

## PF\_KEY Key Management API, Version 2

### Status of this Memo

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### Abstract

A generic key management API that can be used not only for IP Security [[Atk95a](#)] [[Atk95b](#)] [[Atk95c](#)] but also for other network security services is presented in this document. Version 1 of this API was implemented inside 4.4-Lite BSD as part of the U. S. Naval Research Laboratory's freely distributable and usable IPv6 and IPsec implementation[AMPMC96]. It is documented here for the benefit of others who might also adopt and use the API, thus providing increased portability of key management applications (e.g. a manual keying application, an ISAKMP daemon, a GKMP daemon [[HM97a](#)][[HM97b](#)], a Photuris daemon, or a SKIP certificate discovery protocol daemon).

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## 1 Introduction

PF\_KEY is a new socket protocol family used by trusted privileged key management applications to communicate with an operating system's key management internals (referred to here as the "Key Engine" or the Security Association Database (SADB)). The Key Engine and its structures incorporate the required security attributes for a session and are instances of the "Security Association" (SA) concept described in [Atk95a]. The names PF\_KEY and Key Engine thus refer to more than cryptographic keys and are retained for consistency with the traditional phrase, "Key Management".

PF\_KEY is derived in part from the BSD routing socket, PF\_ROUTE. [Sk191] This document describes Version 2 of PF\_KEY. Version 1 was implemented in the first five alpha test versions of the NRL IPv6+IPsec Software Distribution for 4.4-Lite BSD UNIX and the Cisco ISAKMP/Oakley key management daemon. Version 2 extends and refines this interface. Theoretically, the messages defined in this document could be used in a non-socket context (e.g. between two directly communicating user-level processes), but this document will not discuss in detail such possibilities.

Security policy is deliberately omitted from this interface. PF\_KEY is not a mechanism for tuning systemwide security policy, nor is it intended to enforce any sort of key management policy. The developers of PF\_KEY believe that it is important to separate security mechanisms (such as PF\_KEY) from security policies. This permits a single mechanism to more easily support multiple policies.

### 1.1 Terminology

Even though this document is not intended to be an actual Internet standard, the words that are used to define the significance of particular features of this interface are usually capitalized. Some of these words, including MUST, MAY, and SHOULD, are detailed in [Bra97].

#### - CONFORMANCE and COMPLIANCE

Conformance to this specification has the same meaning as compliance to this specification. In either case, the mandatory-to-implement, or MUST, items MUST be fully implemented as specified here. If any mandatory item is not implemented as specified here, that implementation is not conforming and not compliant with this specification.

This specification also uses many terms that are commonly used in the context of network security. Other documents provide more definitions and background information on these [VK83, HA94, Atk95a]. Two terms deserve special mention:

- (Encryption/Authentication) Algorithm

For PF\_KEY purposes, an algorithm, whether encryption or authentication, is the set of operations performed on a packet to complete authentication or encryption as indicated by the SA type. A PF\_KEY algorithm MAY consist of more than one cryptographic algorithm. Another possibility is that the same basic cryptographic algorithm may be applied with different modes of operation or some other implementation difference. These differences, henceforth called algorithm differentiators, distinguish between different PF\_KEY algorithms, and options to the same algorithm. Algorithm differentiators will often cause fundamentally different security properties.

For example, both DES and 3DES use the same cryptographic algorithm, but they are used differently and have different security properties. The triple-application of DES is considered an algorithm differentiator. There are therefore separate PF\_KEY algorithms for DES and 3DES. Keyed-MD5 and HMAC-MD5 use the same hash function, but construct their message authentication codes differently. The use of HMAC is an algorithm differentiator. DES-ECB and DES-CBC are the same cryptographic algorithm, but use a different mode. Mode (e.g., chaining vs. code-book) is an algorithm differentiator. Blowfish with a 128-bit key, however, is similar to Blowfish with a 384-bit key, because the algorithm's workings are otherwise the same and therefore the key length is not an algorithm differentiator.

In terms of IP Security, a general rule of thumb is that whatever might be labeled the "encryption" part of an ESP transform is probably a PF\_KEY encryption algorithm. Whatever might be labelled the "authentication" part of an AH or ESP transform is probably a PF\_KEY authentication algorithm.

## 1.2 Conceptual Model

This section describes the conceptual model of an operating system that implements the PF\_KEY key management application programming interface. This section is intended to provide background material useful to understand the rest of this document. Presentation of this conceptual model does not constrain a PF\_KEY implementation to strictly adhere to the conceptual components discussed in this subsection.

Key management is most commonly implemented in whole or in part at the application layer. For example, the ISAKMP/Oakley, GKMP, and Photuris proposals for IPsec key management are all application-layer protocols. Manual keying is also done at the application layer. Even parts of the SKIP IP-layer keying proposal can be implemented at the application layer. Figure 1 shows the relationship between a Key Management daemon and PF\_KEY. Key management daemons use PF\_KEY to communicate with the Key Engine and use PF\_INET (or PF\_INET6 in the case of IPv6) to communicate, via the network, with a remote key management entity.

The "Key Engine" or "Security Association Database (SADB)" is a logical entity in the kernel that stores, updates, and deletes Security Association data for various security protocols. There are logical interfaces within the kernel (e.g. `getassocabyspi()`, `getassocabysocket()`) that security protocols inside the kernel (e.g. IP Security, aka IPsec) use to request and obtain Security Associations.

In the case of IPsec, if by policy a particular outbound packet needs processing, then the IPsec implementation requests an appropriate Security Association from the Key Engine via the kernel-internal interface. If the Key Engine has an appropriate SA, it allocates the SA to this session (marking it as used) and returns the SA to the IPsec implementation for use. If the Key Engine has no such SA but a key management application has previously indicated (via a PF\_KEY SADB\_REGISTER message) that it can obtain such SAs, then the Key Engine requests that such an SA be created (via a PF\_KEY SADB\_ACQUIRE message). When the key management daemon creates a new SA, it places it into the Key Engine for future use.

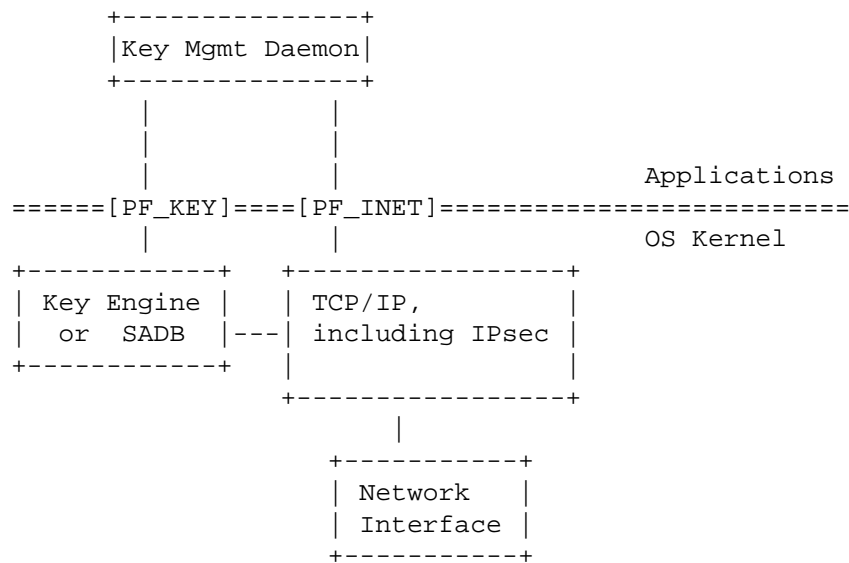


Figure 1: Relationship of Key Mgmt to PF\_KEY

For performance reasons, some security protocols (e.g. IP Security) are usually implemented inside the operating system kernel. Other security protocols (e.g. OSPFv2 Cryptographic Authentication) are implemented in trusted privileged applications outside the kernel. Figure 2 shows a trusted, privileged routing daemon using PF\_INET to communicate routing information with a remote routing daemon and using PF\_KEY to request, obtain, and delete Security Associations used with a routing protocol.

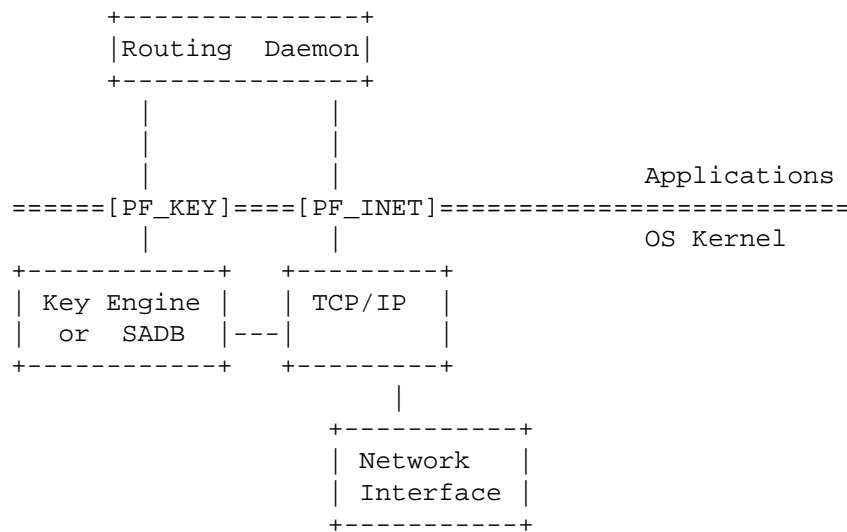


Figure 2: Relationship of Trusted Application to PF\_KEY

When a trusted privileged application is using the Key Engine but implements the security protocol within itself, then operation varies slightly. In this case, the application needing an SA sends a PF\_KEY SADB\_ACQUIRE message down to the Key Engine, which then either returns an error or sends a similar SADB\_ACQUIRE message up to one or more key management applications capable of creating such SAs. As before, the key management daemon stores the SA into the Key Engine. Then, the trusted privileged application uses an SADB\_GET message to obtain the SA from the Key Engine.

In some implementations, policy may be implemented in user-space, even though the actual cryptographic processing takes place in the kernel. Such policy communication between the kernel mechanisms and the user-space policy MAY be implemented by PF\_KEY extensions, or other such mechanism. This document does not specify such extensions. A PF\_KEY implementation specified by the memo does NOT have to support configuring systemwide policy using PF\_KEY.

Untrusted clients, for example a user's web browser or telnet client, do not need to use PF\_KEY. Mechanisms not specified here are used by such untrusted client applications to request security services (e.g. IPsec) from an operating system. For security reasons, only trusted, privileged applications are permitted to open a PF\_KEY socket.

### 1.3 PF\_KEY Socket Definition

The PF\_KEY protocol family (PF\_KEY) symbol is defined in <sys/socket.h> in the same manner that other protocol families are defined. PF\_KEY does not use any socket addresses. Applications using PF\_KEY MUST NOT depend on the availability of a symbol named AF\_KEY, but kernel implementations are encouraged to define that symbol for completeness.

The key management socket is created as follows:

```
#include <sys/types.h>
#include <sys/socket.h>
#include <net/pfkeyv2.h>

int s;
s = socket(PF_KEY, SOCK_RAW, PF_KEY_V2);
```

The PF\_KEY domain currently supports only the SOCK\_RAW socket type. The protocol field MUST be set to PF\_KEY\_V2, or else EPROTONOSUPPORT will be returned. Only a trusted, privileged process can create a PF\_KEY socket. On conventional UNIX systems, a privileged process is a process with an effective userid of zero. On non-MLS proprietary operating systems, the notion of a "privileged process" is implementation-defined. On Compartmented Mode Workstations (CMWs) or other systems that claim to provide Multi-Level Security (MLS), a process MUST have the "key management privilege" in order to open a PF\_KEY socket[DIA]. MLS systems that don't currently have such a specific privilege MUST add that special privilege and enforce it with PF\_KEY in order to comply and conform with this specification. Some systems, most notably some popular personal computers, do not have the concept of an unprivileged user. These systems SHOULD take steps to restrict the programs allowed to access the PF\_KEY API.

### 1.4 Overview of PF\_KEY Messaging Behavior

A process interacts with the key engine by sending and receiving messages using the PF\_KEY socket. Security association information can be inserted into and retrieved from the kernel's security association table using a set of predefined messages. In the normal case, all properly-formed messages sent to the kernel are returned to all open PF\_KEY sockets, including the sender. Improperly formed messages will result in errors, and an implementation MUST check for a properly formed message before returning it to the appropriate listeners. Unlike the routing socket, most errors are sent in reply messages, not the errno field when write() or send() fails. PF\_KEY message delivery is not guaranteed, especially in cases where kernel or socket buffers are exhausted and messages are dropped.



