



CHAPTER 2

Introduction to the Security Appliance

The security appliance combines advanced stateful firewall and VPN concentrator functionality in one device, and for some models, an integrated intrusion prevention module called the AIP SSM or an integrated content security and control module called the CSC SSM. The security appliance includes many advanced features, such as multiple security contexts (similar to virtualized firewalls), transparent (Layer 2) firewall or routed (Layer 3) firewall operation, advanced inspection engines, IPSec and clientless SSL support, and many more features. See [Appendix A, “Feature Licenses,”](#) for a list of supported platforms and features.



Note

The Cisco PIX 501 and PIX 506E security appliances are not supported.

This chapter includes the following sections:

- [New Features by Platform Release, page 2-1](#)
- [Firewall Functional Overview, page 2-16](#)
- [VPN Functional Overview, page 2-20](#)
- [Security Context Overview, page 2-20](#)

New Features by Platform Release

This section lists the new features available in each supported platform release. Because ASDM supports multiple platform releases, and this guide includes features for all releases, you should refer to these sections to determine if a feature is in your release. This section includes the following topics:

- [New Features in Version 8.1\(2\), page 2-1](#)
- [New Features in Version 8.1\(1\), page 2-4](#)
- [New Features in Version 8.0\(4\), page 2-5](#)
- [New Features in Version 8.0\(3\), page 2-9](#)
- [New Features in Version 8.0\(2\), page 2-10](#)

New Features in Version 8.1(2)

Table 2-1 lists the new features for Version 8.1(2).

**Note**

Version 8.1(x) is only supported on the Cisco ASA 5580 adaptive security appliance.

Table 2-1 New Features for ASA Version 8.1(2)

Feature	Description
Remote Access Features	
Auto Sign-On with Smart Tunnels for IE	<p>This feature lets you enable the replacement of logon credentials for WININET connections. Most Microsoft applications use WININET, including Internet Explorer. Mozilla Firefox does not, so it is not supported by this feature. It also supports HTTP-based authentication, therefore form-based authentication does not work with this feature.</p> <p>Credentials are statically associated to destination hosts, not services, so if initial credentials are wrong, they cannot be dynamically corrected during runtime. Also, because of the association with destinations hosts, providing support for an auto sign-on enabled host may not be desirable if you want to deny access to some of the services on that host.</p> <p>To configure a group auto sign-on for smart tunnels, you create a global list of auto sign-on sites, then assign the list to group policies or user names. This feature is not supported with Dynamic Access Policy.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > ACL Manager.</p>
Entrust Certificate Provisioning	<p>ASDM 6.1.3 (which lets you manage security appliances running Versions 8.0x and 8.1x) includes a link to the Entrust website to apply for temporary (test) or discounted permanent SSL identity certificates for your ASA.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Certificate Management > Identity Certificates > Enroll ASA SSL VPN head-end with Entrust.</p>
Extended Time for User Reauthentication on IKE Rekey	<p>You can configure the security appliance to give remote users more time to enter their credentials on a Phase 1 SA rekey. Previously, when reauthenticate-on-rekey was configured for IKE tunnels and a phase 1 rekey occurred, the security appliance prompted the user to authenticate and only gave the user approximately 2 minutes to enter their credentials. If the user did not enter their credentials in that 2 minute window, the tunnel would be terminated. With this new feature enabled, users now have more time to enter credentials before the tunnel drops. The total amount of time is the difference between the new Phase 1 SA being established, when the rekey actually takes place, and the old Phase 1 SA expiring. With default Phase 1 rekey times set, the difference is roughly 3 hours, or about 15% of the rekey interval.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > Certificate Management > Identity Certificates.</p>
Persistent IPsec Tunneled Flows	<p>With the persistent IPsec tunneled flows feature enabled, the security appliance preserves and resumes stateful (TCP) tunneled flows after the tunnel drops, then recovers. All other flows are dropped when the tunnel drops and must reestablish when a new tunnel comes up. Preserving the TCP flows allows some older or sensitive applications to keep working through a short-lived tunnel drop. This feature supports IPsec LAN-to-LAN tunnels and Network Extension Mode tunnels from a hardware client. It does not support IPsec or AnyConnect/SSL VPN remote access tunnels. See the sysopt connection preserve-vpn-flows command. This option is disabled by default.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Network (Client) Access > Advanced > IPsec > System Options. Check the Preserve stateful VPN flows when the tunnel drops for Network Extension Mode (NEM) checkbox to enable persistent IPsec tunneled flows.</p>

