



# Clusters

## Element Software

Megan Bock  
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A cluster is the hub of a SolidFire storage system and is made up of a collection of nodes. You must have at least four nodes in a cluster for SolidFire storage efficiencies to be realized. A cluster appears on the network as a single logical group and can then be accessed as block storage.

Creating a new cluster initializes a node as communications owner for a cluster and establishes network communications for each node in the cluster. This process is performed only once for each new cluster. You can create a cluster by using the Element UI or the API.

You can scale out a cluster by adding additional nodes. When you add a new node, there is no interruption of service and the cluster automatically uses the performance and capacity of the new node.

Administrators and hosts can access the cluster using virtual IP addresses. Any node in the cluster can host the virtual IP addresses. The management virtual IP (MVIP) enables cluster management through a 1GbE connection, while the storage virtual IP (SVIP) enables host access to storage through a 10GbE connection. These virtual IP addresses enable consistent connections regardless of the size or makeup of a SolidFire cluster. If a node hosting a virtual IP address fails, another node in the cluster begins hosting the virtual IP address.



Beginning in Element version 11.0, nodes can be configured with IPv4, IPv6, or both addresses for their management network. This applies to both storage nodes and management nodes, except for management node 11.3 and later which does not support IPv6. When creating a cluster, only a single IPv4 or IPv6 address can be used for the MVIP and the corresponding address type must be configured on all nodes.

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