



Data protection with ONTAP cyber vault

NetApp data management solutions

NetApp

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Data protection with ONTAP cyber vault

ONTAP cyber vault overview

The primary driving threat that necessitates the implementation of a cyber vault is the growing prevalence and evolving sophistication of cyber-attacks, particularly ransomware and data breaches. [With a rise in phishing](#) and ever more sophisticated methods of credential stealing, credentials used to begin a ransomware attack could then be used to access infrastructure systems. In these cases, even hardened infrastructure systems are at risk of attack. The only defense to a compromised system is to have your data protected and isolated in a cyber vault.

NetApp's ONTAP based cyber vault provides organizations with a comprehensive and flexible solution for protecting their most critical data assets. By leveraging logical air-gapping with robust hardening methodologies, ONTAP enables you to create secure, isolated storage environments that are resilient against evolving cyber threats. With ONTAP, you can ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of your data while maintaining the agility and efficiency of your storage infrastructure.



Beginning in July 2024, content from technical reports previously published as PDFs has been integrated with ONTAP product documentation. In addition, new technical reports (TRs) such as this document will no longer be getting TR numbers.

What is a cyber vault?

A cyber vault is a specific data protection technique that involves storing critical data in an isolated environment, separate from the primary IT infrastructure.

"Air-gapped", **immutable** and **indelible** data repository that is immune to threats affecting the main network, such as malware, ransomware, or even insider threats. A cyber vault can be achieved with **immutable** and **indelible** snapshots.

Air-gapping backups that use traditional methods involve creating space and physically separating the primary and secondary media. By moving the media offsite and/or severing connectivity, bad actors have no access to the data. This protects the data but can lead to slower recovery times.

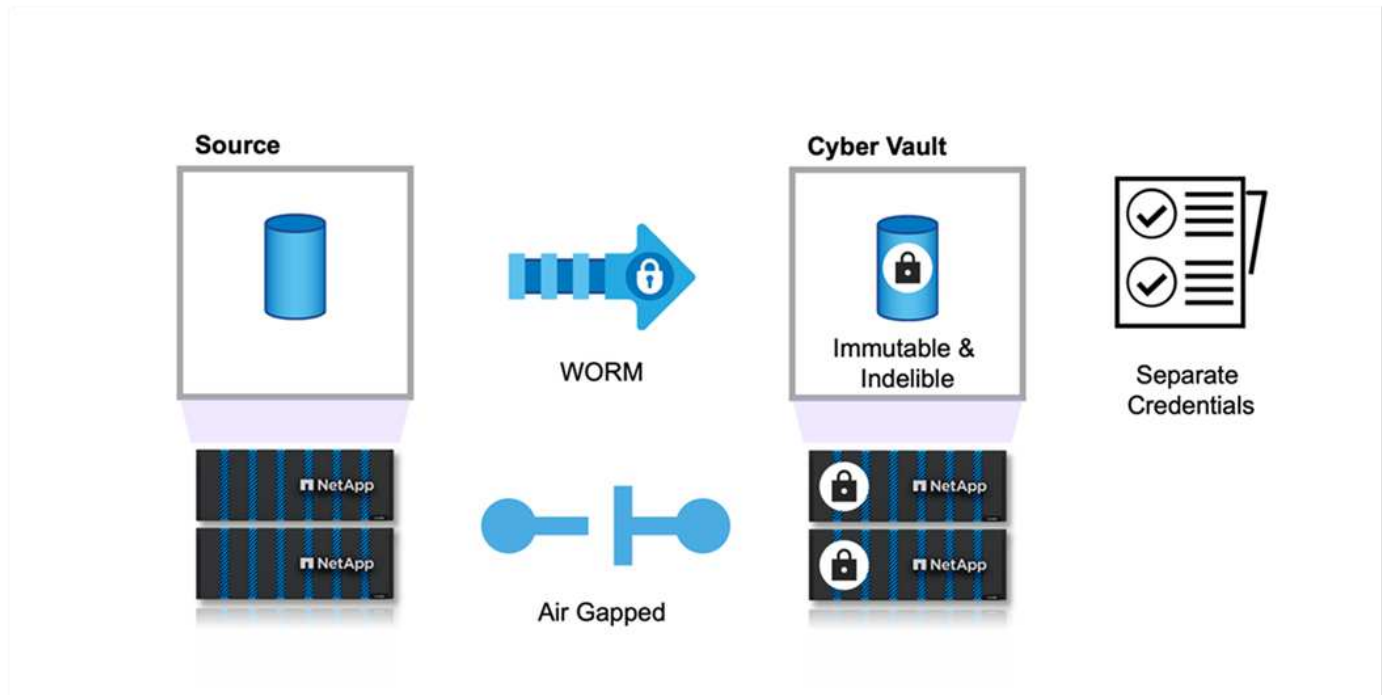
NetApp's approach to cyber vault

Key features of NetApp reference architecture for a cyber vault include:

- Secure, isolated storage infrastructure (e.g., air-gapped storage systems)
- Copies of the data must be both **immutable** and **indelible** without exception
- Strict access controls and multi-factor authentication
- Rapid data restoration capabilities

You can use NetApp storage with ONTAP as an air-gapped cyber vault by leveraging [SnapLock Compliance to WORM-protect Snapshot copies](#). You can perform all the basic SnapLock Compliance tasks on the Cyber vault. Once configured, Cyber vault volumes are automatically protected, eliminating the need to manually commit the Snapshot copies to WORM. More information on logical air-gapping can be found in this [blog](#)

SnapLock Compliance is used to comply with the Banking and Financial regulations SEC 70-a-4(f), FINRA 4511(c), and CFTC 1.31(c)-(d). It has been certified by Cohasset Associates to adhere to these regulations (audit report available upon request). By using SnapLock Compliance with this certification you get a hardened mechanism for air-gapping of your data that is relied upon by the largest financial institutions in the world to ensure both retention and retrieval of banking records.



Cyber vault ONTAP terminology

These are the terms commonly used in cyber vault architectures.

Autonomous Ransomware Protection (ARP) - Autonomous Ransomware Protection (ARP) feature uses workload analysis in NAS (NFS and SMB) environments to proactively, and in real time, detect and warn about abnormal activity that might indicate a ransomware attack. When an attack is suspected, ARP also creates new Snapshot copies, in addition to existing protection from scheduled Snapshot copies. For more information, see the [ONTAP documentation on Autonomous Ransomware Protection](#)

Air-gap (Logical) - You can configure NetApp storage with ONTAP as a logical air-gapped cyber vault by leveraging [SnapLock Compliance to WORM-protect Snapshot copies](#)

Air-gap (Physical) - A physical air-gapped system has no network connectivity to it. Using tape backups, you can move the images to another location. The SnapLock Compliance logical air-gap is just as robust as a physical air-gapped system.

Bastion host - A dedicated computer on an isolated network, configured to withstand attacks.

Immutable Snapshot copies - Snapshot copies that are not able to be modified, without exception (including a support organization or the ability to low level format the storage system).

Indelible Snapshot copies - Snapshot copies that are not able to be deleted, without exception (including a support organization or the ability to low level format the storage system).

Tamperproof Snapshot copies - Tamperproof Snapshot copies use the SnapLock Compliance clock feature to lock Snapshot copies for a specified period. These locked snapshots can not be deleted by any user or

NetApp support. You can use locked Snapshot copies to recover data if a volume is compromised by a ransomware attack, malware, hacker, rogue administrator or accidental deletion. For more information, see the [ONTAP documentation on Tamperproof Snapshot copies](#)

SnapLock - SnapLock is a high-performance compliance solution for organizations that use WORM storage to retain files in unmodified form for regulatory and governance purposes. For more information, see the [ONTAP documentation on SnapLock](#).

SnapMirror - SnapMirror is disaster recovery replication technology, designed to efficiently replicate data. SnapMirror can create a mirror (or exact copy of the data), vault (a copy of the data with longer Snapshot copy retention), or both to a secondary system, on premises or in the cloud. These copies can be used for many different purposes such as a disaster, bursting to the cloud, or a cyber vault (when using the vault policy and locking the vault). For more information, see the [ONTAP documentation on SnapMirror](#)

SnapVault - In ONTAP 9.3 SnapVault was deprecated in favor of configuring SnapMirror using the vault or mirror-vault policy. This is term, while still used, has been deprecated as well. For more information, see the [ONTAP documentation on SnapVault](#).

Cyber vault sizing with ONTAP

Sizing a cyber vault requires understanding how much data that will need to be restored in a given Recovery Time Objective (RTO). Many factors play into properly designing a right sized cyber vault solution. Both performance and capacity must be considered when sizing a cyber vault.

Performance sizing considerations

1. What are the source platform models (FAS v AFF A-Series v AFF C-Series)?
2. What is the bandwidth and latency between the source and cyber vault?
3. How large are the file sizes and how many files?
4. What is your recovery time objective?
5. How much data do you need to be recovered within the RTO?
6. How many SnapMirror fan-in relationships will the cyber vault be ingesting?
7. Will there be single or multiple recoveries happening at the same time?
8. Will those multiple recoveries be happening to the same primary?
9. Will SnapMirror be replicating to the vault during a recovery from a vault?

Sizing examples

Here are examples of different cyber vault configurations.



Platform	AFF A1K	AFF C400	AFF C250	FAS70
Estimated RTO (100TB)	5 HR	18 HR	24 HR	24> HR
Relative cost	High	Moderate	Low	Ultra Low

Capacity sizing considerations

The amount of disk space required for an ONTAP cyber vault destination volume depends on a variety of factors, the most important of which is the rate of change for data in the source volume. The backup schedule and the Snapshot schedule on the destination volume both affect disk usage on the destination volume, and rate of change on the source volume is not likely to be constant. It is a good idea to provide a buffer of additional storage capacity above that which is required to accommodate future changes in end-user or application behavior.

