iSCSI service management

ONTAP 9

NetApp
February 20, 2026

This PDF was generated from https://docs.netapp.com/us-en/ontap/san-admin/iscsi-service-management-system-interfaces-concept.html on February 20, 2026. Always check docs.netapp.com for the latest.

Table of Contents

iSCSI service management . . . 1
- iSCSI service management . . . 1
  - How iSCSI is implemented on the host . . . 1
- How iSCSI authentication works . . . 1
- iSCSI initiator security management . . . 2
- iSCSI endpoint isolation . . . 2
  - Add initiator address range . . . 2
  - Remove initiator address range . . . 2
- Learn about CHAP authentication for iSCSI initiators in ONTAP . . . 2
  - Guidelines for using CHAP authentication . . . 3
- How using iSCSI interface access lists to limit initiator interfaces can increase performance and security . . . 4
- Internet Storage Name Service (iSNS) in ONTAP . . . 4
  - What an iSNS server does . . . 5
  - How SVMs interact with an iSNS server . . . 5
  - Commands for managing iSNS . . . 6

iSCSI service management

iSCSI service management

You can manage the availability of the iSCSI service on the iSCSI logical interfaces of the storage virtual machine (SVM) by using the `vserver iscsi interface enable` or `vserver iscsi interface disable` commands.

By default, the iSCSI service is enabled on all iSCSI logical interfaces.

How iSCSI is implemented on the host

iSCSI can be implemented on the host using hardware or software.

You can implement iSCSI in one of the following ways:

- Using Initiator software that uses the host's standard Ethernet interfaces.
- Through an iSCSI host bus adapter (HBA): An iSCSI HBA appears to the host operating system as a SCSI disk adapter with local disks.
- Using a TCP Offload Engine (TOE) adapter that offloads TCP/IP processing.

  The iSCSI protocol processing is still performed by host software.

How iSCSI authentication works

During the initial stage of an iSCSI session, the initiator sends a login request to the storage system to begin an iSCSI session. The storage system then either permits or denies the login request, or determine that a login is not required.

iSCSI authentication methods are:

- Challenge Handshake Authentication Protocol (CHAP)--The initiator logs in using a CHAP user name and password.

  You can specify a CHAP password or generate a hexadecimal secret password. There are two types of CHAP user names and passwords:

  - Inbound—The storage system authenticates the initiator.

    Inbound settings are required if you are using CHAP authentication.

  - Outbound—This is an optional setting to enable the initiator to authenticate the storage system.

    You can use outbound settings only if you define an inbound user name and password on the storage system.

- deny—The initiator is denied access to the storage system.
- none—The storage system does not require authentication for the initiator.

You can define the list of initiators and their authentication methods. You can also define a default

authentication method that applies to initiators that are not on this list.

Related information

Windows Multipathing Options with Data ONTAP: Fibre Channel and iSCSI

iSCSI initiator security management

ONTAP provides a number of features for managing security for iSCSI initiators. You can define a list of iSCSI initiators and the authentication method for each, display the initiators and their associated authentication methods in the authentication list, add and remove initiators from the authentication list, and define the default iSCSI initiator authentication method for initiators not in the list.

iSCSI endpoint isolation

Existing iSCSI security commands can accept an IP address range, or multiple IP addresses.

All iSCSI initiators must provide origination IP addresses when establishing a session or connection with a target. This new functionality prevents an initiator from logging into the cluster if the origination IP address is unsupported or unknown, providing a unique identification scheme. Any initiator originating from an unsupported or unknown IP address will have their login rejected at the iSCSI session layer, preventing the initiator from accessing any LUN or volume within the cluster.

Implement this new functionality with two new commands to help manage pre-existing entries.

Add initiator address range

Improve iSCSI initiator security management by adding an IP address range, or multiple IP addresses with the `vserver iscsi security add-initiator-address-range` command.

```
cluster1::> vserver iscsi security add-initiator-address-range
```

Remove initiator address range

Remove an IP address range, or multiple IP addresses, with the `vserver iscsi security remove-initiator-address-range` command.