Some messages are generated by the operating system to indicate that actions need to be taken, and are not necessarily in response to any message sent down by the user. Such messages are not received by all PF\_KEY sockets, but by sockets which have indicated that kernel-originated messages are to be received. These messages are special because of the expected frequency at which they will occur. Also, an implementation may further wish to restrict return messages from the kernel, in cases where not all PF\_KEY sockets are in the same trust domain.

Many of the normal BSD socket calls have undefined behavior on PF\_KEY sockets. These include: `bind()`, `connect()`, `socketpair()`, `accept()`, `getpeername()`, `getsockname()`, `ioctl()`, and `listen()`.

### 1.5 Common PF\_KEY Operations

There are two basic ways to add a new Security Association into the kernel. The simplest is to send a single SADB\_ADD message, containing all of the SA information, from the application into the kernel's Key Engine. This approach works particularly well with manual key management, which is required for IPsec, and other security protocols.

The second approach to add a new Security Association into the kernel is for the application to first request a Security Parameters Index (SPI) value from the kernel using the SADB\_GETSPI message and then send an SADB\_UPDATE message with the complete Security Association data. This second approach works well with key management daemons when the SPI values need to be known before the entire Security Association data is known (e.g. so the SPI value can be indicated to the remote end of the key management session).

An individual Security Association can be deleted using the SADB\_DELETE message. Categories of SAs or the entire kernel SA table can be deleted using the SADB\_FLUSH message.

The SADB\_GET message is used by a trusted application-layer process (e.g. `routed(8)` or `gated(8)`) to retrieve an SA (e.g. RIP SA or OSPF SA) from the kernel's Key Engine.

The kernel or an application-layer can use the SADB\_ACQUIRE message to request that a Security Association be created by some application-layer key management process that has registered with the kernel via an SADB\_REGISTER message. This ACQUIRE message will have a sequence number associated with it. This sequence number MUST be used by followup SADB\_GETSPI, SADB\_UPDATE, and SADB\_ADD messages, in order to keep track of which request gets its keying material. The sequence number (described below) is similar to a transaction ID in a

remote procedure call.

The SADB\_EXPIRE message is sent from the kernel to key management applications when the "soft lifetime" or "hard lifetime" of a Security Association has expired. Key management applications should use receipt of a soft lifetime SADB\_EXPIRE message as a hint to negotiate a replacement SA so the replacement SA will be ready and in the kernel before it is needed.

A SADB\_DUMP message is also defined, but this is primarily intended for PF\_KEY implementor debugging and is not used in ordinary operation of PF\_KEY.

#### 1.6 Differences Between PF\_KEY and PF\_ROUTE

The following bullets are points of difference between the routing socket and PF\_KEY. Programmers who are used to the routing socket semantics will find some differences in PF\_KEY.

- \* PF\_KEY message errors are usually returned in PF\_KEY messages instead of causing write() operations to fail and returning the error number in errno. This means that other listeners on a PF\_KEY socket can be aware that requests from another process failed, which can be useful for auditing purposes. This also means that applications that fail to read PF\_KEY messages cannot do error checking.

An implementation MAY return the errors EINVAL, ENOMEM, and ENOBUFS by causing write() operations to fail and returning the error number in errno. This is an optimization for common error cases in which it does not make sense for any other process to receive the error. An application MUST NOT depend on such errors being set by the write() call, but it SHOULD check for such errors, and handle them in an appropriate manner.

- \* The entire message isn't always reflected in the reply. A SADB\_ADD message is an example of this.
- \* The PID is not set by the kernel. The process that originates the message MUST set the `sadb_msg_pid` to its own PID. If the kernel ORIGINATES a message, it MUST set the `sadb_msg_pid` to 0. A reply to an original message SHOULD have the pid of the original message. (E.g. the kernel's response to an SADB\_ADD SHOULD have its pid set to the pid value of the original SADB\_ADD message.)

### 1.7 Name Space

All PF\_KEYv2 preprocessor symbols and structure definitions are defined as a result of including the header file `<net/pfkeyv2.h>`. There is exactly one exception to this rule: the symbol "PF\_KEY" (two exceptions if "AF\_KEY" is also counted), which is defined as a result of including the header file `<sys/socket.h>`. All PF\_KEYv2 preprocessor symbols start with the prefix "SADB\_" and all structure names start with "sadb\_". There are exactly two exceptions to this rule: the symbol "PF\_KEY\_V2" and the symbol "PFKEYV2\_REVISION".

The symbol "PFKEYV2\_REVISION" is a date-encoded value not unlike certain values defined by POSIX and X/Open. The current value for PFKEYV2\_REVISION is 199806L, where 1998 is the year and 06 is the month.

Inclusion of the file `<net/pfkeyv2.h>` MUST NOT define symbols or structures in the PF\_KEYv2 name space that are not described in this document without the explicit prior permission of the authors. Any symbols or structures in the PF\_KEYv2 name space that are not described in this document MUST start with "SADB\_X\_" or "sadb\_x\_". An implementation that fails to obey these rules IS NOT COMPLIANT WITH THIS SPECIFICATION and MUST NOT make any claim to be. These rules also apply to any files that might be included as a result of including the file `<net/pfkeyv2.h>`. This rule provides implementors with some assurance that they will not encounter namespace-related surprises.

### 1.8 On Manual Keying

Not unlike the 4.4-Lite BSD PF\_ROUTE socket, this interface allows an application full-reign over the security associations in a kernel that implements PF\_KEY. A PF\_KEY implementation MUST have some sort of manual interface to PF\_KEY, which SHOULD allow all of the functionality of the programmatic interface described here.

## 2. PF\_KEY Message Format

PF\_KEY messages consist of a base header followed by additional data fields, some of which may be optional. The format of the additional data is dependent on the type of message.

PF\_KEY messages currently do not mandate any specific ordering for non-network multi-octet fields. Unless otherwise specified (e.g. SPI values), fields MUST be in host-specific byte order.

## 2.1 Base Message Header Format

PF\_KEY messages consist of the base message header followed by security association specific data whose types and lengths are specified by a generic type-length encoding.

This base header is shown below, using POSIX types. The fields are arranged primarily for alignment, and where possible, for reasons of clarity.

```
struct sadb_msg {
    uint8_t sadb_msg_version;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_type;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_errno;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_satype;
    uint16_t sadb_msg_len;
    uint16_t sadb_msg_reserved;
    uint32_t sadb_msg_seq;
    uint32_t sadb_msg_pid;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_msg) == 16 */
```

### sadb\_msg\_version

The version field of this PF\_KEY message. This MUST be set to PF\_KEY\_V2. If this is not set to PF\_KEY\_V2, the write() call MAY fail and return EINVAL. Otherwise, the behavior is undetermined, given that the application might not understand the formatting of the messages arriving from the kernel.

### sadb\_msg\_type

Identifies the type of message. The valid message types are described later in this document.

### sadb\_msg\_errno

Should be set to zero by the sender. The responder stores the error code in this field if an error has occurred. This includes the case where the responder is in user space. (e.g. user-space negotiation fails, an errno can be returned.)

### sadb\_msg\_satype

Indicates the type of security association(s). Valid Security Association types are declared in the file <net/pfkeyv2.h>. The current set of Security Association types is enumerated later in this document.

`sadb_msg_len` Contains the total length, in 64-bit words, of all data in the PF\_KEY message including the base header length and additional data after the base header, if any. This length includes any padding or extra space that might exist. Unless otherwise stated, all other length fields are also measured in 64-bit words.

On user to kernel messages, this field MUST be verified against the length of the inbound message. EMSGSIZE MUST be returned if the verification fails. On kernel to user messages, a size mismatch is most likely the result of the user not providing a large enough buffer for the message. In these cases, the user application SHOULD drop the message, but it MAY try and extract what information it can out of the message.

`sadb_msg_reserved` Reserved value. It MUST be zeroed by the sender. All fields labeled reserved later in the document have the same semantics as this field.

`sadb_msg_seq` Contains the sequence number of this message. This field, along with `sadb_msg_pid`, MUST be used to uniquely identify requests to a process. The sender is responsible for filling in this field. This responsibility also includes matching the `sadb_msg_seq` of a request (e.g. SADB\_ACQUIRE).

This field is similar to a transaction ID in a remote procedure call implementation.

`sadb_msg_pid` Identifies the process which originated this message, or which process a message is bound for. For example, if process id 2112 sends an SADB\_UPDATE message to the kernel, the process MUST set this field to 2112 and the kernel will set this field to 2112 in its reply to that SADB\_UPDATE message. This field, along with `sadb_msg_seq`, can be used to uniquely identify requests to a process.

It is currently assumed that a 32-bit quantity will hold an operating system's process ID space.

## 2.2 Alignment of Headers and Extension Headers

The base message header is a multiple of 64 bits and fields after it in memory will be 64 bit aligned if the base itself is 64 bit aligned. Some of the subsequent extension headers have 64 bit fields in them, and as a consequence need to be 64 bit aligned in an environment where 64 bit quantities need to be 64 bit aligned.

The basic unit of alignment and length in PF\_KEY Version 2 is 64 bits. Therefore:

- \* All extension headers, inclusive of the `sadb_ext` overlay fields, MUST be a multiple of 64 bits long.
- \* All variable length data MUST be padded appropriately such that its length in a message is a multiple of 64 bits.
- \* All length fields are, unless otherwise specified, in units of 64 bits.
- \* Implementations may safely access quantities of between 8 and 64 bits directly within a message without risk of alignment faults.

All PF\_KEYv2 structures are packed and already have all intended padding. Implementations MUST NOT insert any extra fields, including hidden padding, into any structure in this document. This forbids implementations from "extending" or "enhancing" existing headers without changing the extension header type. As a guard against such insertion of silent padding, each structure in this document is labeled with its size in bytes. The size of these structures in an implementation MUST match the size listed.

## 2.3 Additional Message Fields

The additional data following the base header consists of various length-type-values fields. The first 32-bits are of a constant form:

```
struct sadb_ext {
    uint16_t sadb_ext_len;
    uint16_t sadb_ext_type;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_ext) == 4 */
```

`sadb_ext_len`      Length of the extension header in 64 bit words, inclusive.

sadb\_ext\_type    The type of extension header that follows. Values for this field are detailed later. The value zero is reserved.

Types of extension headers include: Association, Lifetime(s), Address(s), Key(s), Identity(ies), Sensitivity, Proposal, and Supported. There MUST be only one instance of a extension type in a message. (e.g. Base, Key, Lifetime, Key is forbidden). An EINVAL will be returned if there are duplicate extensions within a message. Implementations MAY enforce ordering of extensions in the order presented in the EXTENSION HEADER VALUES section.

If an unknown extension type is encountered, it MUST be ignored. Applications using extension headers not specified in this document MUST be prepared to work around other system components not processing those headers. Likewise, if an application encounters an unknown extension from the kernel, it must be prepared to work around it. Also, a kernel that generates extra extension header types MUST NOT depend on applications also understanding extra extension header types.

All extension definitions include these two fields (len and exttype) because they are instances of a generic extension (not unlike sockaddr\_in and sockaddr\_in6 are instances of a generic sockaddr). The sadb\_ext header MUST NOT ever be present in a message without at least four bytes of extension header data following it, and, therefore, there is no problem with it being only four bytes long.

All extensions documented in this section MUST be implemented by a PF\_KEY implementation.