Sizing a relationship for 1 month of retention in ONTAP requires calculating the storage requirements based on several factors, including the size of the primary dataset, the rate of data change (daily change rate), and the deduplication and compression savings (if applicable).

Here is the step-by-step approach:

The first step is to know the size of the source volume(s) you are protecting with the cyber vault. This is the base amount of data that will initially replicate to the cyber vault destination. Next, estimate the daily change rate for the dataset. This is the percentage of data that changes every day. It is crucial to have a good understanding of how dynamic your data is.

For example:

- Primary dataset size = 5TB
- Daily change rate = 5% (0.05)
- Deduplication and compression efficiency = 50% (0.50)

Now, let us walk through the calculation:

- Calculate the daily data change rate:

$$\text{Changed data per day} = 5000 * 5\% = 250\text{GB}$$

- Calculate the total changed data for 30 days:

$$\text{Total changed data in 30 days} = 250 \text{ GB} * 30 = 7.5\text{TB}$$

- Calculate the total storage required:

$$\text{TOTAL} = 5\text{TB} + 7.5\text{TB} = 12.5\text{TB}$$

- Apply deduplication and compression savings:

$$\text{EFFECTIVE} = 12.5\text{TB} * 50\% = 6.25\text{TB}$$

Summary of storage needs

- Without efficiency: It would require **12.5TB** to store 30 days of the cyber vault data.
- With 50% efficiency: It would require **6.25TB** of storage after deduplication and compression.



Snapshot copies may have additional overhead due to metadata, but this is usually minor.



If multiple backups are taken per day, adjust the calculation by the number of Snapshot copies taken each day.



Factor in data growth over time to ensure sizing is future proof.

Creating a cyber vault with ONTAP

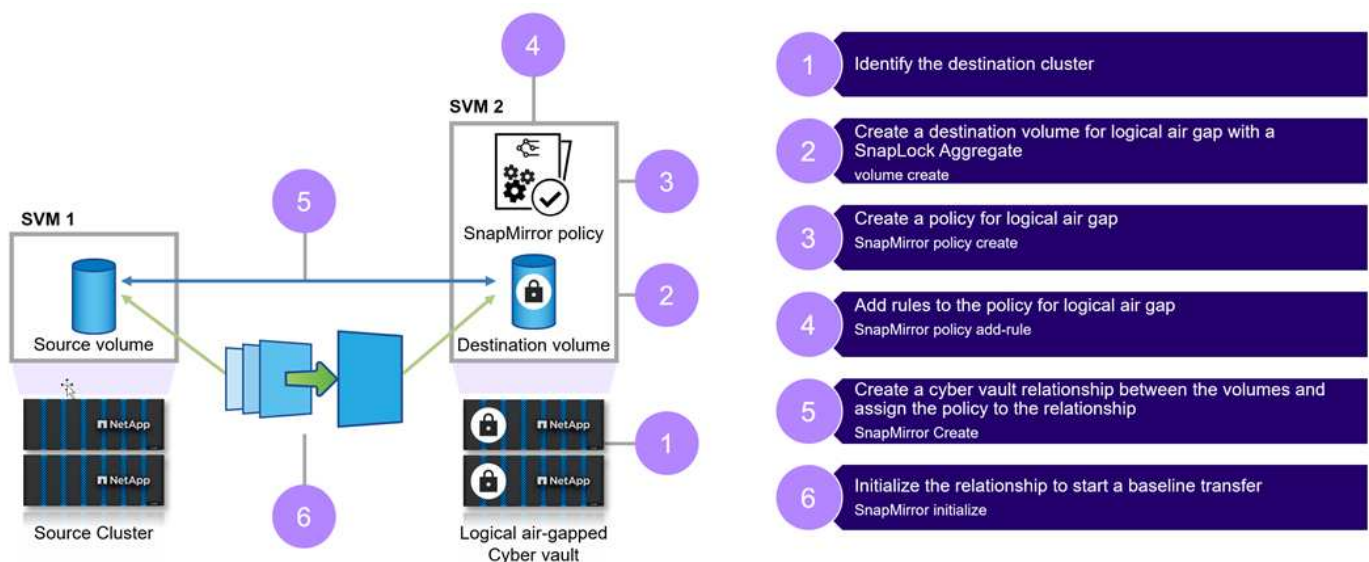
The steps below will assist with the creation of a cyber vault with ONTAP.

Before you begin

- The source cluster must be running ONTAP 9 or later.
- The source and destination aggregates must be 64-bit.
- The source and destination volumes must be created in peered clusters with peered SVMs. For more information, see [Cluster Peering](#).
- If volume autogrow is disabled, the free space on the destination volume must be at least five percent more than the used space on the source volume.

About this task

The following illustration shows the procedure for initializing a SnapLock Compliance vault relationship:



Steps

1. Identify the destination array to become the cyber vault to receive the air-gapped data.
2. On the destination array, to prepare the cyber vault, [install the ONTAP One license](#), [initialize the Compliance Clock](#), and, if you are using an ONTAP release earlier than 9.10.1, [create a SnapLock](#)

Compliance aggregate.

3. On the destination array, create a SnapLock Compliance destination volume of type DP:

```
volume create -vserver SVM_name -volume volume_name -aggregate aggregate_name  
-snaplock-type compliance|enterprise -type DP -size size
```

4. Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, SnapLock and non-SnapLock volumes can exist on the same aggregate; therefore, you are no longer required to create a separate SnapLock aggregate if you are using ONTAP 9.10.1. You use the volume `-snaplock-type` option to specify a Compliance type. In ONTAP releases earlier than ONTAP 9.10.1, the SnapLock mode, Compliance is inherited from the aggregate. Version-flexible destination volumes are not supported. The language setting of the destination volume must match the language setting of the source volume.

The following command creates a 2 GB SnapLock Compliance volume named `dstvolB` in SVM2 on the aggregate `node01_aggr`:

```
cluster2::> volume create -vserver SVM2 -volume dstvolB -aggregate node01_aggr  
-snaplock-type compliance -type DP -size 2GB
```

5. On the destination cluster, to create the air-gap, set the default retention period, as described in [Set the default retention period](#).

A SnapLock volume that is a vault destination has a default retention period assigned to it. The value for this period is initially set to a minimum of 0 years and maximum of 100 years (Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1. For earlier ONTAP releases, the value is 0 - 70.) for SnapLock Compliance volumes. Each NetApp Snapshot copy is committed with this default retention period at first. The default-retention-period must be changed. The retention period can be extended later, if needed, but never shortened. For more information, see [Set retention time overview](#).



Service providers should consider customer's contract end dates when determining retention period. For example, if the cyber vault retention period is 30 days and the customer's contract ends before the retention period expires, data in the cyber vault can not be deleted until the retention period expires.

6. [Create a new replication relationship](#) between the non-SnapLock source and the new SnapLock destination you created in Step 3.

This example creates a new SnapMirror relationship with destination SnapLock volume `dstvolB` using a policy of `XDPEndpoint` to vault Snapshot copies labeled daily and weekly on an hourly schedule:

```
cluster2::> snapmirror create -source-path SVM1:srcvolA -destination-path  
SVM2:dstvolB -vserver SVM2 -policy XDPEndpoint -schedule hourly
```

[Create a custom replication policy](#) or a [custom schedule](#) if the available defaults are not suitable.

7. On the destination SVM, initialize the SnapVault relationship created in Step 5:

```
snapmirror initialize -destination-path destination_path
```

8. The following command initializes the relationship between the source volume `srcvolA` on SVM1 and the destination volume `dstvolB` on SVM2:

```
cluster2::> snapmirror initialize -destination-path SVM2:dstvolB
```


9. After the relationship is initialized and idle, use the snapshot show command on the destination to verify the SnapLock expiry time applied to the replicated Snapshot copies.

This example lists the Snapshot copies on volume dstvolB that have the SnapMirror label and the SnapLock expiration date:

```
cluster2::> snapshot show -vserver SVM2 -volume dstvolB -fields snapmirror-label, snaplock-expiry-time
```

Cyber vault hardening

These are the additional recommendations to harden an ONTAP cyber vault. Please consult the ONTAP hardening guide below for more recommendations and procedures.

Cyber vault hardening recommendations

- Isolate the cyber vault's management planes
- Do not enable data LIFs on the destination cluster as they are an additional attack vector
- On the destination cluster, limit intercluster LIF access to the source cluster with a service policy
- Segment the management LIF on the destination cluster for limited access with a service policy and a bastion host
- Restrict all data traffic from the source cluster to the cyber vault to allow only the ports required for SnapMirror traffic
- Where possible, disable any unneeded management access methods within ONTAP to decrease the attack surface
- Enable audit logging and remote log storage
- Enable multi-admin verification and require verification from an admin outside your regular storage administrators (e.g. CISO staff)
- Implement role-based access controls
- Require administrative multifactor authentication for System Manager and ssh
- Use token based authentication for scripts and REST API calls

Please refer to the [ONTAP hardening guide](#), [Multi-admin verification overview](#) and [ONTAP multifactor authentication guide](#) for how to accomplish these hardening steps.

Cyber vault interoperability

ONTAP hardware and software can be used to create a cyber vault configuration.

ONTAP hardware recommendations

All ONTAP unified physical arrays can be used for a cyber vault implementation.

- FAS hybrid storage offers the most cost-efficient solution.
- AFF C-Series offers the most efficient power consumption and density.
- AFF A-Series is the highest performing platform offering the best RTO. With the recent announcement of

our latest AFF A-Series, this platform will offer the best storage efficiency without performance compromise.