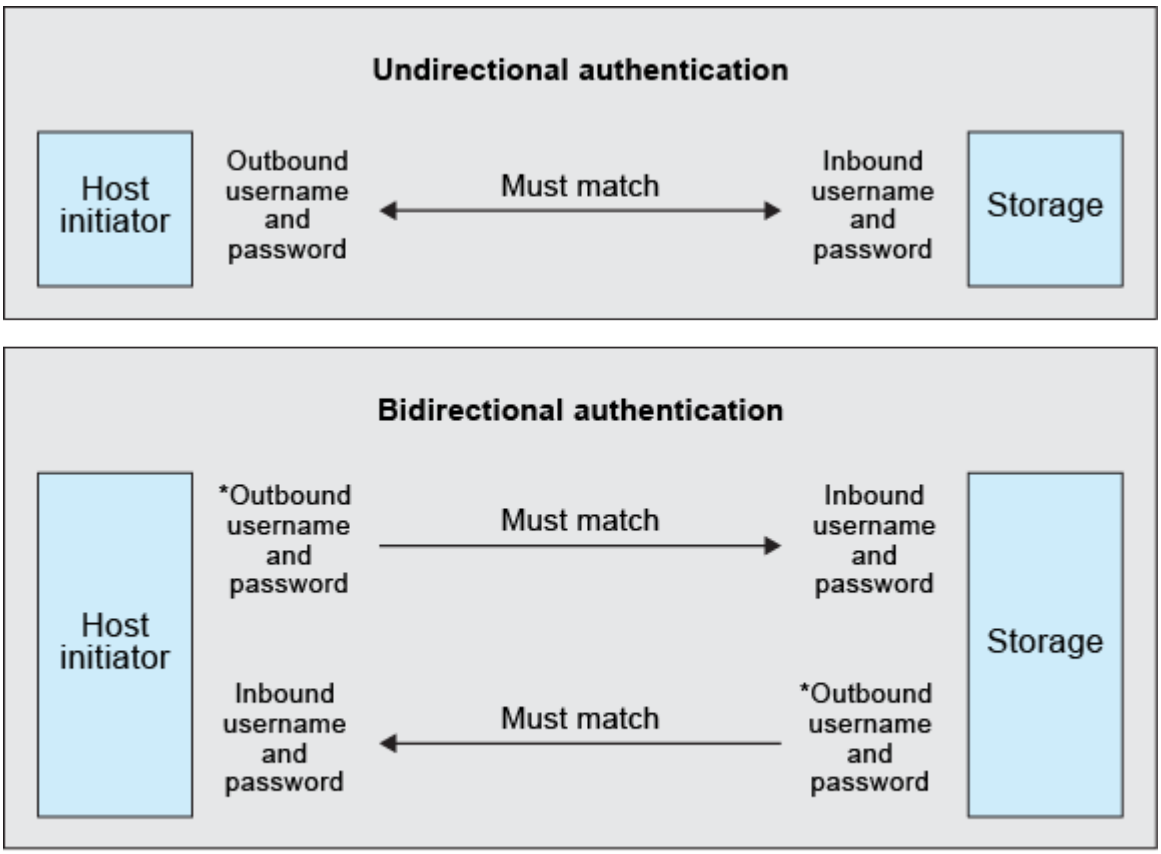
```
cluster1::> vserver iscsi security remove-initiator-address-range
```

Learn about CHAP authentication for iSCSI initiators in ONTAP

The Challenge Handshake Authentication Protocol (CHAP) enables authenticated communication between iSCSI initiators and targets. When you use CHAP authentication, you define CHAP user names and passwords on both the initiator and the storage system.

During the initial stage of an iSCSI session, the initiator sends a login request to the storage system to begin

the session. The login request includes the initiator's CHAP user name and CHAP algorithm. The storage system responds with a CHAP challenge. The initiator provides a CHAP response. The storage system verifies the response and authenticates the initiator. The CHAP password is used to compute the response.



Authentication	Outbound	Inbound	Match?
Unidirectional	Host initiator user name and password	Storage user name and password	Must match
Bidirectional	Host initiator user name and password	Storage user name and password	Must match
Bidirectional	Storage user name and password	Host initiator user name and password	Must match

The outbound user name and password for the host initiator must be different than the outbound user name and password for the storage system.

Guidelines for using CHAP authentication

Follow these guidelines when using CHAP authentication.

- If you define an inbound user name and password on the storage system, you must use the same user name and password for outbound CHAP settings on the initiator. If you also define an outbound user name and password on the storage system to enable bidirectional authentication, you must use the same user

name and password for inbound CHAP settings on the initiator.