### 2.3.1 Association Extension

The Association extension specifies data specific to a single security association. The only times this extension is not present is when control messages (e.g. SADB\_FLUSH or SADB\_REGISTER) are being passed and on the SADB\_ACQUIRE message.

```
struct sadb_sa {
    uint16_t sadb_sa_len;
    uint16_t sadb_sa_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_sa_spi;
    uint8_t sadb_sa_replay;
    uint8_t sadb_sa_state;
    uint8_t sadb_sa_auth;
    uint8_t sadb_sa_encrypt;
    uint32_t sadb_sa_flags;
};
```

```
/* sizeof(struct sadb_sa) == 16 */
```

sadb_sa_spi	The Security Parameters Index value for the security association. Although this is a 32-bit field, some types of security associations might have an SPI or key identifier that is less than 32-bits long. In this case, the smaller value shall be stored in the least significant bits of this field and the unneeded bits shall be zero. This field MUST be in network byte order.
sadb_sa_replay	The size of the replay window, if not zero. If zero, then no replay window is in use.
sadb_sa_state	The state of the security association. The currently defined states are described later in this document.
sadb_sa_auth	The authentication algorithm to be used with this security association. The valid authentication algorithms are described later in this document. A value of zero means that no authentication is used for this security association.
sadb_sa_encrypt	The encryption algorithm to be used with this security association. The valid encryption algorithms are described later in this document. A value of zero means that no encryption is used for this security association.
sadb_sa_flags	A bitmap of options defined for the security association. The currently defined flags are described later in this document.

The kernel MUST check these values where appropriate. For example, IPsec AH with no authentication algorithm is probably an error.

When used with some messages, the values in some fields in this header should be ignored.

### 2.3.2 Lifetime Extension

The Lifetime extension specifies one or more lifetime variants for this security association. If no Lifetime extension is present the association has an infinite lifetime. An association SHOULD have a lifetime of some sort associated with it. Lifetime variants come in three varieties, HARD - indicating the hard-limit expiration, SOFT - indicating the soft-limit expiration, and CURRENT - indicating the current state of a given security association. The Lifetime



extension looks like:

```
struct sadb_lifetime {
    uint16_t sadb_lifetime_len;
    uint16_t sadb_lifetime_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_lifetime_allocations;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_usetime;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_lifetime) == 32 */
```

#### sadb\_lifetime\_allocations

For CURRENT, the number of different connections, endpoints, or flows that the association has been allocated towards. For HARD and SOFT, the number of these the association may be allocated towards before it expires. The concept of a connection, flow, or endpoint is system specific.

#### sadb\_lifetime\_bytes

For CURRENT, how many bytes have been processed using this security association. For HARD and SOFT, the number of bytes that may be processed using this security association before it expires.

#### sadb\_lifetime\_addtime

For CURRENT, the time, in seconds, when the association was created. For HARD and SOFT, the number of seconds after the creation of the association until it expires.

For such time fields, it is assumed that 64-bits is sufficiently large to hold the POSIX time\_t value. If this assumption is wrong, this field will have to be revisited.

#### sadb\_lifetime\_usetime

For CURRENT, the time, in seconds, when association was first used. For HARD and SOFT, the number of seconds after the first use of the association until it expires.

The semantics of lifetimes are inclusive-OR, first-to-expire. This means that if values for bytes and time, or multiple times, are passed in, the first of these values to be reached will cause a lifetime expiration.

### 2.3.3 Address Extension

The Address extension specifies one or more addresses that are associated with a security association. Address extensions for both source and destination MUST be present when an Association extension is present. The format of an Address extension is:

```
struct sadb_address {
    uint16_t sadb_address_len;
    uint16_t sadb_address_exttype;
    uint8_t sadb_address_proto;
    uint8_t sadb_address_prefixlen;
    uint16_t sadb_address_reserved;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_address) == 8 */

/* followed by some form of struct sockaddr */
```

The sockaddr structure SHOULD conform to the sockaddr structure of the system implementing PF\_KEY. If the system has an `sa_len` field, so SHOULD the sockaddrs in the message. If the system has NO `sa_len` field, the sockaddrs SHOULD NOT have an `sa_len` field. All non-address information in the sockaddrs, such as `sin_zero` for AF\_INET sockaddrs, and `sin6_flowinfo` for AF\_INET6 sockaddrs, MUST be zeroed out. The zeroing of ports (e.g. `sin_port` and `sin6_port`) MUST be done for all messages except for originating SADB\_ACQUIRE messages, which SHOULD fill them in with ports from the relevant TCP or UDP session which generates the ACQUIRE message. If the ports are non-zero, then the `sadb_address_proto` field, normally zero, MUST be filled in with the transport protocol's number. If the `sadb_address_prefixlen` is non-zero, then the address has a prefix (often used in KM access control decisions), with length specified in `sadb_address_prefixlen`. These additional fields may be useful to KM applications.

The SRC and DST addresses for a security association MUST be in the same protocol family and MUST always be present or absent together in a message. The PROXY address MAY be in a different protocol family, and for most security protocols, represents an actual originator of a packet. (For example, the inner-packets's source address in a tunnel.)

The SRC address MUST be a unicast or unspecified (e.g., INADDR\_ANY) address. The DST address can be any valid destination address (unicast, multicast, or even broadcast). The PROXY address SHOULD be a unicast address (there are experimental security protocols where PROXY semantics may be different than described above).

#### 2.3.4 Key Extension

The Key extension specifies one or more keys that are associated with a security association. A Key extension will not always be present with messages, because of security risks. The format of a Key extension is:

```
struct sadb_key {
    uint16_t sadb_key_len;
    uint16_t sadb_key_exttype;
    uint16_t sadb_key_bits;
    uint16_t sadb_key_reserved;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_key) == 8 */

/* followed by the key data */
```

`sadb_key_bits`    The length of the valid key data, in bits. A value of zero in `sadb_key_bits` MUST cause an error.

The key extension comes in two varieties. The AUTH version is used with authentication keys (e.g. IPsec AH, OSPF MD5) and the ENCRYPT version is used with encryption keys (e.g. IPsec ESP). PF\_KEY deals only with fully formed cryptographic keys, not with "raw key material". For example, when ISAKMP/Oakley is in use, the key management daemon is always responsible for transforming the result of the Diffie-Hellman computation into distinct fully formed keys PRIOR to sending those keys into the kernel via PF\_KEY. This rule is made because PF\_KEY is designed to support multiple security protocols (not just IP Security) and also multiple key management schemes including manual keying, which does not have the concept of "raw key material". A clean, protocol-independent interface is important for portability to different operating systems as well as for portability to different security protocols.

If an algorithm defines its key to include parity bits (e.g. DES) then the key used with PF\_KEY MUST also include those parity bits. For example, this means that a single DES key is always a 64-bit quantity.

When a particular security protocol only requires one authentication and/or one encryption key, the fully formed key is transmitted using the appropriate key extension. When a particular security protocol requires more than one key for the same function (e.g. Triple-DES using 2 or 3 keys, and asymmetric algorithms), then those two fully formed keys MUST be concatenated together in the order used for outbound packet processing. In the case of multiple keys, the algorithm MUST be able to determine the lengths of the individual

keys based on the information provided. The total key length (when combined with knowledge of the algorithm in use) usually provides sufficient information to make this determination.

Keys are always passed through the PF\_KEY interface in the order that they are used for outbound packet processing. For inbound processing, the correct order that keys are used might be different from this canonical concatenation order used with the PF\_KEY interface. It is the responsibility of the implementation to use the keys in the correct order for both inbound and outbound processing.

For example, consider a pair of nodes communicating unicast using an ESP three-key Triple-DES Security Association. Both the outbound SA on the sender node, and the inbound SA on the receiver node will contain key-A, followed by key-B, followed by key-C in their respective ENCRYPT key extensions. The outbound SA will use key-A first, followed by key-B, then key-C when encrypting. The inbound SA will use key-C, followed by key-B, then key-A when decrypting. (NOTE: We are aware that 3DES is actually encrypt-decrypt-encrypt.) The canonical ordering of key-A, key-B, key-C is used for 3DES, and should be documented. The order of "encryption" is the canonical order for this example. [Sch96]

The key data bits are arranged most-significant to least significant. For example, a 22-bit key would take up three octets, with the least significant two bits not containing key material. Five additional octets would then be used for padding to the next 64-bit boundary.

While not directly related to PF\_KEY, there is a user interface issue regarding odd-digit hexadecimal representation of keys. Consider the example of the 16-bit number:

0x123

That will require two octets of storage. In the absence of other information, however, unclear whether the value shown is stored as:

01 23                      OR                      12 30

It is the opinion of the authors that the former (0x123 == 0x0123) is the better way to interpret this ambiguity. Extra information (for example, specifying 0x0123 or 0x1230, or specifying that this is only a twelve-bit number) would solve this problem.

### 2.3.5 Identity Extension

The Identity extension contains endpoint identities. This information is used by key management to select the identity certificate that is used in negotiations. This information may also be provided by a kernel to network security aware applications to identify the remote entity, possibly for access control purposes. If this extension is not present, key management MUST assume that the addresses in the Address extension are the only identities for this Security Association. The Identity extension looks like:

```
struct sadb_ident {
    uint16_t sadb_ident_len;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_exttype;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_type;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_reserved;
    uint64_t sadb_ident_id;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_ident) == 16 */

/* followed by the identity string, if present */
```

**sadb\_ident\_type** The type of identity information that follows. Currently defined identity types are described later in this document.

**sadb\_ident\_id** An identifier used to aid in the construction of an identity string if none is present. A POSIX user id value is one such identifier that will be used in this field. Use of this field is described later in this document.

A C string containing a textual representation of the identity information optionally follows the `sadb_ident` extension. The format of this string is determined by the value in `sadb_ident_type`, and is described later in this document.

### 2.3.6 Sensitivity Extension

The Sensitivity extension contains security labeling information for a security association. If this extension is not present, no sensitivity-related data can be obtained from this security association. If this extension is present, then the need for explicit security labeling on the packet is obviated.

```
struct sadb_sens {
    uint16_t sadb_sens_len;
    uint16_t sadb_sens_exttype;
```

```

        uint32_t sadb_sens_dpd;
        uint8_t sadb_sens_sens_level;
        uint8_t sadb_sens_sens_len;
        uint8_t sadb_sens_integ_level;
        uint8_t sadb_sens_integ_len;
        uint32_t sadb_sens_reserved;
    };
    /* sizeof(struct sadb_sens) == 16 */

    /* followed by:
        uint64_t sadb_sens_bitmap[sens_len];
        uint64_t sadb_integ_bitmap[integ_len]; */

sadb_sens_dpd    Describes the protection domain, which allows
                  interpretation of the levels and compartment
                  bitmaps.
sadb_sens_sens_level
                  The sensitivity level.
sadb_sens_sens_len
                  The length, in 64 bit words, of the sensitivity
                  bitmap.
sadb_sens_integ_level
                  The integrity level.
sadb_sens_integ_len
                  The length, in 64 bit words, of the integrity
                  bitmap.

```

This sensitivity extension is designed to support the Bell-LaPadula [BL74] security model used in compartmented-mode or multi-level secure systems, the Clark-Wilson [CW87] commercial security model, and/or the Biba integrity model [Biba77]. These formal models can be used to implement a wide variety of security policies. The definition of a particular security policy is outside the scope of this document. Each of the bitmaps MUST be padded to a 64-bit boundary if they are not implicitly 64-bit aligned.

### 2.3.7 Proposal Extension

The Proposal extension contains a "proposed situation" of algorithm preferences. It looks like:

```

struct sadb_prop {
    uint16_t sadb_prop_len;
    uint16_t sadb_prop_exttype;
    uint8_t sadb_prop_replay;
    uint8_t sadb_prop_reserved[3];
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_prop) == 8 */

```

```

/* followed by:
   struct sadb_comb sadb_combs[(sadb_prop_len *
                                sizeof(uint64_t) - sizeof(struct sadb_prop)) /
                                sizeof(struct sadb_comb)]; */

```

Following the header is a list of proposed parameter combinations in preferential order. The values in these fields have the same definition as the fields those values will move into if the combination is chosen.

NOTE: Some algorithms in some security protocols will have variable IV lengths per algorithm. Variable length IVs are not supported by PF\_KEY v2. If they were, however, proposed IV lengths would go in the Proposal Extension.