ONTAP software recommendations

Beginning with ONTAP 9.14.1, you can specify retention periods for specific SnapMirror labels in the SnapMirror policy of the SnapMirror relationship so that the replicated Snapshot copies from the source to the destination volume are retained for the retention-period specified in the rule. If no retention period is specified, the default-retention-period of the destination volume is used.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.13.1, you can instantaneously restore a locked Snapshot copy on the destination SnapLock volume of a SnapLock vault relationship by creating a FlexClone with the snaplock-type option set to "non-snaplock" and specifying the Snapshot copy as the "parent-snapshot" when executing the volume clone creation operation. Learn more about [creating a FlexClone volume with a SnapLock type](#).

MetroCluster configuration

For MetroCluster configurations, you should be aware of the following:

- You can create a SnapVault relationship only between sync-source SVMs, not between a sync-source SVM and a sync-destination SVM.
- You can create a SnapVault relationship from a volume on a sync-source SVM to a data-serving SVM.
- You can create a SnapVault relationship from a volume on a data-serving SVM to a DP volume on a sync-source SVM.

Cyber vault frequently asked questions

This FAQ is intended for NetApp customers and partners. It answers frequently asked questions about the NetApp's ONTAP based cyber vault reference architecture.

What is a NetApp cyber vault?

Cyber vault is a specific data protection technique that involves storing data in an isolated environment, separate from the primary IT infrastructure.

Cyber vault is an "air-gapped", immutable, and indelible data repository that is immune to threats affecting the primary data, such as malware, ransomware, or insider threats. A cyber vault can be achieved with immutable NetApp ONTAP Snapshot copies and made indelible with NetApp SnapLock Compliance. While under SnapLock Compliance protection, data cannot be modified or deleted, not even by ONTAP administrators or NetApp Support.

Air-gapping backups using traditional methods involve creating space and physically separating the primary and secondary media. Air-gapping with cyber vault includes using a separate data replication network outside of standard data access networks to replicate Snapshot copies to an indelible destination.

Further steps beyond air-gapped networks involves disabling all data access and replication protocols on the cyber vault when they are not needed. This prevents data access or data exfiltration at the destination site. With SnapLock Compliance, physical separation is not required. SnapLock Compliance protects your vaulted, point-in-time, read-only Snapshot copies, resulting in rapid data recovery, that's safe from deletion, and immutable.

NetApp's approach to cyber vault

NetApp cyber vault, powered by SnapLock, provides organizations with a comprehensive and flexible solution for protecting their most critical data assets. By leveraging hardening technologies in ONTAP, NetApp enables you to create a secure, air-gapped, and isolated cyber vault that is immune against evolving cyber threats. With NetApp, you can ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of your data while maintaining the agility and efficiency of your storage infrastructure.

Key features of the NetApp reference architecture for a cyber vault include:

- Secure, isolated storage infrastructure (e.g., air-gapped storage systems)
- Backup copies of your data are both immutable and indelible
- Strict and separate access controls, multi-administrator verification and multi-factor authentication
- Rapid data restoration capabilities

Cyber vault frequently asked questions

Is cyber vault a product from NetApp?

No, "cyber vault" is an industry wide term. NetApp has created a reference architecture to make it easy for customers to build their own cyber vaults and leverage the dozens of ONTAP security features to help protect their data from cyber threats. More information is available on the [ONTAP documentation site](#).

Is cyber vault with NetApp just another name for LockVault or SnapVault?

LockVault was a feature of Data ONTAP 7-mode that is not available in the current versions of ONTAP.

SnapVault was a legacy term for what is now accomplished with SnapMirror's vault policy. This policy allows the destination to retain a different quantity of Snapshot copies than the source volume.

Cyber vault is using SnapMirror with the vault policy and SnapLock Compliance together to create an immutable and indelible copy of data.

Which NetApp hardware can I use for a cyber vault, FAS, capacity flash, or performance flash?

This reference architecture for cyber vaulting applies to the entire ONTAP hardware portfolio. Customers can use AFF A-Series, AFF C-Series or FAS platforms as the vault. Flash-based platforms will provide the fastest recovery times while disk-based platforms will provide the most cost-effective solution. Depending on how much data is being recovered and if multiple recoveries are happening in parallel, using disk-based systems (FAS) may take days to weeks to complete. Please consult with a NetApp or partner representative to properly size a cyber vault solution to meet the business requirements.

Can I use Cloud Volumes ONTAP as a cyber vault source?

Yes, however using CVO as a source requires the data to be replicated to an on-prem cyber vault destination as SnapLock Compliance is a requirement for an ONTAP cyber vault. The data replication from a hyperscaler based CVO instance may incur egress charges.

Can I use Cloud Volumes ONTAP as a cyber vault destination?

The Cyber Vault architecture relies on ONTAP's SnapLock Compliance's indelibility and is designed for on-prem implementations. Cloud-based Cyber Vault architectures are under investigation for future publication.

Can I use ONTAP Select as a cyber vault source?

Yes, ONTAP Select can be used as a source to an on-prem hardware based cyber vault destination.

Can I use ONTAP Select as a cyber vault destination?

No, ONTAP Select should not be used as a cyber vault destination as it does not have the ability to use SnapLock Compliance.

Is a cyber vault with NetApp just using SnapMirror?

No, a NetApp cyber vault architecture leverages many ONTAP features to create a secure, isolated, air-gapped and hardened copy of data. For more information on what additional technical can be used see the next question.

Is there any other technology or configurations used for cyber vault?

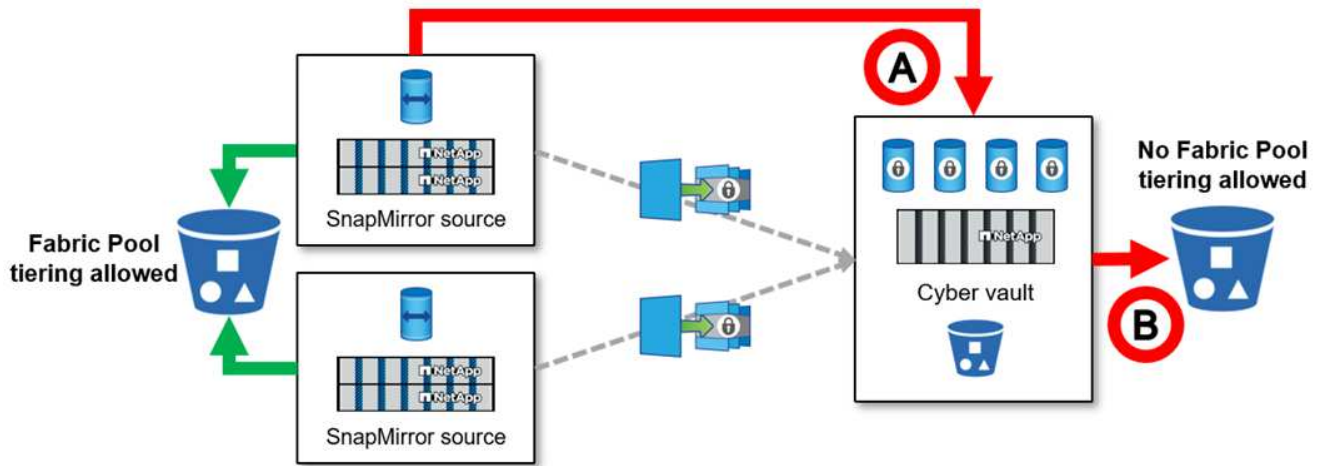
The foundation of a NetApp cyber vault is SnapMirror and SnapLock Compliance but using additional ONTAP features such as tamperproof Snapshot copies, Multi Factor Authentication (MFA), Multi Admin Verify, role-based access control, and remote and local audit logging, improves the security and safety of one's data.

What makes ONTAP Snapshot copies better than others for a cyber vault?

ONTAP Snapshot copies are immutable by default and can be made indelible with SnapLock Compliance. Not even NetApp support can delete the SnapLock Snapshot copies. The better question to ask is what makes NetApp cyber vault better than other cyber vaults in the industry. First, ONTAP is the most secure storage on the planet and has obtained CSfC validation which allows for the storage of secret and top-secret data at rest at both the hardware and software layers. More information on [CSfC can be found here](#). In addition, ONTAP can be air-gapped at the storage layer, with the cyber vault system controlling the replication allowing for an air-gap to be created within the cyber vault network.