Table 2-1 New Features for ASA Version 8.1(2) (continued)

Feature	Description
Show Active Directory Groups	<p>The CLI command show ad-groups was added to list the active directory groups. ASDM Dynamic Access Policy uses this command to present the administrator with a list of MS AD groups that can be used to define the VPN policy.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Clientless SSL VPN Access > Dynamic Access Policies > Add/Edit DAP > Add/Edit AAA Attribute.</p>
Smart Tunnel over Mac OS	<p>Smart tunnels now support Mac OS.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Clientless SSL VPN Access > Portal > Smart Tunnels.</p>
Firewall Features	
NetFlow Filtering	<p>You can filter NetFlow events based on traffic and event-type, and then send records to different collectors. For example, you can log all flow-create events to one collector, but log flow-denied events to a different collector. See the flow-export event-type command.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Security Policy > Service Policy Rules > Add/Edit Service Policy Rule > Rule Actions > NetFlow.</p>
NetFlow Delay Flow Creation Event	<p>For short-lived flows, NetFlow collecting devices benefit from processing a single event as opposed to seeing two events: flow creation and teardown. You can now configure a delay before sending the flow creation event. If the flow is torn down before the timer expires, only the flow teardown event will be sent. See the flow-export delay flow-create command.</p> <p>Note The teardown event includes all information regarding the flow; there is no loss of information.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > Logging > NetFlow.</p>
QoS Traffic Shaping	<p>If you have a device that transmits packets at a high speed, such as the security appliance with Fast Ethernet, and it is connected to a low speed device such as a cable modem, then the cable modem is a bottleneck at which packets are frequently dropped. To manage networks with differing line speeds, you can configure the security appliance to transmit packets at a fixed slower rate. See the shape command.</p> <p>See also the crypto ipsec security-association replay command, which lets you configure the IPSec anti-replay window size. One side-effect of priority queueing is packet re-ordering. For IPSec packets, out-of-order packets that are not within the anti-replay window generate warning syslog messages. These warnings become false alarms in the case of priority queueing. This new command avoids possible false alarms.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Security Policy > Service Policy Rules > Add/Edit Service Policy Rule > Rule Actions > QoS. Note that the only traffic class supported for traffic shaping is class-default, which matches all traffic.</p>

Table 2-1 New Features for ASA Version 8.1(2) (continued)

Feature	Description
TCP Normalization Enhancements	<p>You can now configure TCP normalization actions for certain packet types. Previously, the default actions for these kinds of packets was to drop the packet. Now you can set the TCP normalizer to allow the packets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCP invalid ACK check (the invalid-ack command) • TCP packet sequence past window check (the seq-past-window command) • TCP SYN-ACK with data check (the synack-data command) <p>You can also set the TCP out-of-order packet buffer timeout (the queue command timeout keyword). Previously, the timeout was 4 seconds. You can now set the timeout to another value.</p> <p>The default action for packets that exceed MSS has changed from drop to allow (the exceed-mss command).</p> <p>The following non-configurable actions have changed from drop to clear for these packet types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad option length in TCP • TCP Window scale on non-SYN • Bad TCP window scale value • Bad TCP SACK ALLOW option <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Objects > TCP Maps.</p>
TCP Intercept statistics	<p>You can enable collection for TCP Intercept statistics using the threat-detection statistics tcp-intercept command, and view them using the show threat-detection statistics command.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Threat Detection.</p>
Threat detection shun timeout	<p>You can now configure the shun timeout for threat detection using the threat-detection scanning-threat shun duration command.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Threat Detection.</p>
Threat detection host statistics fine tuning	<p>You can now reduce the amount of host statistics collected, thus reducing the system impact of this feature, by using the threat-detection statistics host number-of-rate command.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Threat Detection.</p>
Platform Features	
Increased VLANs	The number of VLANs supported on the ASA 5580 are increased from 100 to 250.