These combinations look like:

```

struct sadb_comb {
    uint8_t sadb_comb_auth;
    uint8_t sadb_comb_encrypt;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_flags;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_auth_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_auth_maxbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_encrypt_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_encrypt_maxbits;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_reserved;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_soft_allocations;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_hard_allocations;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_usetime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_usetime;
};

/* sizeof(struct sadb_comb) == 72 */

```

sadb\_comb\_auth If this combination is accepted, this will be the value of sadb\_sa\_auth.

sadb\_comb\_encrypt If this combination is accepted, this will be the value of sadb\_sa\_encrypt.

sadb\_comb\_auth\_minbits;

sadb\_comb\_auth\_maxbits;

The minimum and maximum acceptable authentication key lengths, respectively, in bits. If sadb\_comb\_auth is zero, both of these values MUST be zero. If sadb\_comb\_auth is nonzero, both of these values MUST be nonzero. If this combination is accepted, a value between these (inclusive) will be stored in the sadb\_key\_bits field of KEY\_AUTH. The minimum MUST NOT be greater than the maximum.

sadb\_comb\_encrypt\_minbits;

sadb\_comb\_encrypt\_maxbits;

The minimum and maximum acceptable encryption key lengths, respectively, in bits. If sadb\_comb\_encrypt is zero, both of these values MUST be zero. If sadb\_comb\_encrypt is nonzero, both of these values MUST be nonzero. If this combination is accepted, a value between these (inclusive) will be stored in the sadb\_key\_bits field of KEY\_ENCRYPT. The minimum MUST NOT be greater than the maximum.

sadb\_comb\_soft\_allocations

sadb\_comb\_hard\_allocations

If this combination is accepted, these are proposed values of sadb\_lifetime\_allocations in the SOFT and HARD lifetimes, respectively.

sadb\_comb\_soft\_bytes

sadb\_comb\_hard\_bytes

If this combination is accepted, these are proposed values of sadb\_lifetime\_bytes in the SOFT and HARD lifetimes, respectively.

sadb\_comb\_soft\_addtime

sadb\_comb\_hard\_addtime

If this combination is accepted, these are proposed values of sadb\_lifetime\_addtime in the SOFT and HARD lifetimes, respectively.

sadb\_comb\_soft\_usetime

sadb\_comb\_hard\_usetime

If this combination is accepted, these are proposed values of sadb\_lifetime\_usetime in the SOFT and HARD lifetimes, respectively.



Each combination has an authentication and encryption algorithm, which may be 0, indicating none. A combination's flags are the same as the flags in the Association extension. The minimum and maximum key lengths (which are in bits) are derived from possible a priori policy decisions, along with basic properties of the algorithm. Lifetime attributes are also included in a combination, as some algorithms may know something about their lifetimes and can suggest lifetime limits.

### 2.3.8 Supported Algorithms Extension

The Supported Algorithms extension contains a list of all algorithms supported by the system. This tells key management what algorithms it can negotiate. Available authentication algorithms are listed in the SUPPORTED\_AUTH extension and available encryption algorithms are listed in the SUPPORTED\_ENCRYPT extension. The format of these extensions is:

```
struct sadb_supported {
    uint16_t sadb_supported_len;
    uint16_t sadb_supported_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_supported_reserved;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_supported) == 8 */

/* followed by:
   struct sadb_alg sadb_algs[(sadb_supported_len *
    sizeof(uint64_t) - sizeof(struct sadb_supported)) /
    sizeof(struct sadb_alg)]; */
```

This header is followed by one or more algorithm descriptions. An algorithm description looks like:

```
struct sadb_alg {
    uint8_t sadb_alg_id;
    uint8_t sadb_alg_ivlen;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_maxbits;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_reserved;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_alg) == 8 */
```

`sadb_alg_id`     The algorithm identification value for this algorithm. This is the value that is stored in `sadb_sa_auth` or `sadb_sa_encrypt` if this algorithm is selected.

`sadb_alg_ivlen` The length of the initialization vector to be used for the algorithm. If an IV is not needed, this value MUST be set to zero.

`sadb_alg_minbits`  
The minimum acceptable key length, in bits. A value of zero is invalid.

`sadb_alg_maxbits`  
The maximum acceptable key length, in bits. A value of zero is invalid. The minimum MUST NOT be greater than the maximum.

### 2.3.9 SPI Range Extension

One PF\_KEY message, `SADB_GETSPI`, might need a range of acceptable SPI values. This extension performs such a function.

```
struct sadb_spirange {  
    uint16_t sadb_spirange_len;  
    uint16_t sadb_spirange_exttype;  
    uint32_t sadb_spirange_min;  
    uint32_t sadb_spirange_max;  
    uint32_t sadb_spirange_reserved;  
};  
/* sizeof(struct sadb_spirange) == 16 */
```

`sadb_spirange_min`  
The minimum acceptable SPI value.

`sadb_spirange_max`  
The maximum acceptable SPI value. The maximum MUST be greater than or equal to the minimum.

## 2.4 Illustration of Message Layout

The following shows how the octets are laid out in a PF\_KEY message. Optional fields are indicated as such.

The base header is as follows:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+-----+								+-----+								+-----+								+-----+							
...version								sadb_msg_type								sadb_msg_errno								...msg_satype							
+-----+								+-----+								+-----+								+-----+							
sadb_msg_len																sadb_msg_reserved															
+-----+								+-----+								+-----+								+-----+							
sadb_msg_seq																															
+-----+								+-----+								+-----+								+-----+							
sadb_msg_pid																															
+-----+								+-----+								+-----+								+-----+							

The base header may be followed by one or more of the following extension fields, depending on the values of various base header fields. The following fields are ordered such that if they appear, they SHOULD appear in the order presented below.

An extension field MUST not be repeated. If there is a situation where an extension MUST be repeated, it should be brought to the attention of the authors.

The Association extension

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+							
sadb_sa_len								sadb_sa_exttype																							
+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+							
sadb_sa_spi																															
+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+							
...replay								sadb_sa_state								sadb_sa_auth								sadb_sa_encrypt							
+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+							
sadb_sa_flags																															
+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+								+-----+-----+-----+-----+							

The Lifetime extension

+-----+-----+-----+-----+															
sadb_lifetime_len								sadb_lifetime_exttype							
+-----+-----+-----+-----+															
sadb_lifetime_allocations															
+-----+-----+-----+-----+															

	sadb_lifetime_bytes	
	(64 bits)	
	sadb_lifetime_addtime	
	(64 bits)	
	sadb_lifetime_usetime	
	(64 bits)	

The Address extension

	sadb_address_len		sadb_address_exttype	
	_address_proto		..._prefixlen	
			sadb_address_reserved	
>	Some form of 64-bit aligned struct sockaddr goes here.			<

The Key extension

	sadb_key_len		sadb_key_exttype	
	sadb_key_bits		sadb_key_reserved	
>	A key, padded to 64-bits, most significant bits to least.			>

The Identity extension

	sadb_ident_len		sadb_ident_exttype	
	sadb_ident_type		sadb_ident_reserved	
	sadb_ident_id			
	(64 bits)			
>	A null-terminated C-string which MUST be padded out for			>
<	64-bit alignment.			<

## The Sensitivity extension

+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
	sadb_sens_len		sadb_sens_exttype
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
	sadb_sens_dpd		
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
	...sens_level		...sens_len
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
	sadb_sens_reserved		
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
>	The sensitivity bitmap, followed immediately by the		<
<	integrity bitmap, each is an array of uint64_t.		>
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			

## The Proposal extension

+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
	sadb_prop_len		sadb_prop_exttype
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
...prop_replay		sadb_prop_reserved	
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			
>	One or more combinations, specified as follows...		<
+-----+-----+-----+-----+			

## Combination

+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_auth	sadb_comb_encr	sadb_comb_flags			
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_auth_minbits		sadb_comb_auth_maxbits			
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_encrypt_minbits		sadb_comb_encrypt_maxbits			
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_reserved					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_soft_allocations					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_hard_allocations					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_soft_bytes					
(64 bits)					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_hard_bytes					
(64 bits)					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
sadb_comb_soft_addtime					
(64 bits)					
+-----+-----+-----+-----+					

	sadb_comb_hard_addtime	
	(64 bits)	
	sadb_comb_soft_usetime	
	(64 bits)	
	sadb_comb_hard_usetime	
	(64 bits)	

The Supported Algorithms extension

	sadb_supported_len		sadb_supported_exttype	
	sadb_supported_reserved			

Followed by one or more Algorithm Descriptors

	sadb_alg_id		sadb_alg_ivlen		sadb_alg_minbits	
	sadb_alg_maxbits			sadb_alg_reserved		

The SPI Range extension

	sadb_spirange_len		sadb_spirange_exttype	
	sadb_spirange_min			
	sadb_spirange_max			
	sadb_spirange_reserved			

### 3 Symbolic Names

This section defines various symbols used with PF\_KEY and the semantics associated with each symbol. Applications MUST use the symbolic names in order to be portable. The numeric definitions shown are for illustrative purposes, unless explicitly stated otherwise. The numeric definition MAY vary on other systems. The symbolic name MUST be kept the same for all conforming implementations.

### 3.1 Message Types

The following message types are used with PF\_KEY. These are defined in the file <net/pfkeyv2.h>.

```
#define SADB_RESERVED      0
#define SADB_GETSPI        1
#define SADB_UPDATE        2
#define SADB_ADD            3
#define SADB_DELETE        4
#define SADB_GET            5
#define SADB_ACQUIRE       6
#define SADB_REGISTER       7
#define SADB_EXPIRE        8
#define SADB_FLUSH         9

#define SADB_DUMP          10    /* not used normally */

#define SADB_MAX            10
```

Each message has a behavior. A behavior is defined as where the initial message travels (e.g. user to kernel), and what subsequent actions are expected to take place. Contents of messages are illustrated as:

<base, REQUIRED EXTENSION, REQ., (OPTIONAL EXT.,) (OPT)>

The SA extension is sometimes used only for its SPI field. If all other fields MUST be ignored, this is represented by "SA(\*)".

The lifetime extensions are represented with one to three letters after the word "lifetime," representing (H)ARD, (S)OFT, and (C)URRENT.

The address extensions are represented with one to three letters after the word "address," representing (S)RC, (D)ST, (P)ROXY.

NOTE: Some security association types do not use a source address for SA identification, where others do. This may cause EEXIST errors for some SA types where others do not report collisions. It is expected that application authors know enough about the underlying security association types to understand these differences.

The key extensions are represented with one or two letters after the word "key," representing (A)UTH and (E)NCRYPT.

The identity extensions are represented with one or two letters after the word "identity," representing (S)RC and (D)ST.

In the case of an error, only the base header is returned.

Note that any standard error could be returned for any message.

Typically, they will be either one of the errors specifically listed in the description for a message or one of the following:

- EINVAL Various message improprieties, including SPI ranges that are malformed.
- ENOMEM Needed memory was not available.
- ENOBUFFS Needed memory was not available.
- EMSGSIZ The message exceeds the maximum length allowed.

### 3.1.1 SADB\_GETSPI

The SADB\_GETSPI message allows a process to obtain a unique SPI value for given security association type, source address, and destination address. This message followed by an SADB\_UPDATE is one way to create a security association (SADB\_ADD is the other method). The process specifies the type in the base header, the source and destination address in address extension. If the SADB\_GETSPI message is in response to a kernel-generated SADB\_ACQUIRE, the `sadb_msg_seq` MUST be the same as the SADB\_ACQUIRE message. The application may also specify the SPI. This is done by having the kernel select within a range of SPI values by using the SPI range extension. To specify a single SPI value to be verified, the application sets the high and low values to be equal. Permitting range specification is important because the kernel can allocate an SPI value based on what it knows about SPI values already in use. The kernel returns the same message with the allocated SPI value stored in the `spi` field of an association extension. The allocated SPI (and destination address) refer to a LARVAL security association. An SADB\_UPDATE message can later be used to add an entry with the requested SPI value.

It is recommended that associations that are created with SADB\_GETSPI SHOULD be automatically deleted within a fixed amount of time if they are not updated by an SADB\_UPDATE message. This allows SA storage not to get cluttered with larval associations.

The message behavior of the SADB\_GETSPI message is:

Send an SADB\_GETSPI message from a user process to the kernel.

<base, address, SPI range>



The kernel returns the SADB\_GETSPI message to all listening processes.

<base, SA(\*), address(SD)>

Errors:

EEXIST Requested SPI or SPI range is not available or already used.

### 3.1.2 SADB\_UPDATE Message

The SADB\_UPDATE message allows a process to update the information in an existing Security Association. Since SADB\_GETSPI does not allow setting of certain parameters, this message is needed to fully form the SADB\_SASTATE\_LARVAL security association created with SADB\_GETSPI. The format of the update message is a base header, followed by an association header and possibly by several extension headers. The kernel searches for the security association with the same type, spi, source address and destination address specified in the message and updates the Security Association information using the content of the SADB\_UPDATE message.