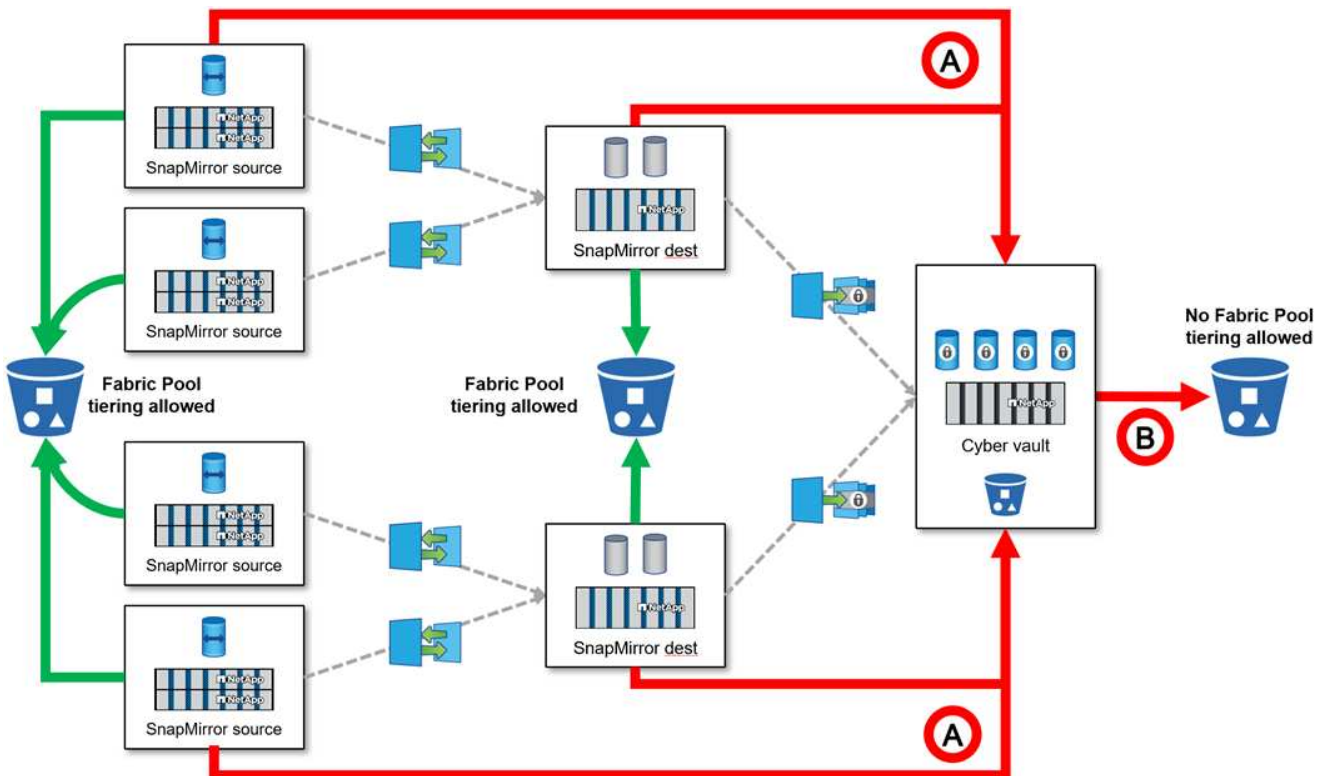
Can a volume on a cyber vault use ONTAP Fabric Pool?

No, a cyber vault volume (SnapLock Compliance SnapMirror destination), can not be tiered off using Fabric Pool, regardless of policy.



There are multiple scenarios in which Fabric pool **can not** be used with a cyber vault.

- A. Fabric Pool cold tiers **can not** be using a cyber vault cluster. This is because enabling the S3 protocol invalidates the secure nature of the cyber vault reference architecture. Additionally, the S3 bucket used for Fabric pool can not be protected.
- B. SnapLock Compliance volumes on the cyber vault **can not** be tiered to a S3 bucket as the data is locked in the volume.



Is ONTAP S3 Worm available on a cyber vault?

No, S3 is a data access protocol that invalidates the secure nature of the reference architecture.

Does NetApp cyber vault run on a different ONTAP personality or profile?

No, it's a reference architecture. Customers can use the [reference architecture](#) and build a cyber vault, or can use the [PowerShell scripts to create, harden and validate](#) a cyber vault.

Can I turn on data protocols such as NFS, SMB and S3 in a cyber vault?

By default, data protocols should be disabled on the cyber vault to make it secure. However, data protocols can be enabled on the cyber vault to access data for recovery or when needed. This should be done on a temporary basis and disabled after recovery has completed.

Can you convert an existing SnapVault environment to a cyber vault, or do you need to reseed everything?

Yes. One could take a system that is a SnapMirror destination (with vault policy), disable the data protocols, harden the system per the [ONTAP hardening guide](#), isolate it a secure location, and follow the other procedures in the reference architecture to make it a cyber vault without having to reseed the destination.

Have additional questions?

Please email ng-cyber-vault@netapp.com with your questions! We will respond and add your questions to the FAQ.

Cyber vault resources

To learn more about the information described in this cyber vault information, refer to the following additional information and security concepts.

- [NetApp cyber vault: Multilayered Data Protection Solutions Brief](#)
- [NetApp Earns AAA Rating for Industry-First AI-Driven On-Box Ransomware Detection Solution](#)
- [Elevate cyber resilience with the most secure storage on the planet](#)
- [ONTAP security hardening guide](#)
- [NetApp Zero Trust](#)
- [NetApp Cyber Resilience](#)
- [NetApp Data Protection](#)
- [Cluster and SVM peering overview with the CLI](#)
- [SnapVault archiving](#)
- [Configure, analyze, cron script](#)

Creating, hardening and validating a ONTAP cyber vault with PowerShell

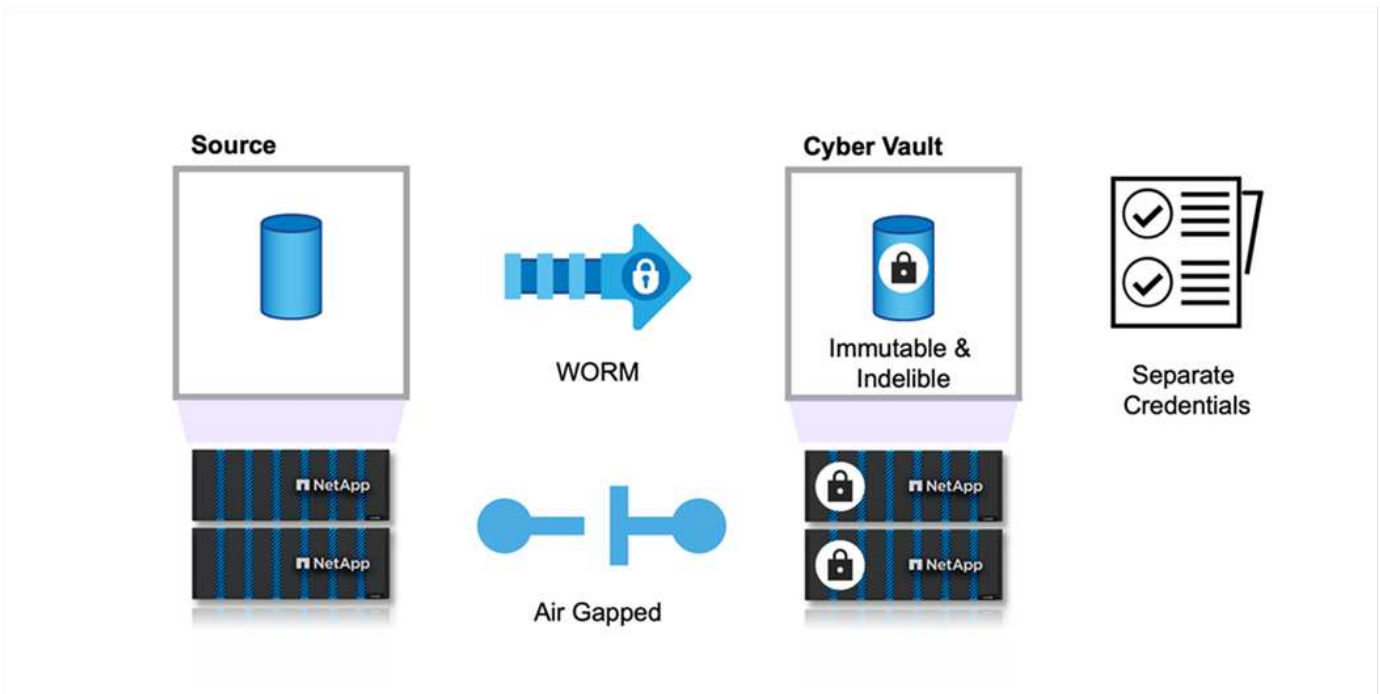
Overview of ONTAP cyber vault with PowerShell

In today's digital landscape, safeguarding an organization's critical data assets is not just a best practice - it is a business imperative. Cyber threats are evolving at an unprecedented pace, and traditional data protection measures are no longer sufficient to keep sensitive information secure. That is where a cyber vault comes in. NetApp's cutting-edge ONTAP based solution combines advanced air-gapping techniques with robust data protection measures to create an impenetrable barrier against cyber threats. By isolating the most valuable data with secure hardening technology, a cyber vault minimizes the attack surface so that the most critical data remains confidential, intact, and readily available when needed.

A cyber vault is a secure storage facility that consists of multiple layers of protection, such as firewalls, networking, and storage. These components safeguard vital recovery data necessary for crucial business operations. The cyber vault's components regularly synchronize with the essential production data based on the vault policy, but otherwise remain inaccessible. This isolated and disconnected setup ensures that in the event of a cyber-attack compromising the production environment, a reliable and final recovery can easily be carried out from the cyber vault.

NetApp enables easy creation of an air-gap for cyber vault by configuring the network, disabling LIFs, updating firewall rules, and isolating the system from external networks and the internet. This robust approach effectively disconnects the system from external networks and the internet, providing unparalleled protection against remote cyber-attacks and unauthorized access attempts, making the system immune to network-based threats and intrusion.

Combining this with SnapLock Compliance protection, data cannot be modified or deleted, not even by ONTAP administrators or NetApp Support. SnapLock is regularly audited against SEC and FINRA regulations, ensuring that data resiliency meets these stringent WORM and data retention regulations of the banking industry. NetApp is the only enterprise storage validated by NSA CSfC to store top-secret data.



This document describes the automated configuration of NetApp's cyber vault for on-premises ONTAP storage to another designated ONTAP storage with immutable snapshots adding an extra layer of protection from increasing cyber-attacks for rapid recovery. As part of this architecture, the entire configuration is applied as per ONTAP best practices. The last section has instructions for performing a recovery in case of an attack.