- You cannot use the same user name and password for inbound and outbound settings on the storage system.
- CHAP user names can be 1 to 128 bytes.

  The system does not allow null user names.

- CHAP passwords (secrets) can be 1 to 512 bytes.

  Passwords can be hexadecimal values or strings. For hexadecimal values, you should enter the value with a prefix of “0x” or “0X”.

  The system does not allow a null password.

> ONTAP allows the use of special characters, non-English letters, numbers and spaces for CHAP passwords (secrets). However, this is subject to host restrictions. If any of these are not allowed by your specific host, they cannot be used.
>
> For example, the Microsoft iSCSI software initiator requires both the initiator and target CHAP passwords to be at least 12 bytes if IPsec encryption is not being used. The maximum password length is 16 bytes regardless of whether IPsec is used.
>
> See the initiator’s documentation for additional restrictions.

How using iSCSI interface access lists to limit initiator interfaces can increase performance and security

ISCSI interface access lists can be used to limit the number of LIFs in an SVM that an initiator can access, thereby increasing performance and security.

When an initiator begins a discovery session using an iSCSI `SendTargets` command, it receives the IP addresses associated with the LIF (network interface) that is in the access list. By default, all initiators have access to all iSCSI LIFs in the SVM. You can use the access list to restrict the number of LIFs in an SVM that an initiator has access to.

Internet Storage Name Service (iSNS) in ONTAP

The Internet Storage Name Service (iSNS) is a protocol that enables automated discovery and management of iSCSI devices on a TCP/IP storage network. An iSNS server maintains information about active iSCSI devices on the network, including their IP addresses, iSCSI node names IQN’s, and portal groups.

You can obtain an iSNS server from a third-party vendor. If you have an iSNS server on your network configured and enabled for use by the initiator and target, you can use the management LIF for a storage virtual machine (SVM) to register all the iSCSI LIFs for that SVM on the iSNS server. After the registration is complete, the iSCSI initiator can query the iSNS server to discover all the LIFs for that particular SVM.

If you decide to use an iSNS service, you must ensure that your storage virtual machines (SVMs) are properly registered with an Internet Storage Name Service (iSNS) server.

If you do not have an iSNS server on your network, you must manually configure each target to be visible to the host.

What an iSNS server does

An iSNS server uses the Internet Storage Name Service (iSNS) protocol to maintain information about active iSCSI devices on the network, including their IP addresses, iSCSI node names (IQNs), and portal groups.

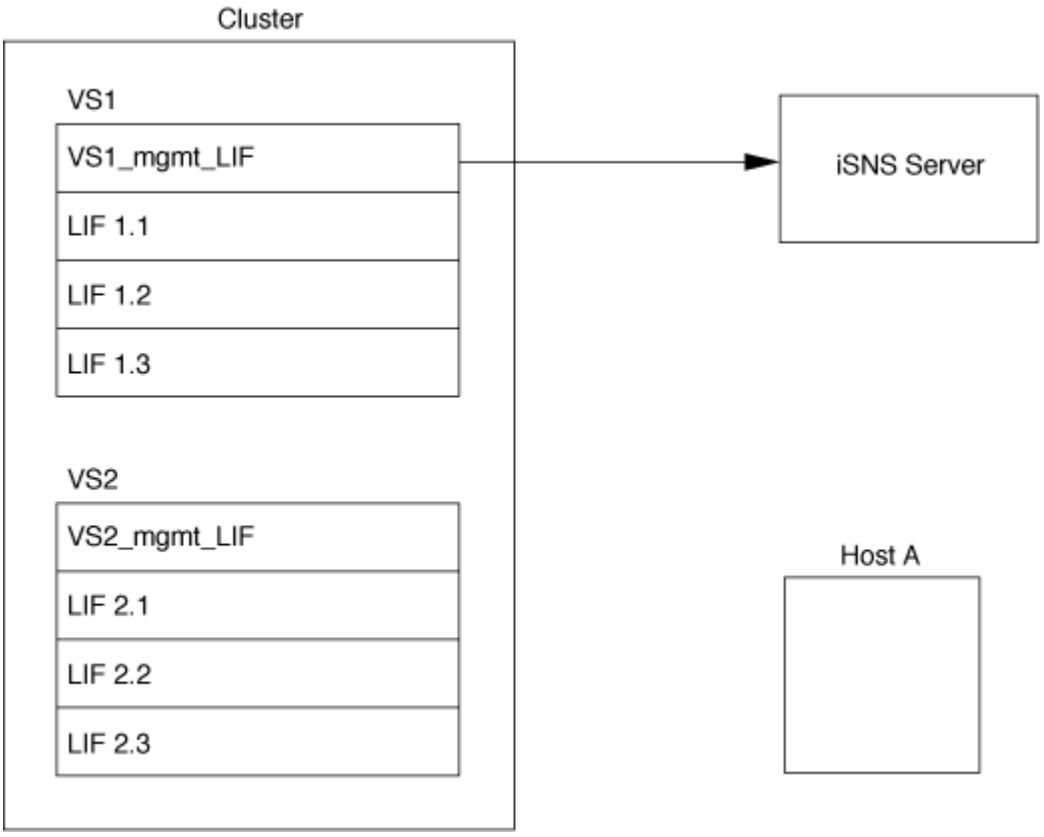
The iSNS protocol enables automated discovery and management of iSCSI devices on an IP storage network. An iSCSI initiator can query the iSNS server to discover iSCSI target devices.