The kernel MAY disallow SADB\_UPDATE to succeed unless the message is issued from the same socket that created the security association. Such enforcement significantly reduces the chance of accidental changes to an in-use security association. Malicious trusted parties could still issue an SADB\_FLUSH or SADB\_DELETE message, but deletion of associations is more easily detected and less likely to occur accidentally than an erroneous SADB\_UPDATE. The counter argument to supporting this behavior involves the case where a user-space key management application fails and is restarted. The new instance of the application will not have the same socket as the creator of the security association.

The kernel MUST sanity check all significant values submitted in an SADB\_UPDATE message before changing the SA in its database and MUST return EINVAL if any of the values are invalid. Examples of checks that should be performed are DES key parity bits, key length checking, checks for keys known to be weak for the specified algorithm, and checks for flags or parameters known to be incompatible with the specified algorithm.

Only SADB\_SASTATE\_MATURE SAs may be submitted in an SADB\_UPDATE message. If the original SA is an SADB\_SASTATE\_LARVAL SA, then any value in the SA may be changed except for the source address, destination address, and SPI. If the original SA is an SADB\_SASTATE\_DEAD SA, any attempt to perform an SADB\_UPDATE on the SA

MUST return EINVAL. It is not valid for established keying or algorithm information to change without the SPI changing, which would require creation of a new SA rather than a change to an existing SA. Once keying and algorithm information is negotiated, address and identity information is fixed for the SA. Therefore, if the original SA is an SADB\_SASTATE\_MATURE or DYING SA, only the `sadb_sa_state` field in the SA header and lifetimes (hard, soft, and current) may be changed and any attempt to change other values MUST result in an error return of EINVAL.

The message behavior of the SADB\_UPDATE message is:

Send an SADB\_UPDATE message from a user process to the kernel.

```
<base, SA, (lifetime(HSC),) address(SD), (address(P),)
  key(AE), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity)>
```

The kernel returns the SADB\_UPDATE message to all listening processes.

```
<base, SA, (lifetime(HSC),) address(SD), (address(P),)
  (identity(SD),) (sensitivity)>
```

The keying material is not returned on the message from the kernel to listening sockets because listeners might not have the privileges to see such keying material.

Errors:

- ESRCH The security association to be updated was not found.
- EINVAL In addition to other possible causes, this error is returned if sanity checking on the SA values (such as the keys) fails.
- EACCES Insufficient privilege to update entry. The socket issuing the SADB\_UPDATE is not creator of the entry to be updated.

### 3.1.3 SADB\_ADD

The SADB\_ADD message is nearly identical to the SADB\_UPDATE message, except that it does not require a previous call to SADB\_GETSPI. The SADB\_ADD message is used in manual keying applications, and in other cases where the uniqueness of the SPI is known immediately.

An SADB\_ADD message is also used when negotiation is finished, and the second of a pair of associations is added. The SPI for this association was determined by the peer machine. The `sadb_msg_seq`

MUST be set to the value set in a kernel-generated SADB\_ACQUIRE so that both associations in a pair are bound to the same ACQUIRE request.

The kernel MUST sanity check all used fields in the SA submitted in an SADB\_ADD message before adding the SA to its database and MUST return EINVAL if any of the values are invalid.

Only SADB\_SASTATE\_MATURE SAs may be submitted in an SADB\_ADD message. SADB\_SASTATE\_LARVAL SAs are created by SADB\_GETSPI and it is not sensible to add a new SA in the DYING or SADB\_SASTATE\_DEAD state. Therefore, the `sadb_sa_state` field of all submitted SAs MUST be SADB\_SASTATE\_MATURE and the kernel MUST return an error if this is not true.

The message behavior of the SADB\_ADD message is:

Send an SADB\_ADD message from a user process to the kernel.

```
<base, SA, (lifetime(HS),) address(SD), (address(P),)
  key(AE), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity)>
```

The kernel returns the SADB\_ADD message to all listening processes.

```
<base, SA, (lifetime(HS),) address(SD), (identity(SD),)
  (sensitivity)>
```

The keying material is not returned on the message from the kernel to listening sockets because listeners may not have the privileges to see such keying material.

Errors:

EEXIST	The security association that was to be added already exists.
EINVAL	In addition to other possible causes, this error is returned if sanity checking on the SA values (such as the keys) fails.

#### 3.1.4 SADB\_DELETE

The SADB\_DELETE message causes the kernel to delete a Security Association from the key table. The delete message consists of the base header followed by the association, and the source and destination sockaddrs in the address extension. The kernel deletes the security association matching the type, spi, source address, and destination address in the message.

The message behavior for SADB\_DELETE is as follows:

Send an SADB\_DELETE message from a user process to the kernel.

<base, SA(\*), address(SD)>

The kernel returns the SADB\_DELETE message to all listening processes.

<base, SA(\*), address(SD)>

### 3.1.5 SADB\_GET

The SADB\_GET message allows a process to retrieve a copy of a Security Association from the kernel's key table. The get message consists of the base header followed by the relevant extension fields. The Security Association matching the type, spi, source address, and destination address is returned.

The message behavior of the SADB\_GET message is:

Send an SADB\_GET message from a user process to the kernel.

<base, SA(\*), address(SD)>

The kernel returns the SADB\_GET message to the socket that sent the SADB\_GET message.

<base, SA, (lifetime(HSC),) address(SD), (address(P),) key(AE),  
(identity(SD),) (sensitivity)>

Errors:

ESRCH    The sought security association was not found.

### 3.1.6 SADB\_ACQUIRE

The SADB\_ACQUIRE message is typically sent only by the kernel to key socket listeners who have registered their key socket (see SADB\_REGISTER message). SADB\_ACQUIRE messages can be sent by application-level consumers of security associations (such as an OSPFv2 implementation that uses OSPF security). The SADB\_ACQUIRE message is a base header along with an address extension, possibly an identity extension, and a proposal extension. The proposed situation contains a list of desirable algorithms that can be used if the algorithms in the base header are not available. The values for the fields in the base header and in the security association data which follows the base header indicate the properties of the Security Association that the listening process should attempt to acquire. If

the message originates from the kernel (i.e. the `sadb_msg_pid` is 0), the `sadb_msg_seq` number MUST be used by a subsequent `SADB_GETSPI` and `SADB_UPDATE`, or subsequent `SADB_ADD` message to bind a security association to the request. This avoids the race condition of two TCP connections between two IP hosts that each require unique associations, and having one steal another's security association. The `sadb_msg_errno` and `sadb_msg_state` fields should be ignored by the listening process.

The `SADB_ACQUIRE` message is typically triggered by an outbound packet that needs security but for which there is no applicable Security Association existing in the key table. If the packet can be sufficiently protected by more than one algorithm or combination of options, the `SADB_ACQUIRE` message MUST order the preference of possibilities in the Proposal extension.

There are three messaging behaviors for `SADB_ACQUIRE`. The first is where the kernel needs a security association (e.g. for IPsec).

The kernel sends an `SADB_ACQUIRE` message to registered sockets.

```
<base, address(SD), (address(P)), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,)
  proposal>
```

NOTE: The `address(SD)` extensions MUST have the port fields filled in with the port numbers of the session requiring keys if appropriate.

The second is when, for some reason, key management fails, it can send an `ACQUIRE` message with the same `sadb_msg_seq` as the initial `ACQUIRE` with a non-zero `errno`.

Send an `SADB_ACQUIRE` to indicate key management failure.

```
<base>
```

The third is where an application-layer consumer of security associations (e.g. an OSPFv2 or RIPv2 daemon) needs a security association.

Send an `SADB_ACQUIRE` message from a user process to the kernel.

```
<base, address(SD), (address(P),) (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,)
  proposal>
```

The kernel returns an `SADB_ACQUIRE` message to registered sockets.

```
<base, address(SD), (address(P),) (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,)
  proposal>
```

The user-level consumer waits for an SADB\_UPDATE or SADB\_ADD message for its particular type, and then can use that association by using SADB\_GET messages.

Errors:

EINVAL Invalid acquire request.  
EPROTONOSUPPORT No KM application has registered with the Key Engine as being able to obtain the requested SA type, so the requested SA cannot be acquired.

### 3.1.7 SADB\_REGISTER

The SADB\_REGISTER message allows an application to register its key socket as able to acquire new security associations for the kernel. SADB\_REGISTER allows a socket to receive SADB\_ACQUIRE messages for the type of security association specified in `sadb_msg_satype`. The application specifies the type of security association that it can acquire for the kernel in the type field of its register message. If an application can acquire multiple types of security association, it MUST register each type in a separate message. Only the base header is needed for the register message. Key management applications MAY register for a type not known to the kernel, because the consumer may be in user-space (e.g. OSPFv2 security).

The reply of the SADB\_REGISTER message contains a supported algorithm extension. That field contains an array of supported algorithms, one per octet. This allows key management applications to know what algorithm are supported by the kernel.

In an environment where algorithms can be dynamically loaded and unloaded, an asynchronous SADB\_REGISTER reply MAY be generated. The list of supported algorithms MUST be a complete list, so the application can make note of omissions or additions.

The messaging behavior of the SADB\_REGISTER message is:

Send an SADB\_REGISTER message from a user process to the kernel.

```
<base>
```

The kernel returns an SADB\_REGISTER message to registered sockets, with algorithm types supported by the kernel being indicated in the supported algorithms field.

NOTE: This message may arrive asynchronously due to an algorithm being loaded or unloaded into a dynamically linked kernel.

<base, supported>

### 3.1.8 SADB\_EXPIRE Message

The operating system kernel is responsible for tracking SA expirations for security protocols that are implemented inside the kernel. If the soft limit or hard limit of a Security Association has expired for a security protocol implemented inside the kernel, then the kernel MUST issue an SADB\_EXPIRE message to all key socket listeners. If the soft limit or hard limit of a Security Association for a user-level security protocol has expired, the user-level protocol SHOULD issue an SADB\_EXPIRE message.

The base header will contain the security association information followed by the source sockaddr, destination sockaddr, (and, if present, internal sockaddr,) (and, if present, one or both compartment bitmaps).

The lifetime extension of an SADB\_EXPIRE message is important to indicate which lifetime expired. If a HARD lifetime extension is included, it indicates that the HARD lifetime expired. This means the association MAY be deleted already from the SADB. If a SOFT lifetime extension is included, it indicates that the SOFT lifetime expired. The CURRENT lifetime extension will indicate the current status, and comparisons to the HARD or SOFT lifetime will indicate which limit was reached. HARD lifetimes MUST take precedence over SOFT lifetimes, meaning if the HARD and SOFT lifetimes are the same, the HARD lifetime will appear on the EXPIRE message. The pathological case of HARD lifetimes being shorter than SOFT lifetimes is handled such that the SOFT lifetime will never expire.

The messaging behavior of the SADB\_EXPIRE message is:

The kernel sends an SADB\_EXPIRE message to all listeners when the soft limit of a security association has been expired.

<base, SA, lifetime(C and one of HS), address(SD)>

Note that the SADB\_EXPIRE message is ONLY sent by the kernel to the KMD. It is a one-way informational message that does not have a reply.

### 3.1.9 SADB\_FLUSH

The SADB\_FLUSH message causes the kernel to delete all entries in its key table for a certain `sadb_msg_satype`. Only the base header is required for a flush message. If `sadb_msg_satype` is filled in with a specific value, only associations of that type are deleted. If it is filled in with `SADB_SATYPE_UNSPEC`, ALL associations are deleted.

The messaging behavior for SADB\_FLUSH is:

Send an SADB\_FLUSH message from a user process to the kernel.

<base>

The kernel will return an SADB\_FLUSH message to all listening sockets.

<base>

The reply message happens only after the actual flushing of security associations has been attempted.

### 3.1.10 SADB\_DUMP

The SADB\_DUMP message causes the kernel to dump the operating system's entire Key Table to the requesting key socket. As in SADB\_FLUSH, if a `sadb_msg_satype` value is in the message, only associations of that type will be dumped. If `SADB_SATYPE_UNSPEC` is specified, all associations will be dumped. Each Security Association is returned in its own SADB\_DUMP message. A SADB\_DUMP message with a `sadb_seq` field of zero indicates the end of the dump transaction. The dump message is used for debugging purposes only and is not intended for production use.

Support for the dump message MAY be discontinued in future versions of PF\_KEY. Key management applications MUST NOT depend on this message for basic operation.

The messaging behavior for SADB\_DUMP is:

Send an SADB\_DUMP message from a user process to the kernel.