New Features in Version 8.1(1)

Table 2-2 lists the new features for Version 8.1(1).



Note

Version 8.1(x) is only supported on the Cisco ASA 5580 adaptive security appliance.

Table 2-2 **New Features for ASA Version 8.1(1)**

Feature	Description
Introduction of the Cisco ASA 5580	<p>The Cisco ASA 5580 comes in two models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASA 5580-20 delivers 5 Gigabits per second of TCP traffic and UDP performance is even greater. Many features in the system have been made multi-core capable to achieve this high throughput. In addition the system delivers greater than 60,000 TCP connections per second and supports up to 1 million connections. • The ASA 5580-40 will deliver 10 Gigabits per second of TCP traffic and similar to ASA 5580-20 the UDP performance will be even greater. The ASA 5580-40 delivers greater than 120,000 TCP connections per second and up to 2 million connections in total. <p>In ASDM, see Home > System Resource Status and Home > Device Information > Environment Status.</p>
NetFlow	<p>The new NetFlow feature enhances the ASA logging capabilities by logging flow-based events through the NetFlow protocol. For detailed information on this feature and the new CLI commands, see the <i>Cisco ASA 5580 Adaptive Security Appliance Command Line Configuration Guide</i>.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > Logging > Netflow.</p>
Timeout for SIP Provisional Media	<p>You can now configure the timeout for SIP provisional media using the timeout sip-provisional-media command.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > Global Timeouts.</p>
Details about the activation key	<p>You can now view the permanent and temporary activation keys with their enabled features, including all previously installed temporary keys and their expiration dates using the show activation key detail command.</p> <p>In ASDM in single context mode, see Configuration > Device Management > System Image/Configuration > Activation Key. In ASDM in multiple context mode, see System > Configuration > Device Management > Activation Key.</p>

New Features in Version 8.0(4)



Note

These features are not available in Version 8.1(1). See the [“New Features in Version 8.1\(2\)” section on page 2-1](#) for many, but not all, of these features. For example, Unified Communications features are not supported in 8.1(2).

Table 2-3 lists the new features for Version 8.0(4).

Table 2-3 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(4)

Feature	Description
Unified Communications Features¹	
Phone Proxy	<p>Phone Proxy functionality is supported. ASA Phone Proxy provides similar features to those of the Metreos Cisco Unified Phone Proxy with additional support for SIP inspection and enhanced security. The ASA Phone Proxy has the following key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secures remote IP phones by forcing the phones to encrypt signaling and media • Performs certificate-based authentication with remote IP phones • Terminates TLS signaling from IP phones and initiates TCP and TLS to Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage servers • Terminates SRTP and initiates RTP/SRTP to the called party <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > Encrypted Traffic Inspection > Enable Phone Proxy.</p>
Mobility Proxy	<p>Secure connectivity (mobility proxy) between Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage clients and servers is supported.</p> <p>Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage solutions include the Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator, an easy-to-use software application for mobile handsets that extends enterprise communications applications and services to mobile phones and smart phones and the Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage server. The mobility solution streamlines the communication experience, enabling real-time collaboration across the enterprise.</p> <p>The ASA in this solution delivers inspection for the MMP (formerly called OLWP) protocol, the proprietary protocol between Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator and Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage. The ASA also acts as a TLS proxy, terminating and reoriginating the TLS signaling between the Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator and Cisco Unified Mobility Advantage.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > Encrypted Traffic Inspection > TLS Proxy.</p>
Presence Federation Proxy	<p>Secure connectivity (presence federation proxy) between Cisco Unified Presence servers and Cisco/Microsoft Presence servers is supported. With the Presence solution, businesses can securely connect their Cisco Unified Presence clients back to their enterprise networks, or share Presence information between Presence servers in different enterprises.</p> <p>The ASA delivers functionality to enable Presence for Internet and intra-enterprise communications. An SSL-enabled Cisco Unified Presence client can establish an SSL connection to the Presence Server. The ASA enables SSL connectivity between server to server communication including third-party Presence servers communicating with Cisco Unified Presence servers. Enterprises share Presence information, and can use IM applications. The ASA inspects SIP messages between the servers.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Service Policy Rules > Add/Edit Service Policy Rule > Rule Actions > Protocol Inspection or Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > Encrypted Traffic Inspection > TLS Proxy > Add > Client Configuration.</p>
Remote Access Features	