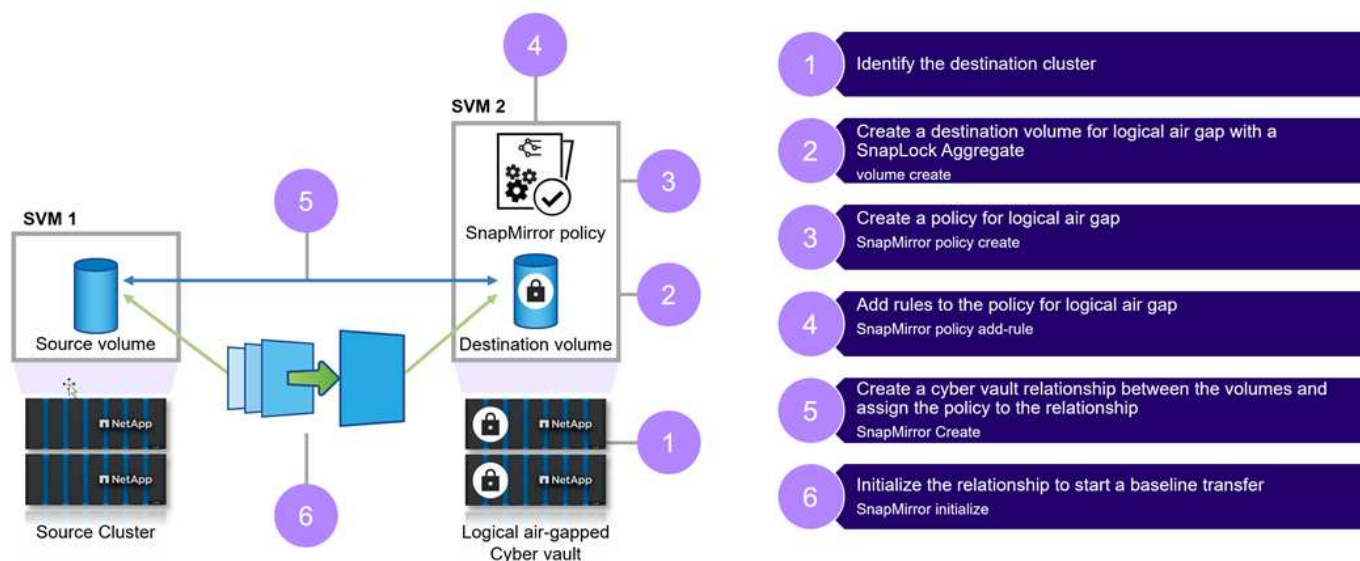


The same solution is applicable to create the designated cyber vault in AWS using FSx ONTAP.

High level steps to create a ONTAP cyber vault

- Create peering relationship
 - Production site using ONTAP storage is peered with designated cyber vault ONTAP storage
- Create SnapLock Compliance volume
- Setup SnapMirror relationship and rule to set label
 - SnapMirror relationship and appropriate schedules are configured
- Set retentions prior to initiating the SnapMirror (vault) transfer
 - Retention lock is applied on the copied data, which further prevents the data from any insider or data failure. Using this, the data cannot be deleted before the retention period expires
 - Organizations can keep this data for few weeks/months depending upon their requirements
- Initialize the SnapMirror relationship based on labels
 - Initial seeding and incremental forever transfer happens based on the SnapMirror schedule
 - Data is protected (immutable and indelible) with SnapLock compliance, and that the data is available for recovery
- Implement strict data transfer controls
 - Cyber vault is unlocked for a limited period with data from the production site and is synced with data in the vault. Once the transfer is complete, the connection is disconnected, closed, and locked again
- Quick recovery

- If primary is affected in the production site, the data from the cyber vault is securely recovered to the original production or to another chosen environment



Solution components

NetApp ONTAP running 9.15.1 on source and destination clusters.

ONTAP One: NetApp ONTAP's all-in-one license.

Capabilities used from ONTAP One license:

- SnapLock Compliance
- SnapMirror
- Multi-admin verification
- All hardening capabilities exposed by ONTAP
- Separate RBAC credentials for cyber vault



All ONTAP unified physical arrays can be used for a cyber vault, however AFF C-series capacity based flash systems and FAS hybrid flash systems are the most cost-effective ideal platforms for this purpose. Please consult the [ONTAP cyber vault sizing](#) for sizing guidance.

ONTAP cyber vault creation with PowerShell

Air-gapping backups that use traditional methods involve creating space and physically separating the primary and secondary media. By moving the media off-site and/or severing connectivity, bad actors have no access to the data. This protects the data but can lead to slower recovery times. With SnapLock Compliance, physical separation is not required. SnapLock Compliance protects the vaulted snapshot point-in-time, read-only copies, resulting in data that is quickly accessible, safe from deletion or indelible, and safe from modification or immutable.

Pre-requisites

Before starting with the steps in the next section of this document, make sure the following prerequisites are met:

- The source cluster must be running ONTAP 9 or later.
- The source and destination aggregates must be 64-bit.
- The source and destination clusters must be peered.
- The source and destination SVMs must be peered.
- Ensure cluster peering encryption is enabled.

Setting up data transfers to a ONTAP cyber vault requires several steps. On the primary volume, configure a snapshot policy that specifies which copies to create and when to create them by using appropriate schedules and assign labels to specify which copies should be transferred by SnapVault. On the secondary, a SnapMirror policy must be created that specifies the labels of Snapshot copies to be transferred and how many of these copies should be kept on the cyber vault. After configuring these policies, create the SnapVault relationship and establish a transfer schedule.



This document assumes the primary storage and designated ONTAP cyber vault is already setup and configured.



Cyber vault cluster can be in the same or different data center as the source data.

Steps to create a ONTAP cyber vault

1. Use the ONTAP CLI or System Manager to initialize the compliance clock.
2. Create a data protection volume with SnapLock compliance enabled.
3. Use the SnapMirror create command to create SnapVault data protection relationships.
4. Set the default SnapLock Compliance retention period for the destination volume.



Default Retention is "Set to minimum." A SnapLock volume that is a vault destination has a default retention period assigned to it. The value for this period is initially set to a minimum of 0 years and maximum of 100 years (Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1. For earlier ONTAP releases, the value is 0 - 70.) for SnapLock Compliance volumes. Each NetApp Snapshot copy is committed with this default retention period at first. The retention period can be extended later, if needed, but never shortened. For more information, see [Set retention time overview](#).

The above encompasses manual steps. Security experts advise automating the process to avoid manual management which introduces big margin for error. Below is the code snippet that completely automates the pre-requisites and configuration of SnapLock compliance and initialization of the clock.

Here is a PowerShell code example to initializing the ONTAP compliance clock.

```

function initializeSnapLockComplianceClock {
    try {
        $nodes = Get-NcNode

        $isInitialized = $false
        logMessage -message "Cheking if snaplock compliance clock is
initialized"
        foreach($node in $nodes) {
            $check = Get-NcSnaplockComplianceClock -Node $node.Node
            if ($check.SnaplockComplianceClockSpecified -eq "True") {
                $isInitialized = $true
            }
        }

        if ($isInitialized) {
            logMessage -message "SnapLock Compliance clock already
initialized" -type "SUCCESS"
        } else {
            logMessage -message "Initializing SnapLock compliance clock"
            foreach($node in $nodes) {
                Set-NcSnaplockComplianceClock -Node $node.Node
            }
            logMessage -message "Successfully initialized SnapLock
Compliance clock" -type "SUCCESS"
        }
    } catch {
        handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
    }
}

```

Here is a PowerShell code example to configure a ONTAP cyber vault.

```

function configureCyberVault {
    for($i = 0; $i -lt $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES.Length; $i++) {
        try {
            # checking if the volume already exists and is of type
snaplock compliance
            logMessage -message "Checking if SnapLock Compliance volume
$( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] ) already exists in vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
            $volume = Get-NcVol -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER -Volume
$DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] | Select-Object -Property Name, State,
TotalSize, Aggregate, Vserver, Snaplock | Where-Object { $_.Snaplock.Type
-eq "compliance" }
            if($volume) {

```

```

        $volume
        logMessage -message "SnapLock Compliance volume
$( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] ) already exists in vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        # Create SnapLock Compliance volume
        logMessage -message "Creating SnapLock Compliance volume:
$( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )"
        New-NcVol -Name $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] -Aggregate
$DESTINATION_AGGREGATE_NAMES[$i] -SnaplockType Compliance -Type DP -Size
$DESTINATION_VOLUME_SIZES[$i] -ErrorAction Stop | Select-Object -Property
Name, State, TotalSize, Aggregate, Vserver
        logMessage -message "Volume $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[
$i] ) created successfully" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # Set SnapLock volume attributes
    logMessage -message "Setting SnapLock volume attributes for
volume: $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )"
    Set-NcSnaplockVolAttr -Volume $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]
-MinimumRetentionPeriod $SNAPLOCK_MIN_RETENTION -MaximumRetentionPeriod
$SNAPLOCK_MAX_RETENTION -ErrorAction Stop | Select-Object -Property Type,
MinimumRetentionPeriod, MaximumRetentionPeriod
    logMessage -message "SnapLock volume attributes set
successfully for volume: $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )" -type "SUCCESS"

    # checking snapmirror relationship
    logMessage -message "Checking if SnapMirror relationship
exists between source volume $( $SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] ) and destination
SnapLock Compliance volume $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )"
    $snapmirror = Get-NcSnapmirror | Select-Object SourceCluster,
SourceLocation, DestinationCluster, DestinationLocation, Status,
MirrorState | Where-Object { $_.SourceCluster -eq
$SOURCE_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME -and $_.SourceLocation -eq "$( $SOURCE_VSERVER)
:$( $SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )" -and $_.DestinationCluster -eq
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME -and $_.DestinationLocation -eq "
$( $DESTINATION_VSERVER ):$( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )" -and ( $_.Status
-eq "snapmirrored" -or $_.Status -eq "uninitialized" ) }
    if($snapmirror) {
        $snapmirror
        logMessage -message "SnapMirror relationship already
exists for volume: $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        # Create SnapMirror relationship
        logMessage -message "Creating SnapMirror relationship for
volume: $( $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i] )"

```

```

        New-NcSnapmirror -SourceCluster $SOURCE_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME
        -SourceVserver $SOURCE_VSERVER -SourceVolume $SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]
        -DestinationCluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME -DestinationVserver
        $DESTINATION_VSERVER -DestinationVolume $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]
        -Policy $SNAPMIRROR_PROTECTION_POLICY -Schedule $SNAPMIRROR_SCHEDULE
        -ErrorAction Stop | Select-Object -Property SourceCluster, SourceLocation,
        DestinationCluster, DestinationLocation, Status, Policy, Schedule
        logMessage -message "SnapMirror relationship created
        successfully for volume: $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i])" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    } catch {
        handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
    }
}
}

```

5. Once the above steps are completed, air-gapped cyber vault using SnapLock Compliance and SnapVault is ready.

Before transferring snapshot data to the cyber vault, the SnapVault relationship must be initialized. However, prior to that, it is necessary to perform security hardening to secure the vault.