<base>

Several SADB\_DUMP messages will return from the kernel to the sending socket.



```
<base, SA, (lifetime (HSC),) address(SD), (address(P),)
  key(AE), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity)>
```

### 3.2 Security Association Flags

The Security Association's flags are a bitmask field. These flags also appear in a combination that is part of a PROPOSAL extension. The related symbolic definitions below should be used in order that applications will be portable:

```
#define SADB_SAFLAGS_PFS 1      /* perfect forward secrecy */
```

The SADB\_SAFLAGS\_PFS flag indicates to key management that this association should have perfect forward secrecy in its key. (In other words, any given session key cannot be determined by cryptanalysis of previous session keys or some master key.)

### 3.3 Security Association States

The security association state field is an integer that describes the states of a security association. They are:

```
#define SADB_SASTATE_LARVAL 0
#define SADB_SASTATE_MATURE 1
#define SADB_SASTATE_DYING 2
#define SADB_SASTATE_DEAD 3

#define SADB_SASTATE_MAX 3
```

A SADB\_SASTATE\_LARVAL security association is one that was created by the SADB\_GETSPI message. A SADB\_SASTATE\_MATURE association is one that was updated with the SADB\_UPDATE message or added with the SADB\_ADD message. A DYING association is one whose soft lifetime has expired. A SADB\_SASTATE\_DEAD association is one whose hard lifetime has expired, but hasn't been reaped by system garbage collection. If a consumer of security associations has to extend an association beyond its normal lifetime (e.g. OSPF Security) it MUST only set the soft lifetime for an association.

### 3.4 Security Association Types

This defines the type of Security Association in this message. The symbolic names are always the same, even on different implementations. Applications SHOULD use the symbolic name in order to have maximum portability across different implementations. These are defined in the file <net/pfkeyv2.h>.

```
#define SADB_SATYPE_UNSPEC      0

#define SADB_SATYPE_AH          2  /* RFC-1826 */
#define SADB_SATYPE_ESP         3  /* RFC-1827 */

#define SADB_SATYPE_RSVP        5  /* RSVP Authentication */
#define SADB_SATYPE_OSPFV2      6  /* OSPFv2 Authentication */
#define SADB_SATYPE_RIPV2       7  /* RIPv2 Authentication */
#define SADB_SATYPE_MIP         8  /* Mobile IP Auth. */

#define SADB_SATYPE_MAX         8
```

SADB\_SATYPE\_UNSPEC is defined for completeness and means no specific type of security association. This type is never used with PF\_KEY SAs.

SADB\_SATYPE\_AH is for the IP Authentication Header [Atk95b].

SADB\_SATYPE\_ESP is for the IP Encapsulating Security Payload [Atk95c].

SADB\_SATYPE\_RSVP is for the RSVP Integrity Object.

SADB\_SATYPE\_OSPFV2 is for OSPFv2 Cryptographic authentication [Moy98].

SADB\_SATYPE\_RIPV2 is for RIPv2 Cryptographic authentication [BA97].

SADB\_SATYPE\_MIP is for Mobile IP's authentication extensions [Per97].

SADB\_SATYPE\_MAX is always set to the highest valid numeric value.

### 3.5 Algorithm Types

The algorithm type is interpreted in the context of the Security Association type defined above. The numeric value might vary between implementations, but the symbolic name MUST NOT vary between implementations. Applications should use the symbolic name in order to have maximum portability to various implementations.

Some of the algorithm types defined below might not be standardized or might be deprecated in the future. To obtain an assignment for a symbolic name, contact the authors.

The symbols below are defined in <net/pfkeyv2.h>.

```
/* Authentication algorithms */
#define SADB_AALG_NONE          0
#define SADB_AALG_MD5HMAC      2
#define SADB_AALG_SHA1HMAC     3
#define SADB_AALG_MAX          3

/* Encryption algorithms */
#define SADB_EALG_NONE          0
#define SADB_EALG_DESCBC       2
#define SADB_EALG_3DESCBC      3
#define SADB_EALG_NULL         11
#define SADB_EALG_MAX          11
```

The algorithm for SADB\_AALG\_MD5\_HMAC is defined in [MG98a]. The algorithm for SADB\_AALG\_SHA1HMAC is defined in [MG98b]. The algorithm for SADB\_EALG\_DESCBC is defined in [MD98]. SADB\_EALG\_NULL is the NULL encryption algorithm, defined in [GK98]. The SADB\_EALG\_NONE value is not to be used in any security association except those which have no possible encryption algorithm in them (e.g. IPsec AH).

### 3.6 Extension Header Values

To briefly recap the extension header values:

```
#define SADB_EXT_RESERVED      0
#define SADB_EXT_SA            1
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_CURRENT 2
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_HARD  3
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_SOFT  4
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_SRC    5
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_DST    6
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_PROXY  7
#define SADB_EXT_KEY_AUTH       8
#define SADB_EXT_KEY_ENCRYPT     9
#define SADB_EXT_IDENTITY_SRC   10
#define SADB_EXT_IDENTITY_DST   11
#define SADB_EXT_SENSITIVITY    12
#define SADB_EXT_PROPOSAL       13
#define SADB_EXT_SUPPORTED_AUTH 14
#define SADB_EXT_SUPPORTED_ENCRYPT 15
#define SADB_EXT_SPIRANGE       16

#define SADB_EXT_MAX            16
```

### 3.7 Identity Extension Values

Each identity can have a certain type.

```
#define SADB_IDENTITYTYPE_RESERVED 0
#define SADB_IDENTITYTYPE_PREFIX 1
#define SADB_IDENTITYTYPE_FQDN 2
#define SADB_IDENTITYTYPE_USERFQDN 3

#define SADB_IDENTITYTYPE_MAX 3
```

The PREFIX identity string consists of a network address followed by a forward slash and a prefix length. The network address is in a printable numeric form appropriate for the protocol family. The prefix length is a decimal number greater than or equal to zero and less than the number of bits in the network address. It indicates the number of bits in the network address that are significant; all bits in the network address that are not significant MUST be set to zero. Note that implementations MUST parse the contents of the printable address into a binary form for comparison purposes because multiple printable strings are valid representations of the same address in many protocol families (for example, some allow leading zeros and some have letters that are case insensitive). Examples of PREFIX identities are "199.33.248.64/27" and "3ffe::1/128". If the source or destination identity is a PREFIX identity, the source or destination address for the SA (respectively) MUST be within that prefix. The `sadb_ident_id` field is zeroed for these identity types.

The FQDN identity string contains a fully qualified domain name. An example FQDN identity is "ministry-of-truth.inner.net". The `sadb_ident_id` field is zeroed for these identity types.

The UserFQDN identity consists of a text string in the format commonly used for Internet-standard electronic mail. The syntax is the text username, followed by the "@" character, followed in turn by the appropriate fully qualified domain name. This identity specifies both a username and an associated FQDN. There is no requirement that this string specify a mailbox valid for SMTP or other electronic mail use. This identity is useful with protocols supporting user-oriented keying. It is a convenient identity form because the DNS Security extensions can be used to distribute signed public key values by associating KEY and SIG records with an appropriate MB DNS record. An example UserFQDN identity is "julia@ministry-of-love.inner.net". The `sadb_ident_id` field is used to contain a POSIX user id in the absence of an identity string itself so that a user-level application can use the `getpwuid{,_r}()` routine to obtain a textual user login id. If a string is present, it SHOULD match the numeric value in the `sadb_ident_id` field. If it does not match, the string SHOULD override

the numeric value.

### 3.8 Sensitivity Extension Values

The only field currently defined in the sensitivity extension is the `sadb_sens_dpd`, which represents the data protection domain. The other data in the sensitivity extension is based off the `sadb_sens_dpd` value.

The DP/DOI is defined to be the same as the "Labeled Domain Identifier Value" of the IP Security DOI specification [Pip98]. As noted in that specification, values in the range 0x80000000 to 0xffffffff (inclusive) are reserved for private use and values in the range 0x00000001 through 0x7fffffff are assigned by IANA. The all-zeros DP/DOI value is permanently reserved to mean that "no DP/DOI is in use".

### 3.9 Proposal Extension Values

These are already mentioned in the Algorithm Types and Security Association Flags sections.

## 4 Future Directions

While the current specification for the Sensitivity and Integrity Labels is believed to be general enough, if a case should arise that can't work with the current specification then this might cause a change in a future version of PF\_KEY.

Similarly, PF\_KEY might need extensions to work with other kinds of Security Associations in future. It is strongly desirable for such extensions to be made in a backwards-compatible manner should they be needed.

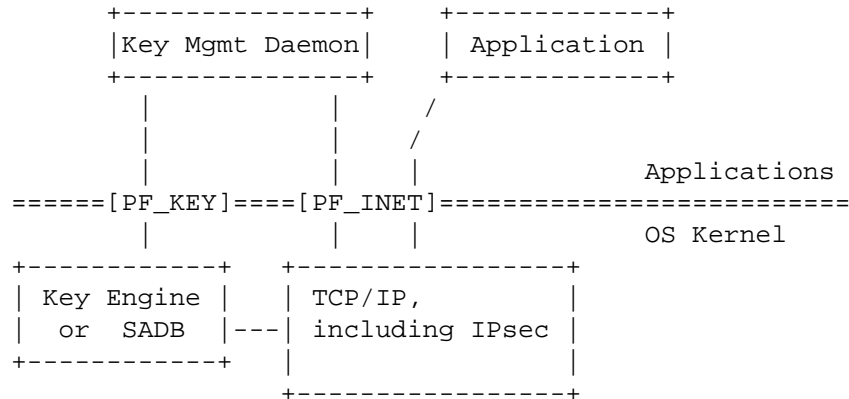
When more experience is gained with certificate management, it is possible that the IDENTITY extension will have to be revisited to allow a finer grained selection of certificate identities.

## 5. Examples

The following examples illustrate how PF\_KEY is used. The first example is an IP Security example, where the consumer of the security associations is inside an operating system kernel. The second example is an OSPF Security example, which illustrates a user-level consumer of security associations. The third example covers things not mentioned by the first two examples. A real system may closely conform to one of these examples, or take parts of them. These examples are purely illustrative, and are not intended to mandate a

particular implementation method.

### 5.1 Simple IP Security Example



When the Key Management daemon (KMD) begins. It must tell PF\_KEY that it is willing to accept message for the two IPsec services, AH and ESP. It does this by sending down two SADB\_REGISTER messages.

```

KMD->Kernel:      SADB_REGISTER for ESP
Kernel->Registered: SADB_REGISTER for ESP, Supported Algorithms
KMD->Kernel:      SADB_REGISTER for AH
Kernel->Registered: SADB_REGISTER for AH, Supported Algorithms
  
```

Each REGISTER message will cause a reply to go to all PF\_KEY sockets registered for ESP and AH respectively (including the requester).

Assume that no security associations currently exist for IPsec to use. Consider when a network application begins transmitting data (e.g. a TCP SYN). Because of policy, or the application's request, the kernel IPsec module needs an AH security association for this data. Since there is not one present, the following message is generated:

```

Kernel->Registered: SADB_ACQUIRE for AH, addrs, ID, sens,
                    proposals
  
```

The KMD reads the ACQUIRE message, especially the `sadb_msg_seq` number. Before it begins the negotiation, it sends down an SADB\_GETSPI message with the `sadb_msg_seq` number equal to the one received in the ACQUIRE. The kernel returns the results of the GETSPI to all listening sockets.

```

KMD->Kernel:      SADB_GETSPI for AH, addr, SPI range
Kernel->All:      SADB_GETSPI for AH, assoc, addrs
  
```

The KMD may perform a second GETSPI operation if it needs both directions of IPsec SPI values. Now that the KMD has an SPI for at least one of the security associations, it begins negotiation. After deriving keying material, and negotiating other parameters, it sends down one (or more) SADB\_UPDATE messages with the same value in `sadb_msg_seq`.