NetApp does not supply or resell iSNS servers. You can obtain these servers from a vendor supported by NetApp.

How SVMs interact with an iSNS server

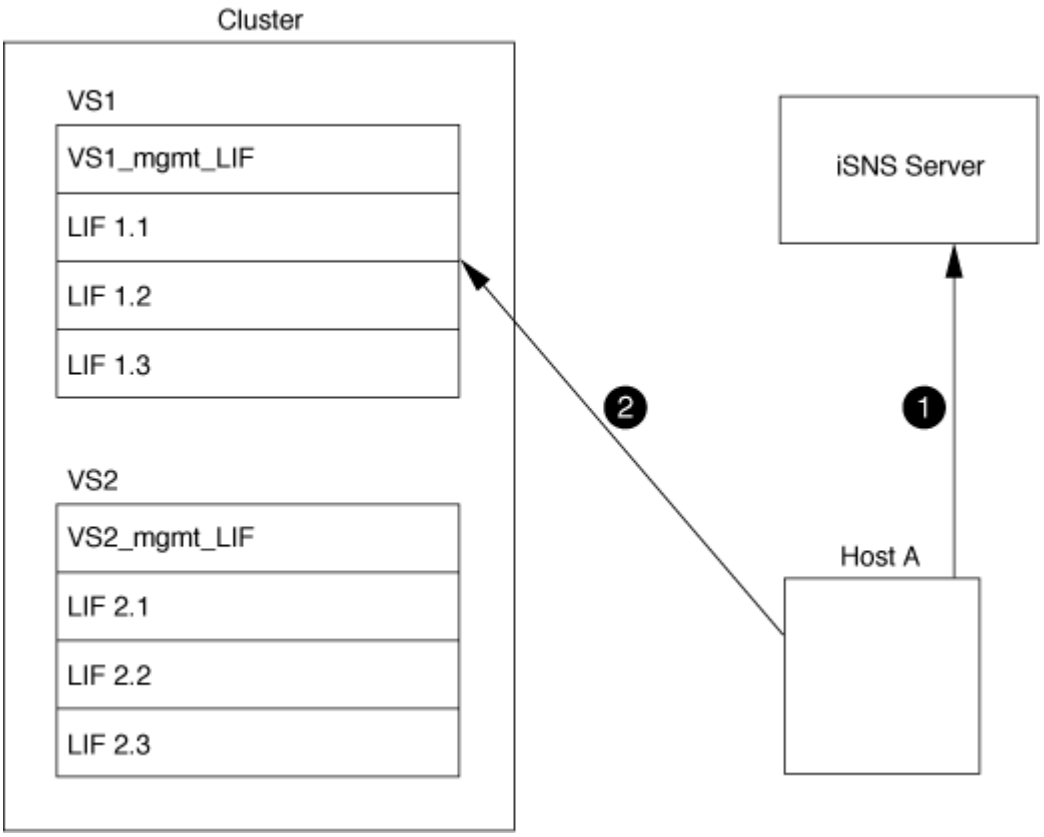
The iSNS server communicates with each storage virtual machine (SVM) through the SVM management LIF. The management LIF registers all iSCSI target node name, alias, and portal information with the iSNS service for a specific SVM.