ONTAP cyber vault hardening with PowerShell

The ONTAP cyber vault provides better resilience against cyber-attacks compared to traditional solutions. When designing an architecture to enhance security, it is crucial to consider measures to reduce the surface area of attack. This can be achieved through various methods such as implementing hardened password policies, enabling RBAC, locking default user accounts, configuring firewalls, and utilizing approval flows for any changes to the vault system. Furthermore, restricting network access protocols from specific IP address can help to limit potential vulnerabilities.

ONTAP provides a set of controls that allow to harden the ONTAP storage. Use the [guidance and configuration settings for ONTAP](#) to help organization meet prescribed security objectives for information system confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

Hardening best practices

Manual steps

1. Create a designated user with pre-defined and custom administrative role.
2. Create a new IPspace to isolate network traffic.
3. Create a new SVM residing in the new IPspace.
4. Ensure firewall routing policies are properly configured and that all rules are regularly audited and updated as needed.

ONTAP CLI or via automation script

1. Protect administration with multi-admin verification (MAV) in addition to multifactor authentication (MFA), enhancing security for administrative access to the data storage VM.
2. Enable encryption for standard data "in-flight" between clusters.
3. Secure SSH with strong encryption cipher and enforce secure passwords.
4. Enable global FIPS.
5. Telnet and Remote Shell (RSH) should be disabled.
6. Lock default admin account.
7. Disable data LIFs and secure remote access points.
8. Disable and remove unused or extraneous protocols and services.
9. Encrypt network traffic.
10. Use the principle of least privilege when setting up superuser and administrative roles.
11. Restrict HTTPS and SSH from specific IP address using allowed IP option.
12. Quiesce and resume the replication based on the transfer schedule.

Bullets 1-4 needs manual intervention like designating an isolated network, segregating the IPspace and so on and needs to be performed beforehand. Detailed information to configure the hardening can be found in the [ONTAP security hardening guide](#). The rest can be easily automated for easy deployment and monitoring purposes. The objective of this orchestrated approach is to provide a mechanism to automate the hardening steps to future proof the vault controller. The time frame the cyber vault air-gap is open is as short as possible. SnapVault leverages incremental forever technology, which will only move the changes since the last update into the cyber vault, thereby minimizing the amount of time the cyber vault must stay open. To further optimize the workflow, the cyber vault opening is coordinated with the replication schedule to ensure the smallest connection window.

Here is a PowerShell code example to harden a ONTAP controller.

```
function removeSvmDataProtocols {
    try {

        # checking NFS service is disabled
        logMessage -message "Checking if NFS service is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        $nfsService = Get-NcNfsService
        if($nfsService) {
            # Remove NFS
            logMessage -message "Removing NFS protocol on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
            Remove-NcNfsService -VserverContext $DESTINATION_VSERVER
            -Confirm:$false
            logMessage -message "NFS protocol removed on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
        } else {
            logMessage -message "NFS service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
        }
    }
}
```

```

    }

    # checking CIFS/SMB server is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if CIFS/SMB server is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $cifsServer = Get-NcCifsServer
    if($cifsServer) {
        # Remove SMB/CIFS
        logMessage -message "Removing SMB/CIFS protocol on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        $domainAdministratorUsername = Read-Host -Prompt "Enter Domain
administrator username"
        $domainAdministratorPassword = Read-Host -Prompt "Enter Domain
administrator password" -AsSecureString
        $plainPassword = [Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal
]::PtrToStringAuto([Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal]::SecureStringToBSTR($
domainAdministratorPassword))
        Remove-NcCifsServer -VserverContext $DESTINATION_VSERVER
-AdminUsername $domainAdministratorUsername -AdminPassword $plainPassword
-Confirm:$false -ErrorAction Stop
        logMessage -message "SMB/CIFS protocol removed on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "CIFS/SMB server is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking iSCSI service is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if iSCSI service is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $iscsiService = Get-NcIscsiService
    if($iscsiService) {
        # Remove iSCSI
        logMessage -message "Removing iSCSI protocol on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        Remove-NcIscsiService -VserverContext $DESTINATION_VSERVER
-Confirm:$false
        logMessage -message "iSCSI protocol removed on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "iSCSI service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking FCP service is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if FCP service is disabled on

```



```

vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $fcpservice = Get-NcFcpService
    if($fcpservice) {
        # Remove FCP
        logMessage -message "Removing FC protocol on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        Remove-NcFcpService -VserverContext $DESTINATION_VSERVER
        -Confirm:$false
        logMessage -message "FC protocol removed on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "FCP service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

} catch {
    handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
}

}

function disableSvmDataLifs {
    try {
        logMessage -message "Finding all data lifs on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        $dataLifs = Get-NcNetInterface -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER |
Where-Object { $_.Role -contains "data_core" }
        $dataLifs | Select-Object -Property InterfaceName, OpStatus,
DataProtocols, Vserver, Address

        logMessage -message "Disabling all data lifs on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
        # Disable the filtered data LIFs
        foreach ($lif in $dataLifs) {
            $disableLif = Set-NcNetInterface -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER
            -Name $lif.InterfaceName -AdministrativeStatus down -ErrorAction Stop
            $disableLif | Select-Object -Property InterfaceName, OpStatus,
DataProtocols, Vserver, Address
        }
        logMessage -message "Disabled all data lifs on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"

    } catch {
        handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
    }
}

```



```

function configureMultiAdminApproval {
    try {

        # check if multi admin verification is enabled
        logMessage -message "Checking if multi-admin verification is
enabled"
        $maaConfig = Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "set -privilege advanced;
security multi-admin-verify show"
        if ($maaConfig.Value -match "Enabled" -and $maaConfig.Value -match
"true") {
            $maaConfig
            logMessage -message "Multi-admin verification is configured
and enabled" -type "SUCCESS"
        } else {
            logMessage -message "Setting Multi-admin verification rules"
            # Define the commands to be restricted
            $rules = @(
                "cluster peer delete",
                "vserver peer delete",
                "volume snapshot policy modify",
                "volume snapshot rename",
                "vserver audit modify",
                "vserver audit delete",
                "vserver audit disable"
            )
            foreach($rule in $rules) {
                Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "security multi-admin-verify
rule create -operation \"$rule\""
            }

            logMessage -message "Creating multi admin verification group
for ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP, Group name :
$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME, Users : $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_USERS,
Email : $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_EMAIL"
            Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "security multi-admin-verify
approval-group create -name $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME -approvers
$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_USERS -email \"$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_EMAIL\""
            logMessage -message "Created multi admin verification group
for ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP, Group name :
$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME, Users : $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_USERS,
Email : $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_EMAIL" -type "SUCCESS"

            logMessage -message "Enabling multi admin verification group

```

```

$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME"
    Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "security multi-admin-verify
modify -approval-groups $MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME -required
-approvers 1 -enabled true"
    logMessage -message "Enabled multi admin verification group
$MULTI_ADMIN_APPROVAL_GROUP_NAME" -type "SUCCESS"

    logMessage -message "Enabling multi admin verification for
ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP"
    Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "security multi-admin-verify
modify -enabled true"
    logMessage -message "Successfully enabled multi admin
verification for ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP" -type
"SUCCESS"

    logMessage -message "Enabling multi admin verification for
ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP"
    Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "security multi-admin-verify
modify -enabled true"
    logMessage -message "Successfully enabled multi admin
verification for ONTAP Cluster $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP" -type
"SUCCESS"
}

} catch {
    handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
}
}

function additionalSecurityHardening {
    try {
        $command = "set -privilege advanced -confirmations off;security
protocol modify -application telnet -enabled false;"
        logMessage -message "Disabling Telnet"
        Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP -Credential
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command $command
        logMessage -message "Disabled Telnet" -type "SUCCESS"

        #$command = "set -privilege advanced -confirmations off;security
config modify -interface SSL -is-fips-enabled true;"
        #logMessage -message "Enabling Global FIPS"
        ##Invoke-SSHCommand -SessionId $sshSession.SessionId -Command
$command -ErrorAction Stop
    }
}

```

```

#logMessage -message "Enabled Global FIPS" -type "SUCCESS"

$command = "set -privilege advanced -confirmations off;network
interface service-policy modify-service -vserver cluster2 -policy default-
management -service management-https -allowed-addresses $ALLOWED_IPS;"
logMessage -message "Restricting IP addresses $ALLOWED_IPS for
Cluster management HTTPS"
Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP -Credential
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command $command
logMessage -message "Successfully restricted IP addresses
$ALLOWED_IPS for Cluster management HTTPS" -type "SUCCESS"

#logMessage -message "Checking if audit logs volume audit_logs
exists"
#$volume = Get-NcVol -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER -Name
audit_logs -ErrorAction Stop

#if($volume) {
#    logMessage -message "Volume audit_logs already exists!
Skipping creation"
#} else {
#    # Create audit logs volume
#    logMessage -message "Creating audit logs volume : audit_logs"
#    New-NcVol -Name audit_logs -Aggregate
$DESTINATION_AGGREGATE_NAME -Size 5g -ErrorAction Stop | Select-Object
-Property Name, State, TotalSize, Aggregate, Vserver
#    logMessage -message "Volume audit_logs created successfully"
-type "SUCCESS"
#}

## Mount audit logs volume to path /vol/audit_logs
#logMessage -message "Creating junction path for volume audit_logs
at path /vol/audit_logs for vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
#Mount-NcVol -VserverContext $DESTINATION_VSERVER -Name audit_logs
-JunctionPath /audit_logs | Select-Object -Property Name, -JunctionPath
#logMessage -message "Created junction path for volume audit_logs
at path /vol/audit_logs for vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"

#logMessage -message "Enabling audit logging for vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER at path /vol/audit_logs"
#$command = "set -privilege advanced -confirmations off;vserver
audit create -vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER -destination /audit_logs
-format xml;"
#Invoke-SSHCommand -SessionI $sshSession.SessionId -Command
$command -ErrorAction Stop
#logMessage -message "Successfully enabled audit logging for

```

```

vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER at path /vol/audit_logs"

    } catch {
        handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
    }
}

```

ONTAP cyber vault validation with PowerShell

A robust cyber vault should be able to withstand a sophisticated attack, even when the attacker has credentials to access the environment with elevated privileges.