If a KMD has any error at all during its negotiation, it can send down:

```
KMD->Kernel:      SADB_ACQUIRE for AH, assoc (with an error)
Kernel->All:       SADB_ACQUIRE for AH, assoc (same error)
```

but if it succeeds, it can instead:

```
KMD->Kernel:      SADB_UPDATE for AH, assoc, addrs, keys,
                  <etc.>
Kernel->All:       SADB_UPDATE for AH, assoc, addrs, <etc.>
```

The results of the UPDATE (minus the actual keys) are sent to all listening sockets. If only one SPI value was determined locally, the other SPI (since IPsec SAs are unidirectional) must be added with an SADB\_ADD message.

```
KMD->Kernel:      SADB_ADD for AH, assoc, addrs, keys, <etc.>
Kernel->All:       SADB_ADD for AH, assoc, addrs, <etc.>
```

If one of the extensions passed down was a Lifetime extension, it is possible at some point an SADB\_EXPIRE message will arrive when one of the lifetimes has expired.

```
Kernel->All:       SADB_EXPIRE for AH, assoc, addrs,
                  Hard or Soft, Current, <etc.>
```

The KMD can use this as a clue to begin negotiation, or, if it has some say in policy, send an SADB\_UPDATE down with a lifetime extension.

## 5.2 Proxy IP Security Example

Many people are interested in using IP Security in a "proxy" or "firewall" configuration in which an intermediate system provides security services for "inside" hosts. In these environments, the intermediate systems can use PF\_KEY to communicate with key management applications almost exactly as they would if they were the actual endpoints. The messaging behavior of PF\_KEY in these cases is exactly the same as the previous example, but the address information is slightly different.

Consider this case:

A ===== B ----- C

Key:

```

A          "outside" host that implements IPsec
B          "firewall" that implements IPsec
C          "inside" host that does not implement IPsec

===        IP_{A<->B} ESP [ IP_{A<->C} ULP ]
---        IP_{A<->C} ULP

```

A is a single system that wishes to communicate with the "inside" system C. B is a "firewall" between C and the outside world that will do ESP and tunneling on C's behalf. A discovers that it needs to send traffic to C via B through methods not described here (Use of the DNS' KX record might be one method for discovering this).

For packets that flow from left to right, A and B need an IPsec Security Association with:

```

SA type of ESP tunnel-mode
Source Identity that dominates A (e.g. A's address)
Destination Identity that dominates B (e.g. B's address)
Source Address of A
Destination Address of B

```

For packets to flow from right to left, A and B need an IPsec Security Association with:

```

SA type of ESP tunnel-mode
Source Identity that dominates C
Destination Identity that dominates A
Source Address of B
Destination Address of A
Proxy Address of C

```

For this second SA (for packets flowing from C towards A), node A MUST verify that the inner source address is dominated by the Source Identity for the SA used with those packets. If node A does not do this, an adversary could forge packets with an arbitrary Source Identity and defeat the packet origin protections provided by IPsec.

Now consider a slightly more complex case:

```

A_1 --|                                     |-- D_1
      |--- B ===== C ---|
A_2 --|                                     |-- D_2

```



Key:

```

A_n      "inside" host on net 1 that does not do IPsec.
B        "firewall" for net 1 that supports IPsec.
C        "firewall" for net 2 that supports IPsec.
D_n      "inside" host on net 2 that does not do IPsec.
===      IP_{B<->C} ESP [ IP_{A<->C} ULP ]
---      IP_{A<->C} ULP

```

For A\_1 to send a packet to D\_1, B and C need an SA with:

```

SA Type of ESP
Source Identity that dominates A_1
Destination Identity that dominates C
Source Address of B
Destination Address of C
Proxy Address of A_1

```

For D\_1 to send a packet to A\_1, C and B need an SA with:

```

SA Type of ESP Tunnel-mode
Source Identity that dominates D_1
Destination Identity that dominates B
Source Address of C
Destination Address of B
Proxy Address of D_1

```

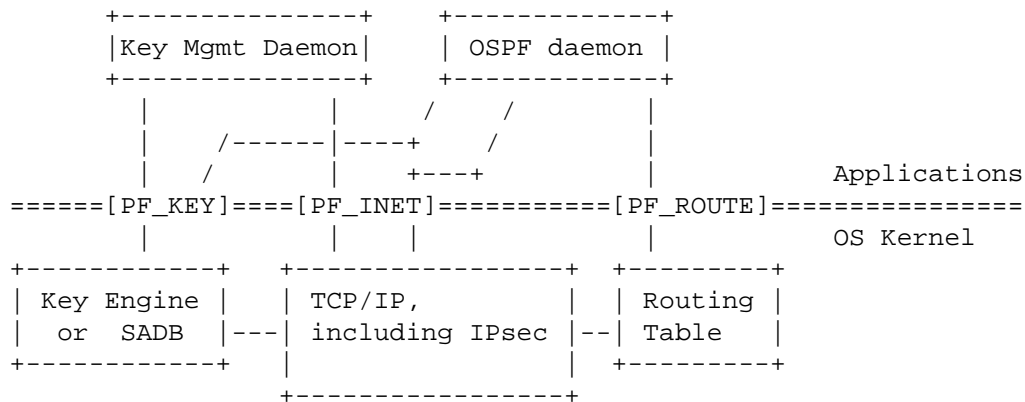
Note that A\_2 and D\_2 could be substituted for A\_1 and D\_1 (respectively) here; the association of an SA with a particular pair of ends or group of those pairs is a policy decision on B and/or C and not necessarily a function of key management. The same check of the Source Identity against the inner source IP address MUST also be performed in this case for the same reason.

For a more detailed discussion of the use of IP Security in complex cases, please see [Atk97].

NOTE: The notion of identity domination might be unfamiliar. Let H represent some node. Let Hn represent H's fully qualified domain name. Let Ha represent the IP address of H. Let Hs represent the IP subnet containing Ha. Let Hd represent a fully qualified domain name that is a parent of the fully qualified domain name of H. Let M be a UserFQDN identity that whose right-hand part is Hn or Ha.

Any of M, Hn, Ha, Hs, and Hd is considered to dominate H in the example above. Hs dominates any node having an IP address within the IP address range represented by Hs. Hd dominates any node having a fully qualified domain name within underneath Hd.

### 5.3 OSPF Security Example



As in the previous examples, the KMD registers itself with the Key Engine via PF\_KEY. Even though the consumer of the security associations is in user-space, the PF\_KEY and Key Engine implementation knows enough to store SAs and to relay messages.

When the OSPF daemon needs to communicate securely with its peers, it would perform an SADB\_GET message and retrieve the appropriate association:

```

OSPFd->Kernel:      SADB_GET of OSPF, assoc, addrs
Kernel->OSPFd:      SADB_GET of OSPF, assoc, addrs, keys, <etc.>
  
```

If this GET fails, the OSPFd may need to acquire a new security association. This interaction is as follows:

```

OSPFd->Kernel:      SADB_ACQUIRE of OSPF, addrs, <ID, sens,>
                    proposal
Kernel->Registered: SADB_ACQUIRE of OSPF, <same as sent message>
  
```

The KMD sees this and performs actions similar to the previous example. One difference, however, is that when the UPDATE message comes back, the OSPFd will then perform a GET of the updated SA to retrieve all of its parameters.

### 5.4 Miscellaneous

Some messages work well only in system maintenance programs, for debugging, or for auditing. In a system panic situation, such as a detected compromise, an SADB\_FLUSH message should be issued for a particular SA type, or for ALL SA types.

```
Program->Kernel:      SADB_FLUSH for ALL
<Kernel then flushes all internal SAs>
Kernel->All:          SADB_FLUSH for ALL
```

Some SAs may need to be explicitly deleted, either by a KMD, or by a system maintenance program.

```
Program->Kernel:      SADB_DELETE for AH, association, addrs
Kernel->All:          SADB_DELETE for AH, association, addrs
```

Common usage of the SADB\_DUMP message is discouraged. For debugging purposes, however, it can be quite useful. The output of a DUMP message should be read quickly, in order to avoid socket buffer overflows.

```
Program->Kernel:      SADB_DUMP for ESP
Kernel->Program:      SADB_DUMP for ESP, association, <all fields>
Kernel->Program:      SADB_DUMP for ESP, association, <all fields>
Kernel->Program:      SADB_DUMP for ESP, association, <all fields>
<ad nauseam...>
```

## 6 Security Considerations

This memo discusses a method for creating, reading, modifying, and deleting Security Associations from an operating system. Only trusted, privileged users and processes should be able to perform any of these operations. It is unclear whether this mechanism provides any security when used with operating systems not having the concept of a trusted, privileged user.

If an unprivileged user is able to perform any of these operations, then the operating system cannot actually provide the related security services. If an adversary knows the keys and algorithms in use, then cryptography cannot provide any form of protection.

This mechanism is not a panacea, but it does provide an important operating system component that can be useful in creating a secure internetwork.

Users need to understand that the quality of the security provided by an implementation of this specification depends completely upon the overall security of the operating system, the correctness of the PF\_KEY implementation, and upon the security and correctness of the applications that connect to PF\_KEY. It is appropriate to use high assurance development techniques when implementing PF\_KEY and the related security association components of the operating system.

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The "CONFORMANCE and COMPLIANCE" wording was taken from [MSST98].

Finally, the authors would like to thank those who sent in comments and questions on the various iterations of this document. This specification and implementations of it are discussed on the PF\_KEY mailing list. If you would like to be added to this list, send a note to <pf\_key-request@inner.net>.

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## Appendix A: Promiscuous Send/Receive Message Type

A kernel supporting PF\_KEY MAY implement the following extension for development and debugging purposes. If it does, it MUST implement the extension as specified here. An implementation MAY require an application to have additional privileges to perform promiscuous send and/or receive operations.

The SADB\_X\_PROMISC message allows an application to send and receive messages in a "promiscuous mode." There are two forms of this message: control and data. The control form consists of only a message header. This message is used to toggle the promiscuous-receive function. A value of one in the `sadb_msg_satype` field enables promiscuous message reception for this socket, while a value of zero in that field disables it.

The second form of this message is the data form. This is used to send or receive messages in their raw form. Messages in the data form consist of a message header followed by an entire new message. There will be two message headers in a row: one for the SADB\_X\_PROMISC message, and one for the payload message.

Data messages sent from the application are sent to either the PF\_KEY socket of a single process identified by a nonzero `sadb_msg_seq` or to all PF\_KEY sockets if `sadb_msg_seq` is zero. These messages are sent without any processing of their contents by the PF\_KEY interface (including sanity checking). This promiscuous-send capability allows an application to send messages as if it were the kernel. This also allows it to send erroneous messages.

If the promiscuous-receive function has been enabled, a copy of any message sent via PF\_KEY by another application or by the kernel is sent to the promiscuous application. This is done before any processing of the message's contents by the PF\_KEY interface (again, including sanity checking). This promiscuous-receive capability allows an application to receive all messages sent by other parties using PF\_KEY.

The messaging behavior of the SADB\_X\_PROMISC message is:

Send a control-form SADB\_X\_PROMISC message from a user process to the kernel.

<base>

The kernel returns the SADB\_X\_PROMISC message to all listening processes.

<base>

Send a data-form SADB\_X\_PROMISC message from a user process to the kernel.

<base, base(, others)>

The kernel sends the encapsulated message to the target process(s).

<base(, others)>

If promiscuous-receive is enabled, the kernel will encapsulate and send copies of all messages sent via the PF\_KEY interface.

<base, base(, others)>

Errors:

EPERM Additional privileges are required to perform the requested operations.

ESRCH (Data form, sending) The target process in `sadb_msg_seq` does not exist or does not have an open PF\_KEY Version 2 socket.



## Appendix B: Passive Change Message Type

The SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message is a passive-side (aka. the "listener" or "receiver") counterpart to the SADB\_ACQUIRE message. It is useful for when key management applications wish to more effectively handle incoming key management requests for passive-side sessions that deviate from systemwide default security services. If a passive session requests that only certain levels of security service be allowed, the SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message expresses this change to any registered PF\_KEY sockets. Unlike SADB\_ACQUIRE, this message is purely informational, and demands no other PF\_KEY interaction.

The SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message is typically triggered by either a change in an endpoint's requested security services, or when an endpoint that made a special request disappears. In the former case, an SADB\_X\_PCHANGE looks like an SADB\_ACQUIRE, complete with an `sadb_proposal` extension indicating the preferred algorithms, lifetimes, and other attributes. When a passive session either disappears, or reverts to a default behavior, an SADB\_X\_PCHANGE will be issued with `_no_` `sadb_proposal` extension, indicating that the exception to systemwide default behavior has disappeared.

There are two messaging behaviors for SADB\_X\_PCHANGE. The first is the kernel-originated case:

The kernel sends an SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message to registered sockets.

