linux/283637)

Here is a list of common options I use with TCPdump almost every time I listen in.

**-v** shows more information about the packet. You can use -vv or -vvv for even more.  
**-n** disables name resolution so you are not waiting on DNS responses to show the packet.  
**-e** shows link layer information (MAC Address)  
**-s** sets how much of the packet to see. 0 shows full packet.  
**-i** sets the interface to use

DHCP traffic operates on port 67 (Server) and port 68 (Client). So we can capture the appropriate traffic with the following expression: **port 67 or port 68**  
The tcpdump statement would look like: **tcpdump -vnes0 -i eth0 port 67 or port 68**

A successful DHCP should contain 4 packets.

**The DISCOVER packet**

The first packet should be the client trying to discover its DHCP information.

**16:42:18.799064** **00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2** > **ff:ff:ff:ff:ff:ff**, ethertype **IPv4** (0x0800), length 342: (tos 0x0, ttl 128, id 44982, offset 0, flags [none], **proto UDP (17)**, length 328) **0.0.0.0.68** > **255.255.255.255.67**: BOOTP/DHCP, Request from 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2, length 300, xid 0xbbe4078f, Flags [none]  
          Client-Ethernet-Address 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
          Vendor-rfc1048 Extensions  
            Magic Cookie 0x63825363  
            DHCP-Message **Option 53**, length 1: **Discover**  
            NOAUTO Option 116, length 1: Y  
            Client-ID Option 61, length 7: ether 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
            Hostname **Option 12**, length 11: "FA-MCKENZIE"  
            Vendor-Class Option 60, length 8: "MSFT 5.0"  
            Parameter-Request **Option 55**, length 11:  
              Subnet-Mask, Domain-Name, Default-Gateway, Domain-Name-Server  
              Netbios-Name-Server, Netbios-Node, Netbios-Scope, Router-Discovery  
              Static-Route, Option 249, Vendor-Option  
            Vendor-Option Option 43, length 2: 220.0

The packet begins with a timestamp. Since we are displaying link layer information, the next bit is the sender and destination MAC addresses. You can see that the destination MAC address is all F's. This means it's a broadcast packet. Because the sender doesn't know specifically who to ask for its DHCP information, it yells to everyone that can hear.  
The next bit of information is about the protocol that was used in this packet. it’s an IPv4 packet and UDP (protocol 17). The next part contains the senders IP address. They don't have one so it’s all 0's. And since the sender is broadcasting the packet, the destination ip is 255.255.255.255. The sender is using port 67 trying to reach a server on port 68 as expected.  
Below the packets header information we have all the options they are using. It’s a DISCOVER from Option 53. We can see all the standard DHCP information that may be required (Option 55), the Hostname (option 12).

**The OFFER packet**

The second packet is expected to see the server offering the DHCP information to the client.  
**16:42:18.800018 00:30:18:a8:c6:13** > **00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2**, ethertype **IPv4** (0x0800), length 342: (tos 0x10, ttl 16, id 0, offset 0, flags [none], **proto UDP (17)**, length 328) 10.5.0.1.67 > 10.5.0.198.68: BOOTP/DHCP, Reply, length 300, xid 0xbbe4078f, Flags [none]  
          **Your-IP** 10.5.0.198  
          Client-Ethernet-Address 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
          Vendor-rfc1048 Extensions  
            Magic Cookie 0x63825363  
            DHCP-Message **Option 53**, length 1: **Offer**  
            Server-ID Option 54, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
            Lease-Time **Option 51**, length 4: 60  
            Subnet-Mask **Option 1**, length 4: 255.255.0.0  
            Domain-Name Option 15, length 10: "sandara.ca"  
            Default-Gateway **Option 3**, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
            Domain-Name-Server **Option 6**, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
Starts off with a timestamp then the senders MAC address, this time it’s the server's MAC address. Since the server knows who to send this packet to, it makes it unicast and sets the destination to the client. Still it’s an IPv4 UDP packet. The packet originated from the server and it uses the IP address that it's offering as its destination.  
Option 53 indicates that this is the OFFER packet. The options offered in the packet contain some very useful information like lease time in seconds (Option 51) DNS Server (Option 6), Subnet Mask (Option 1), Default Gateway (Option 3) and the IP address the client can use, labeled Your-IP.