Table 2-3 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(4) (continued)

Feature	Description
Auto Sign-On with Smart Tunnels for IE ¹	<p>This feature lets you enable the replacement of logon credentials for WININET connections. Most Microsoft applications use WININET, including Internet Explorer. Mozilla Firefox does not, so it is not supported by this feature. It also supports HTTP-based authentication, therefore form-based authentication does not work with this feature.</p> <p>Credentials are statically associated to destination hosts, not services, so if initial credentials are wrong, they cannot be dynamically corrected during runtime. Also, because of the association with destinations hosts, providing support for an auto sign-on enabled host may not be desirable if you want to deny access to some of the services on that host.</p> <p>To configure a group auto sign-on for smart tunnels, you create a global list of auto sign-on sites, then assign the list to group policies or user names. This feature is not supported with Dynamic Access Policy.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Firewall > Advanced > ACL Manager.</p>
Entrust Certificate Provisioning ¹	<p>ASDM includes a link to the Entrust website to apply for temporary (test) or discounted permanent SSL identity certificates for your ASA.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Certificate Management > Identity Certificates. Click Enroll ASA SSL VPN head-end with Entrust.</p>
Extended Time for User Reauthentication on IKE Rekey	<p>You can configure the security appliance to give remote users more time to enter their credentials on a Phase 1 SA rekey. Previously, when reauthenticate-on-rekey was configured for IKE tunnels and a phase 1 rekey occurred, the security appliance prompted the user to authenticate and only gave the user approximately 2 minutes to enter their credentials. If the user did not enter their credentials in that 2 minute window, the tunnel would be terminated. With this new feature enabled, users now have more time to enter credentials before the tunnel drops. The total amount of time is the difference between the new Phase 1 SA being established, when the rekey actually takes place, and the old Phase 1 SA expiring. With default Phase 1 rekey times set, the difference is roughly 3 hours, or about 15% of the rekey interval.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > Certificate Management > Identity Certificates.</p>
Persistent IPsec Tunneled Flows	<p>With the persistent IPsec tunneled flows feature enabled, the security appliance preserves and resumes stateful (TCP) tunneled flows after the tunnel drops, then recovers. All other flows are dropped when the tunnel drops and must reestablish when a new tunnel comes up. Preserving the TCP flows allows some older or sensitive applications to keep working through a short-lived tunnel drop. This feature supports IPsec LAN-to-LAN tunnels and Network Extension Mode tunnels from a Hardware Client. It does not support IPsec or AnyConnect/SSL VPN remote access tunnels. See the [no] sysopt connection preserve-vpn-flows command. This option is disabled by default.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Network (Client) Access > Advanced > IPsec > System Options. Check the Preserve stateful VPN flows when the tunnel drops for Network Extension Mode (NEM) checkbox to enable persistent IPsec tunneled flows.</p>
Show Active Directory Groups	<p>The CLI command show ad-groups was added to list the active directory groups. ASDM Dynamic Access Policy uses this command to present the administrator with a list of MS AD groups that can be used to define the VPN policy.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Clientless SSL VPN Access > Dynamic Access Policies > Add/Edit DAP > Add/Edit AAA Attribute.</p>