In the following example, SVM “VS1” uses SVM management LIF “VS1_mgmt_lif” to register with the iSNS server. During iSNS registration, an SVM sends all the iSCSI LIFs through the SVM management LIF to the iSNS Server. After the iSNS registration is complete, the iSNS server has a list of all the LIFs serving iSCSI in “VS1”. If a cluster contains multiple SVMs, each SVM must register individually with the iSNS server to use the iSNS service.



In the next example, after the iSNS server completes the registration with the target, Host A can discover all the LIFs for “VS1” through the iSNS server as indicated in Step 1. After Host A completes the discovery of the LIFs for “VS1”, Host A can establish a connection with any of the LIFs in “VS1” as shown in Step 2. Host A is

not aware of any of the LIFs in “VS2” until management LIF “VS2_mgmt_LIF” for “VS2” registers with the iSNS server.



However, if you define the interface access lists, the host can only use the defined LIFs in the interface access list to access the target.

After iSNS is initially configured, ONTAP automatically updates the iSNS server when the SVM configuration settings change.

A delay of a few minutes might occur between the time you make the configuration changes and when ONTAP sends the update to the iSNS server. Force an immediate update of the iSNS information on the iSNS server: `vserver iscsi isns update`. Learn more about `vserver iscsi isns update` in the ONTAP command reference.

Commands for managing iSNS

ONTAP provides commands to manage your iSNS service.

If you want to…	Use this command…
Configure an iSNS service	`vserver iscsi isns create`
Start an iSNS service	`vserver iscsi isns start`
Modify an iSNS service	`vserver iscsi isns modify`

Display iSNS service configuration	`vserver iscsi isns show`
Force an update of registered iSNS information	`vserver iscsi isns update`
Stop an iSNS service	`vserver iscsi isns stop`
Remove an iSNS service	`vserver iscsi isns delete`
View the man page for a command	`man` *`command name`*

Learn more about `vserver iscsi isns` in the ONTAP command reference.

Copyright information

Copyright © 2026 NetApp, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the U.S. No part of this document covered by copyright may be reproduced in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or storage in an electronic retrieval system—without prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Software derived from copyrighted NetApp material is subject to the following license and disclaimer:

THIS SOFTWARE IS PROVIDED BY NETAPP “AS IS” AND WITHOUT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, WHICH ARE HEREBY DISCLAIMED. IN NO EVENT SHALL NETAPP BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, PROCUREMENT OF SUBSTITUTE GOODS OR SERVICES; LOSS OF USE, DATA, OR PROFITS; OR BUSINESS INTERRUPTION) HOWEVER CAUSED AND ON ANY THEORY OF LIABILITY, WHETHER IN CONTRACT, STRICT LIABILITY, OR TORT (INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE) ARISING IN ANY WAY OUT OF THE USE OF THIS SOFTWARE, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

NetApp reserves the right to change any products described herein at any time, and without notice. NetApp assumes no responsibility or liability arising from the use of products described herein, except as expressly agreed to in writing by NetApp. The use or purchase of this product does not convey a license under any patent rights, trademark rights, or any other intellectual property rights of NetApp.

The product described in this manual may be protected by one or more U.S. patents, foreign patents, or pending applications.

LIMITED RIGHTS LEGEND: Use, duplication, or disclosure by the government is subject to restrictions as set forth in subparagraph (b)(3) of the Rights in Technical Data -Noncommercial Items at DFARS 252.227-7013 (FEB 2014) and FAR 52.227-19 (DEC 2007).

Data contained herein pertains to a commercial product and/or commercial service (as defined in FAR 2.101) and is proprietary to NetApp, Inc. All NetApp technical data and computer software provided under this Agreement is commercial in nature and developed solely at private expense. The U.S. Government has a non-exclusive, non-transferrable, nonsublicensable, worldwide, limited irrevocable license to use the Data only in connection with and in support of the U.S. Government contract under which the Data was delivered. Except as provided herein, the Data may not be used, disclosed, reproduced, modified, performed, or displayed without the prior written approval of NetApp, Inc. United States Government license rights for the Department of Defense are limited to those rights identified in DFARS clause 252.227-7015(b) (FEB 2014).

Trademark information

NETAPP, the NETAPP logo, and the marks listed at http://www.netapp.com/TM are trademarks of NetApp, Inc. Other company and product names may be trademarks of their respective owners.