Once the rules are in place, an attempt (assuming somehow the attacker was able to get in) to delete a snapshot on the vault side will fail. Same applies with all hardening settings by placing on the necessary restrictions and safeguarding the system.

PowerShell code example to validate the configuration on a schedule basis.

```

function analyze {

    for($i = 0; $i -lt $DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES.Length; $i++) {
        try {
            # checking if volume is of type SnapLock Compliance
            logMessage -message "Checking if SnapLock Compliance volume
            $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) exists in vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
            $volume = Get-NcVol -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER -Volume
            $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) | Select-Object -Property Name, State,
            TotalSize, Aggregate, Vserver, Snaplock | Where-Object { $_.Snaplock.Type
            -eq "compliance" }
            if($volume) {
                $volume
                logMessage -message "SnapLock Compliance volume
                $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) exists in vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
                -type "SUCCESS"
            } else {
                handleError -errorMessage "SnapLock Compliance volume
                $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) does not exist in vServer
                $DESTINATION_VSERVER. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
                `\"configure`\" to create and configure the cyber vault SnapLock Compliance
                volume"
            }

            # checking SnapMirror relationship
            logMessage -message "Checking if SnapMirror relationship
            exists between source volume $($SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) and destination
            SnapLock Compliance volume $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i])"

```

```

        $snapmirror = Get-NcSnapmirror | Select-Object SourceCluster,
SourceLocation, DestinationCluster, DestinationLocation, Status,
MirrorState | Where-Object { $_.SourceCluster -eq
$SOURCE_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME -and $_.SourceLocation -eq "$($SOURCE_VSERVER)
:$($SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i])" -and $_.DestinationCluster -eq
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME -and $_.DestinationLocation -eq "
$($DESTINATION_VSERVER):$($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i])" -and $_.Status
-eq "snapmirrored" }

        if($snapmirror) {
            $snapmirror
            logMessage -message "SnapMirror relationship successfully
configured and in healthy state" -type "SUCCESS"
        } else {
            handleError -errorMessage "SnapMirror relationship does
not exist between the source volume $($SOURCE_VOLUME_NAMES[$i]) and
destination SnapLock Compliance volume $($DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAMES[$i])
(or) SnapMirror status uninitialized/unhealthy. Recommendation: Run the
script with SCRIPT_MODE `"configure`" to create and configure the cyber
vault SnapLock Compliance volume and configure the SnapMirror
relationship"
        }
    }
    catch {
        handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
    }
}

try {

    # checking NFS service is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if NFS service is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $nfsService = Get-NcNfsService
    if($nfsService) {
        handleError -errorMessage "NFS service running on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`"configure`" to disable NFS on vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "NFS service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking CIFS/SMB server is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if CIFS/SMB server is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $cifsServer = Get-NcCifsServer

```

```

    if($cifsServer) {
        handleError -errorMessage "CIFS/SMB server running on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`"configure`" to disable CIFS/SMB on vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "CIFS/SMB server is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking iSCSI service is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if iSCSI service is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $iscsiService = Get-NcIscsiService
    if($iscsiService) {
        handleError -errorMessage "iSCSI service running on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`"configure`" to disable iSCSI on vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "iSCSI service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking FCP service is disabled
    logMessage -message "Checking if FCP service is disabled on
vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $fcpservice = Get-NcFcpService
    if($fcpservice) {
        handleError -errorMessage "FCP service running on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`"configure`" to disable FCP on vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    } else {
        logMessage -message "FCP service is disabled on vServer
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    }

    # checking if all data lifs are disabled on vServer
    logMessage -message "Finding all data lifs on vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    $dataLifs = Get-NcNetInterface -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER |
Where-Object { $_.Role -contains "data_core" }
    $dataLifs | Select-Object -Property InterfaceName, OpStatus,
DataProtocols, Vserver, Address

    logMessage -message "Checking if all data lifs are disabled for
vServer : $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    # Disable the filtered data LIFs

```

```

foreach ($lif in $dataLifs) {
    $checkLif = Get-NcNetInterface -Vserver $DESTINATION_VSERVER
    -Name $lif.InterfaceName | Where-Object { $_.OpStatus -eq "down" }
    if($checkLif) {
        logMessage -message "Data lif $($lif.InterfaceName)
disabled for vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"
    } else {
        handleError -errorMessage "Data lif $($lif.InterfaceName)
is enabled. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE `\"configure`\"
to disable Data lifs for vServer $DESTINATION_VSERVER"
    }
}
logMessage -message "All data lifs are disabled for vServer :
$DESTINATION_VSERVER" -type "SUCCESS"

# check if multi-admin verification is enabled
logMessage -message "Checking if multi-admin verification is
enabled"
$maaConfig = Invoke-NcSsh -Name $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
-Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS -Command "set -privilege advanced;
security multi-admin-verify show"
if ($maaConfig.Value -match "Enabled" -and $maaConfig.Value -match
"true") {
    $maaConfig
    logMessage -message "Multi-admin verification is configured
and enabled" -type "SUCCESS"
} else {
    handleError -errorMessage "Multi-admin verification is not
configured or not enabled. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`\"configure`\" to enable and configure Multi-admin verification"
}

# check if telnet is disabled
logMessage -message "Checking if telnet is disabled"
$telnetConfig = Invoke-NcSsh -Name
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP -Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS
-Command "set -privilege advanced; security protocol show -application
telnet"
if ($telnetConfig.Value -match "enabled" -and $telnetConfig.Value
-match "false") {
    logMessage -message "Telnet is disabled" -type "SUCCESS"
} else {
    handleError -errorMessage "Telnet is enabled. Recommendation:
Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE `\"configure`\" to disable telnet"
}

```

```

# check if network https is restricted to allowed IP addresses
logMessage -message "Checking if HTTPS is restricted to allowed IP
addresses $ALLOWED_IPS"
$networkServicePolicy = Invoke-NcSsh -Name
$DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP -Credential $DESTINATION_ONTAP_CREDS
-Command "set -privilege advanced; network interface service-policy show"
if ($networkServicePolicy.Value -match "management-https:
$( $ALLOWED_IPS) ") {
    logMessage -message "HTTPS is restricted to allowed IP
addresses $ALLOWED_IPS" -type "SUCCESS"
} else {
    handleError -errorMessage "HTTPS is not restricted to allowed
IP addresses $ALLOWED_IPS. Recommendation: Run the script with SCRIPT_MODE
`configure` to restrict allowed IP addresses for HTTPS management"
}
}
catch {
    handleError -errorMessage $_.Exception.Message
}
}

```

This screenshot shows there are no connections on the vault controller.

```

cluster2::> network connections listening show
This table is currently empty.

cluster2::> network connections active show-services
This table is currently empty.

cluster2::> network connections active show-protocols
This table is currently empty.

cluster2::> █

```

This screenshot shows there is no ability to tamper with the snapshots.

The screenshot shows the ONTAP System Manager interface. On the left is a navigation pane with 'STORAGE' selected. The main area shows 'Snapshot copies' with a table containing one entry. A red warning box is visible in the top right corner.

Name	Snapshot copy creation time	Snapshot restore size
snapmirror.35348dcd-f202-11ee-a914-005056b0d308_2151886225.2024-09-10_153339	Sep/10/2024 3:33 PM	526 MiB

Warning: Snapshot copy "snapmirror.35348dcd-f202-11ee-a914-005056b0d308_2151886225.2024-09-10_153339" wasn't deleted because either it hasn't expired or it's locked.