**The REQUEST packet.**  
The next two packets are for confirmation. The client will start off by requesting confirmation from the server that the DHCP information it was offered is correct.  
**16:42:18.802420 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2** > **ff:ff:ff:ff:ff:ff**, ethertype **IPv4** (0x0800), length 377: (tos 0x0, ttl 128, id 44983, offset 0, flags [none], **proto UDP (17)**, length 363) **0.0.0.0.68** > **255.255.255.255.67**: BOOTP/DHCP, Request from 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2, length 335, xid 0xbbe4078f, Flags [none]  
          Client-Ethernet-Address 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
          Vendor-rfc1048 Extensions  
            Magic Cookie 0x63825363  
            DHCP-Message **Option 53**, length 1: **Request**  
            Client-ID Option 61, length 7: ether 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
            Requested-IP Option 50, length 4: 10.5.0.198  
            Server-ID **Option 54**, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
            Hostname Option 12, length 11: "FA-MCKENZIE"  
            FQDN Option 81, length 27: "FA-MCKENZIE.sfaftusa.lan"  
            Vendor-Class Option 60, length 8: "MSFT 5.0"  
            Parameter-Request Option 55, length 11:  
              Subnet-Mask, Domain-Name, Default-Gateway, Domain-Name-Server  
              Netbios-Name-Server, Netbios-Node, Netbios-Scope, Router-Discovery  
              Static-Route, Option 249, Vendor-Option  
            Vendor-Option Option 43, length 3: 220.1.0  
Option 53 indicates this to be the REQUEST packet. This packet is still a broadcast. The client still doesn't have an IP address without confirmation first. And all the options to confirm show up like verifying the DHCP server (Option 54), verifying the IP address to use (Option 50) and so on,

**The ACK packet**

The fourth and final packet should be a confirmation by the DHCP server.  
**16:42:18.803152 00:30:18:a8:c6:13** > **00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2**, ethertype IPv4 (0x0800), length 342: (tos 0x10, ttl 16, id 0, offset 0, flags [none], **proto UDP (17)**, length 328) **10.5.0.1.67** > **10.5.0.198.68**: BOOTP/DHCP, Reply, length 300, xid 0xbbe4078f, Flags [none]  
          Your-IP 10.5.0.198  
          Client-Ethernet-Address 00:1f:3c:9d:68:f2  
          Vendor-rfc1048 Extensions  
            Magic Cookie 0x63825363  
            DHCP-Message **Option 53**, length 1: **ACK**  
            Server-ID Option 54, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
            Lease-Time Option 51, length 4: 60  
            Subnet-Mask Option 1, length 4: 255.255.0.0  
            Domain-Name Option 15, length 10: "sandara.ca"  
            Default-Gateway Option 3, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
            Domain-Name-Server Option 6, length 4: 10.5.0.1  
This final packet has everything filled out as you would expect in the header. And in the options section contains the acknowledgement (Option 53)  
**Recap**

The 4 packets to a successful DHCP

**DISCOVER**: Client connects to the network and sends out a broadcast discovery looking for its DHCP information.  
**OFFER**: The server offers the DHCP information to the client  
**REQUEST**: The client requests verification of the DHCP information  
**ACK**: The server acknowledges the DHCP request  
**Aditional Notes.**

Sometimes you will not see the DISCOVER / OFFER and just see the REQUEST / ACK. This heppens when the client has already obtained a valid DHCP lease earlier and is just requesting to have it again before its lease time expires. Typically this is performed when half the lease has lapsed.  
If the REQUEST is not valid anymore the server will send a NACK indicating to the client that it can no longer use this DHCP information. This should cause the client to start over with a DISCOVER.  
Sometimes you will see repeated DISCOVER / OFFER but never a REQUEST from the client. This happens when the client either doesn't receive the OFFER or doesn't like it for some reason. Perhaps a firewall is blocking it, they have a poor connection, or simply they're using a Windows computer.

It's common for Windows Vista to never even start its DHCP process. It will just refuse to DISCOVER and complain that the connection is "limited or no connectivity".  You can try to diagnose the problem and tell it to reset the network card and/or get new IP information. If this fails to start it then I find adding a static IP and then setting it back to DHCP will get it going. You may even need to restart the DHCPC service. Its Vista.. where you expecting it to work as advertised?