<base, address(SD), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,) (proposal)>

NOTE: The address(SD) extensions MUST have the port fields filled in with the port numbers of the session requiring keys if appropriate.

The second is for a user-level consumer of SAs.

Send an SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message from a user process to the kernel.

<base, address(SD), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,) (proposal)>

The kernel returns an SADB\_X\_PCHANGE message to registered sockets.

<base, address(SD), (identity(SD),) (sensitivity,) (proposal)>

## Appendix C: Key Management Private Data Extension

The Key Management Private Data extension is attached to either an SADB\_ADD or an SADB\_UPDATE message. It attaches a single piece of arbitrary data to a security association. It may be useful for key management applications that could use an SADB\_DUMP or SADB\_GET message to obtain additional state if it needs to restart or recover after a crash. The format of this extension is:

```
#define SADB_X_EXT_KMPRIVATE 17

struct sadb_x_kmpprivate {
    uint16_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_len;
    uint16_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_reserved;
};
/* sizeof(struct sadb_x_kmpprivate) == 8 */

/* followed by arbitrary data */
```

The data following the `sadb_x_kmpprivate` extension can be anything. It will be stored with the actual security association in the kernel. Like all data, it must be padded to an eight byte boundary.

## Appendix D: Sample Header File

```
/*
This file defines structures and symbols for the PF_KEY Version 2
key management interface. It was written at the U.S. Naval Research
Laboratory. This file is in the public domain. The authors ask that
you leave this credit intact on any copies of this file.
*/
#ifndef __PFKEY_V2_H
#define __PFKEY_V2_H 1

#define PF_KEY_V2 2
#define PFKEYV2_REVISION 199806L

#define SADB_RESERVED 0
#define SADB_GETSPI 1
#define SADB_UPDATE 2
#define SADB_ADD 3
#define SADB_DELETE 4
#define SADB_GET 5
#define SADB_ACQUIRE 6
#define SADB_REGISTER 7
#define SADB_EXPIRE 8
#define SADB_FLUSH 9
#define SADB_DUMP 10
#define SADB_X_PROMISC 11
#define SADB_X_PCHANGE 12
#define SADB_MAX 12

struct sadb_msg {
    uint8_t sadb_msg_version;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_type;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_errno;
    uint8_t sadb_msg_satype;
    uint16_t sadb_msg_len;
    uint16_t sadb_msg_reserved;
    uint32_t sadb_msg_seq;
    uint32_t sadb_msg_pid;
};

struct sadb_ext {
    uint16_t sadb_ext_len;
    uint16_t sadb_ext_type;
};

struct sadb_sa {
    uint16_t sadb_sa_len;
    uint16_t sadb_sa_exttype;
```

```
uint32_t sadb_sa_spi;
uint8_t sadb_sa_replay;
uint8_t sadb_sa_state;
uint8_t sadb_sa_auth;
uint8_t sadb_sa_encrypt;
uint32_t sadb_sa_flags;
};

struct sadb_lifetime {
    uint16_t sadb_lifetime_len;
    uint16_t sadb_lifetime_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_lifetime_allocations;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_lifetime_usetime;
};

struct sadb_address {
    uint16_t sadb_address_len;
    uint16_t sadb_address_exttype;
    uint8_t sadb_address_proto;
    uint8_t sadb_address_prefixlen;
    uint16_t sadb_address_reserved;
};

struct sadb_key {
    uint16_t sadb_key_len;
    uint16_t sadb_key_exttype;
    uint16_t sadb_key_bits;
    uint16_t sadb_key_reserved;
};

struct sadb_ident {
    uint16_t sadb_ident_len;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_exttype;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_type;
    uint16_t sadb_ident_reserved;
    uint64_t sadb_ident_id;
};

struct sadb_sens {
    uint16_t sadb_sens_len;
    uint16_t sadb_sens_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_sens_dpd;
    uint8_t sadb_sens_sens_level;
    uint8_t sadb_sens_sens_len;
    uint8_t sadb_sens_integ_level;
    uint8_t sadb_sens_integ_len;
};
```

```
    uint32_t sadb_sens_reserved;
};

struct sadb_prop {
    uint16_t sadb_prop_len;
    uint16_t sadb_prop_exttype;
    uint8_t sadb_prop_replay;
    uint8_t sadb_prop_reserved[3];
};

struct sadb_comb {
    uint8_t sadb_comb_auth;
    uint8_t sadb_comb_encrypt;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_flags;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_auth_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_auth_maxbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_encrypt_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_comb_encrypt_maxbits;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_reserved;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_soft_allocations;
    uint32_t sadb_comb_hard_allocations;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_bytes;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_addtime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_soft_usetime;
    uint64_t sadb_comb_hard_usetime;
};

struct sadb_supported {
    uint16_t sadb_supported_len;
    uint16_t sadb_supported_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_supported_reserved;
};

struct sadb_alg {
    uint8_t sadb_alg_id;
    uint8_t sadb_alg_ivlen;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_minbits;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_maxbits;
    uint16_t sadb_alg_reserved;
};

struct sadb_spirange {
    uint16_t sadb_spirange_len;
    uint16_t sadb_spirange_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_spirange_min;
    uint32_t sadb_spirange_max;
};
```

```
uint32_t sadb_spirange_reserved;
};

struct sadb_x_kmpprivate {
    uint16_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_len;
    uint16_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_exttype;
    uint32_t sadb_x_kmpprivate_reserved;
};

#define SADB_EXT_RESERVED 0
#define SADB_EXT_SA 1
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_CURRENT 2
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_HARD 3
#define SADB_EXT_LIFETIME_SOFT 4
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_SRC 5
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_DST 6
#define SADB_EXT_ADDRESS_PROXY 7
#define SADB_EXT_KEY_AUTH 8
#define SADB_EXT_KEY_ENCRYPT 9
#define SADB_EXT_IDENTITY_SRC 10
#define SADB_EXT_IDENTITY_DST 11
#define SADB_EXT_SENSITIVITY 12
#define SADB_EXT_PROPOSAL 13
#define SADB_EXT_SUPPORTED_AUTH 14
#define SADB_EXT_SUPPORTED_ENCRYPT 15
#define SADB_EXT_SPIRANGE 16
#define SADB_X_EXT_KMPPRIVATE 17
#define SADB_EXT_MAX 17

#define SADB_SATYPE_UNSPEC 0
#define SADB_SATYPE_AH 2
#define SADB_SATYPE_ESP 3
#define SADB_SATYPE_RSVP 5
#define SADB_SATYPE_OSPFV2 6
#define SADB_SATYPE_RIPV2 7
#define SADB_SATYPE_MIP 8
#define SADB_SATYPE_MAX 8

#define SADB_SASTATE_LARVAL 0
#define SADB_SASTATE_MATURE 1
#define SADB_SASTATE_DYING 2
#define SADB_SASTATE_DEAD 3
#define SADB_SASTATE_MAX 3

#define SADB_SAFLAGS_PFS 1

#define SADB_AALG_NONE 0
#define SADB_AALG_MD5HMAC 2
#define SADB_AALG_SHA1HMAC 3
```

```
#define SADB_AALG_MAX          3

#define SADB_EALG_NONE         0
#define SADB_EALG_DESCBC       2
#define SADB_EALG_3DESCBC      3
#define SADB_EALG_NULL         11
#define SADB_EALG_MAX          11

#define SADB_IDENTTYPE_RESERVED 0
#define SADB_IDENTTYPE_PREFIX  1
#define SADB_IDENTTYPE_FQDN     2
#define SADB_IDENTTYPE_USERFQDN 3
#define SADB_IDENTTYPE_MAX      3

#define SADB_KEY_FLAGS_MAX 0
#endif /* __PFKEY_V2_H */
```

## Appendix E: Change Log

The following changes were made between 05 and 06:

- \* Last change before becoming an informational RFC. Removed all Internet-Draft references. Also standardized citation strings. Now cite [RFC 2119](#) for MUST, etc.
- \* New appendix on optional KM private data extension.
- \* Fixed example to indicate the ACQUIRE messages with errno mean KM failure.
- \* Added SADB\_EALG\_NULL.
- \* Clarified proxy examples to match definition of PROXY address being the inner packet's source address. (Basically a sign-flip. The example still shows how to protect against policy vulnerabilities in tunnel endpoints.)
- \* Loosened definition of a destination address to include broadcast.
- \* Recommended that LARVAL security associations have implicit short lifetimes.

The following changes were made between 04 and 05:

- \* New appendix on Passive Change message.
- \* New `sadb_address_prefixlen` field.
- \* Small clarifications on `sadb_ident_id` usage.
- \* New `PFKEYV2_REVISION` value.
- \* Small clarification on what a PROXY address is.
- \* Corrected `sadb_spirange_{min,max}` language.
- \* In ADD messages that are in response to an ACQUIRE, the `sadb_msg_seq` MUST be the same as that of the originating ACQUIRE.
- \* Corrected ACQUIRE message behavior, ACQUIRE message SHOULD send up PROXY addresses when it needs them.
- \* Clarification on SADB\_EXPIRE and user-level security protocols.

The following changes were made between 03 and 04:



- \* Stronger language about manual keying.
- \* PFKEYV2\_REVISION, ala POSIX.
- \* Put in language about sockaddr ports in ACQUIRE messages.
- \* Mention of asymmetric algorithms.
- \* New sadb\_ident\_id field for easier construction of USER\_FQDN identity strings.
- \* Caveat about source addresses not always used for collision detection. (e.g. IPsec)

The following changes were made between 02 and 03:

- \* Formatting changes.
- \* Many editorial cleanups, rewordings, clarifications.
- \* Restrictions that prevent many strange and invalid cases.
- \* Added definitions section.
- \* Removed connection identity type (this will reappear when it is more clear what it should look like).
- \* Removed 5.2.1 (Why involve the kernel?).
- \* Removed INBOUND, OUTBOUND, and FORWARD flags; they can be computed from src, dst, and proxy and you had to anyway for sanity checking.
- \* Removed REPLAY flag; sadb\_sa\_replay==0 means the same thing.
- \* Renamed bit lengths to "bits" to avoid potential confusion.
- \* Explicitly listed lengths for structures.
- \* Reworked identities to always use a string format.
- \* Removed requirements for support of shutdown() and SO\_USELOOPBACK.
- \* 64 bit alignment and 64 bit lengths instead of 32 bit.
- \* time\_t replaced with uint64 in lifetimes.

- \* Inserted [Appendix A](#) (SADB\_X\_PROMISC) and [Appendix B](#) (SAMPLE HEADER FILE).
- \* Explicit error if PF\_KEY\_V2 not set at socket() call.
- \* More text on SO\_USELOOPBACK.
- \* Made fields names and symbol names more consistent.
- \* Explicit error if PF\_KEY\_V2 is not in sadb\_msg\_version field.
- \* Bytes lifetime field now a 64-bit quantity.
- \* Explicit len/exttype wording.
- \* Flattening out of extensions (LIFETIME\_HARD, LIFETIME\_SOFT, etc.)
- \* UI example (0x123 == 0x1230 or 0x0123).
- \* Cleaned up and fixed some message behavior examples.

The following changes were made between 01 and 02:

- \* Mentioned that people COULD use these same messages between user progs. (Also mentioned why you still might want to use the actual socket.)
- \* Various wordsmithing changes.
- \* Took out netkey/ directory, and make net/pfkeyv2.h
- \* Inserted PF\_KEY\_V2 proto argument per C. Metz.
- \* Mentioned other socket calls and how their PF\_KEY behavior is undefined.
- \* SADB\_EXPIRE now communicates both hard and soft lifetime expires.
- \* New "association" extension, even smaller base header.
- \* Lifetime extension improvements.
- \* Length now first in extensions.
- \* Errors can be sent from kernel to user, also.
- \* Examples section inserted.

- \* Some bitfield cleanups, including STATE and SA\_OPTIONS cleanup.
- \* Key splitting now only across auth algorithm and encryption algorithm. Thanks for B. Sommerfeld for clues here.

The following changes were made between 00 and 01:

- \* Added this change log.
- \* Simplified TLV header syntax.
- \* Splitting of algorithms. This may be controversial, but it allows PF\_KEY to be used for more than just IPsec. It also allows some kinds of policies to be placed in the KMD easier.
- \* Added solid definitions and formats for certificate identities, multiple keys, etc.
- \* Specified how keys are to be layed out (most-to-least bits).
- \* Changed sequence number semantics to be like an RPC transaction ID number.

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