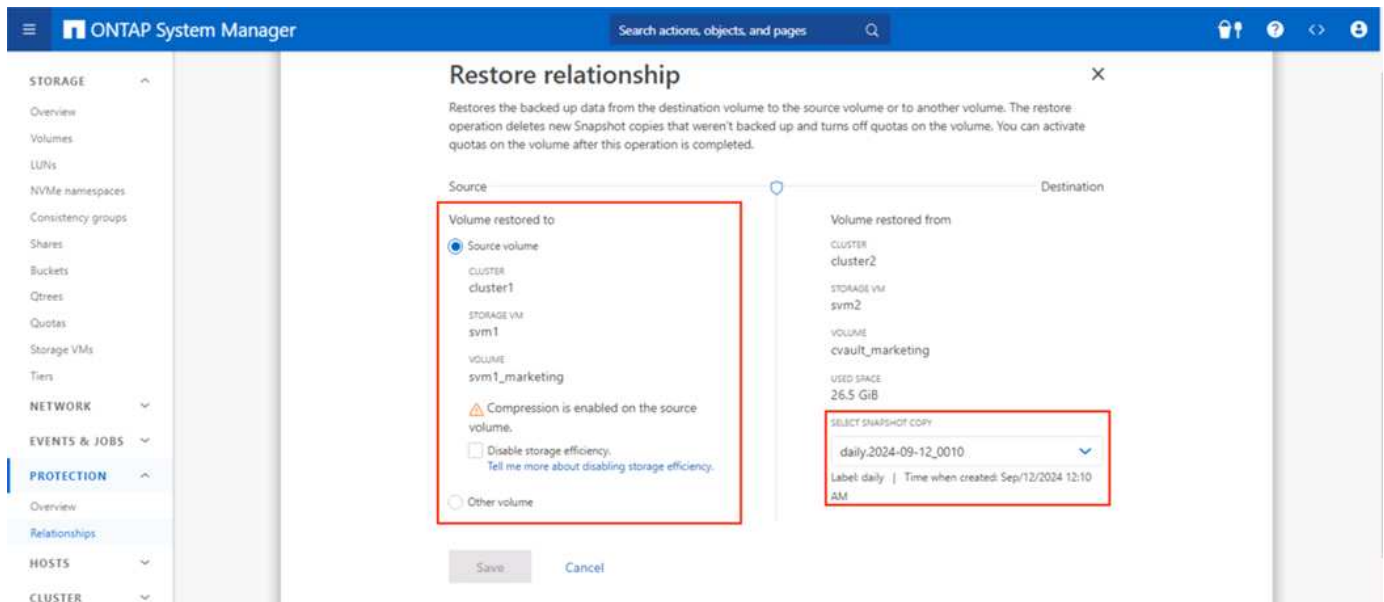
To validate and confirm air-gapping functionality, follow the below steps:

- Test network isolation capabilities, and the ability to quiesce a connection when data is not being transferred.
- Verify the management interface cannot be accessed from any entities apart from the allowed IP addresses.
- Verify Multi-admin verification is in place to provide an additional layer of approval.
- Validate the ability to access via CLI and REST API
- From the source, trigger a transfer operation to vault and ensure the vaulted copy cannot be modified.
- Try to delete the immutable snapshot copies that are transferred to the vault.
- Try to modify the retention period by tampering the system clock.

ONTAP cyber vault data recovery

If data is destroyed in the production datacenter, the data from the cyber vault can be securely recovered to the chosen environment. Unlike a physically air-gapped solution, the air-gapped ONTAP cyber vault is built using native ONTAP features like SnapLock Compliance and SnapMirror. The result is a recovery process that is both fast and easy to execute.

In the event of ransomware attack and need for recovering from the cyber vault, the recovery process is simple and easy as the snapshot copies housed in the cyber vault are used to restore the encrypted data.



If the requirement is to provide a faster method of bringing data back online when necessary to quickly validate, isolate and analyze the data for recovery. This can be easily achieved by using with FlexClone with the snaplock-type option set to non-snaplock type.



Starting with ONTAP 9.13.1, restore a locked Snapshot copy on the destination SnapLock volume of a SnapLock vault relationship can be instantly restored by creating a FlexClone with the snaplock-type option set to "non-snaplock." When executing the volume clone creation operation, specify the Snapshot copy as the "parent-snapshot." More information about creating a FlexClone volume with a SnapLock type [here](#).



Practicing recovery procedures from the cyber vault will ensure the proper steps are established for connecting to the cyber vault and retrieving data. Planning and testing the procedure is essential for any recovery during a cyber-attack event.

Additional considerations

There are additional considerations when designing and deploying an ONTAP based cyber vault.

Capacity sizing considerations

The amount of disk space required for an ONTAP cyber vault destination volume depends on a variety of factors, the most important of which is the rate of change for data in the source volume. The backup schedule and the Snapshot schedule on the destination volume both affect disk usage on the destination volume, and rate of change on the source volume is not likely to be constant. It is a good idea to provide a buffer of additional storage capacity above that which is required to accommodate future changes in end-user or application behavior.

Sizing a relationship for 1 month of retention in ONTAP requires calculating the storage requirements based on several factors, including the size of the primary dataset, the rate of data change (daily change rate), and the deduplication and compression savings (if applicable).

Here is the step-by-step approach:

The first step is to know the size of the source volume(s) you are protecting with the cyber vault. This is the base amount of data that will initially replicate to the cyber vault destination. Next, estimate the daily change rate for the dataset. This is the percentage of data that changes every day. It is crucial to have a good understanding of how dynamic your data is.

For example:

- Primary dataset size = 5TB
- Daily change rate = 5% (0.05)
- Deduplication and compression efficiency = 50% (0.50)

Now, let us walk through the calculation:

- Calculate the daily data change rate:

$$\text{Changed data per day} = 5000 * 5\% = 250\text{GB}$$

- Calculate the total changed data for 30 days:

$$\text{Total changed data in 30 days} = 250 \text{ GB} * 30 = 7.5\text{TB}$$

- Calculate the total storage required:

$$\text{TOTAL} = 5\text{TB} + 7.5\text{TB} = 12.5\text{TB}$$

- Apply deduplication and compression savings:

$$\text{EFFECTIVE} = 12.5\text{TB} * 50\% = 6.25\text{TB}$$

Summary of storage needs

- Without efficiency: It would require **12.5TB** to store 30 days of the cyber vault data.
- With 50% efficiency: It would require **6.25TB** of storage after deduplication and compression.



Snapshot copies may have additional overhead due to metadata, but this is usually minor.



If multiple backups are taken per day, adjust the calculation by the number of Snapshot copies taken each day.



Factor in data growth over time to ensure sizing is future proof.

Performance impact on primary / source

Because the data transfer is a pull operation, the impact on primary storage performance can vary depending on the workload, data volume and the frequency of backups. However, the overall performance impact on the primary system is generally moderate and manageable, as data transfer is designed to offload data protection and backup tasks to the cyber vault storage system. During the initial relationship setup and the first full backup, a significant amount of data is transferred from the primary system to the cyber vault system (the SnapLock Compliance volume). This can lead to increased network traffic and I/O load on the primary system. Once the initial full backup is complete, ONTAP only needs to track and transfer blocks that have changed since the last backup. This results in a much smaller I/O load compared to the initial replication. Incremental updates are efficient and have minimal impact on primary storage performance. The vault process runs in the background, which reduces the chances of interference with the primary system's production workloads.

- Ensuring the storage system has enough resources (CPU, memory and IOPs) to handle the additional load mitigates the performance impact.

Configure, analyze, cron script

NetApp has created a [single script that can be downloaded](#) and used to configure, verify, and schedule cyber vault relationships.

What this script does

- Cluster peering
- SVM peering
- DP volume creation
- SnapMirror relationship and initialization
- Harden the ONTAP system used for the cyber vault
- Quiesce and resume the relationship based on the transfer schedule
- Validate the security settings periodically and generate a report showing any anomalies

How to use this script

[Download the script](#) and to use the script, simply follow the below steps:

- Launch Windows PowerShell as an administrator.

- Navigate to the directory containing the script.
- Execute the script using `.\` syntax along with the required parameters



Please ensure all information entered. On the first run (configure mode), it will ask for credentials for both, the production and the new cyber vault system. After that, it will create the SVM peering's (if not existent), the volumes and the SnapMirror between the system and initialize them.



Cron mode can be used to schedule the quiesce and resume of data transfer.

Modes of operation

The automation script provides 3 modes for execution - configure, analyze and cron.

```
if($SCRIPT_MODE -eq "configure") {
    configure
} elseif ($SCRIPT_MODE -eq "analyze") {
    analyze
} elseif ($SCRIPT_MODE -eq "cron") {
    runCron
}
```

- Configure - Performs the validation checks and configures the system as air-gapped.
- Analyze - Automated monitoring and reporting feature to send out information to monitoring groups for anomalies and suspicious activities to ensure the configurations are not drifted.
- Cron - To enable disconnected infrastructure, cron mode automates disabling the LIF and quiesces the transfer relationship.

It will take time to transfer the data in those selected volumes depending on both systems performance and the amount of data.

```
./script.ps1 -SOURCE_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP "172.21.166.157"
-SOURCE_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME "NTAP915_Src" -SOURCE_VSERVER "svm_NFS"
-SOURCE_VOLUME_NAME "Src_RP_Vol01" -DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_MGMT_IP
"172.21.166.159" -DESTINATION_ONTAP_CLUSTER_NAME "NTAP915_Destn"
-DESTINATION_VSERVER "svm_nim_nfs" -DESTINATION_AGGREGATE_NAME
"NTAP915_Destn_01_VM_DISK_1" -DESTINATION_VOLUME_NAME "Dst_RP_Vol01_Vault"
-DESTINATION_VOLUME_SIZE "5g" -SNAPLOCK_MIN_RETENTION "15minutes"
-SNAPLOCK_MAX_RETENTION "30minutes" -SNAPMIRROR_PROTECTION_POLICY
"XDPDefault" -SNAPMIRROR_SCHEDULE "5min" -DESTINATION_CLUSTER_USERNAME
"admin" -DESTINATION_CLUSTER_PASSWORD "PASSWORD123"
```

ONTAP cyber vault PowerShell solution conclusion

By leveraging air-gapping with robust hardening methodologies provided by ONTAP,

NetApp enables you to create a secure, isolated storage environment that is resilient against evolving cyber threats. All of this is accomplished while maintaining the agility and efficiency of existing storage infrastructure. This secure access empowers companies to achieve their stringent safety and uptime goals with minimal change to their existing people, process, and technology framework.

ONTAP cyber vault uses native features in ONTAP is an easy approach for additional protection to create immutable and indelible copies of your data. Adding NetApp's ONTAP based cyber vault to the overall security posture will:

- Create an environment that is separate and disconnected to the production and backup networks and restrict user access to it.

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