Table 2-3 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(4) (continued)

Feature	Description
Smart Tunnel over Mac OS ¹	Smart tunnels now support Mac OS. In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Clientless SSL VPN Access > Portal > Smart Tunnels.
Firewall Features	
QoS Traffic Shaping	<p>If you have a device that transmits packets at a high speed, such as the security appliance with Fast Ethernet, and it is connected to a low speed device such as a cable modem, then the cable modem is a bottleneck at which packets are frequently dropped. To manage networks with differing line speeds, you can configure the security appliance to transmit packets at a fixed slower rate. See the shape command. See also the crypto ipsec security-association replay command, which lets you configure the IPsec anti-replay window size. One side-effect of priority queueing is packet re-ordering. For IPsec packets, out-of-order packets that are not within the anti-replay window generate warning syslog messages. These warnings become false alarms in the case of priority queueing. This new command avoids possible false alarms.</p> <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Security Policy > Service Policy Rules > Add/Edit Service Policy Rule > Rule Actions > QoS. Note that the only traffic class supported for traffic shaping is class-default, which matches all traffic.</p>
TCP Normalization Enhancements	<p>You can now configure TCP normalization actions for certain packet types. Previously, the default actions for these kinds of packets was to drop the packet. Now you can set the TCP normalizer to allow the packets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCP invalid ACK check (the invalid-ack command) • TCP packet sequence past window check (the seq-past-window command) • TCP SYN-ACK with data check (the synack-data command) <p>You can also set the TCP out-of-order packet buffer timeout (the queue command timeout keyword). Previously, the timeout was 4 seconds. You can now set the timeout to another value.</p> <p>The default action for packets that exceed MSS has changed from drop to allow (the exceed-mss command).</p> <p>The following non-configurable actions have changed from drop to clear for these packet types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad option length in TCP • TCP Window scale on non-SYN • Bad TCP window scale value • Bad TCP SACK ALLOW option <p>In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Objects > TCP Maps.</p>
TCP Intercept statistics	<p>You can enable collection for TCP Intercept statistics using the threat-detection statistics tcp-intercept command, and view them using the show threat-detection statistics command.</p> <p>In ASDM 6.1(5) and later, see Configuration > Firewall > Threat Detection. This command was not supported in ASDM 6.1(3).</p>
Threat detection shun timeout	<p>You can now configure the shun timeout for threat detection using the threat-detection scanning-threat shun duration command.</p> <p>In ASDM 6.1(5) and later, see Configuration > Firewall > Threat Detection. This command was not supported in ASDM 6.1(3).</p>

Table 2-3 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(4) (continued)

Feature	Description
Timeout for SIP Provisional Media	You can now configure the timeout for SIP provisional media using the timeout sip-provisional-media command. In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Advanced > Global Timeouts.
Platform Features	
Native VLAN support for the ASA 5505	You can now include the native VLAN in an ASA 5505 trunk port using the switchport trunk native vlan command. Note This feature is not currently supported in ASDM. You can enter this command using the Tools > Command Line Interface dialog box. For example, to make VLAN 202 a native VLAN, enter switchport trunk native vlan 202 . See the <i>Cisco Security Appliance Command Reference</i> for more information.

1. This feature is not supported on the PIX security appliance.

New Features in Version 8.0(3)

Table 2-4 lists the new features for Version 8.0(3).

Table 2-4 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(3)

Feature	Description
AnyConnect RSA SoftID API Integration	Provides support for AnyConnect VPN clients to communicate directly with RSA SoftID for obtaining user token codes. It also provides the ability to specify SoftID message support for a connection profile (tunnel group), and the ability to configure SDI messages on the security appliance that match SDI messages received through a RADIUS proxy. This feature ensures the prompts displayed to the remote client user are appropriate for the action required during authentication and the AnyConnect client responds successfully to authentication challenges.
IP Address Reuse Delay	Delays the reuse of an IP address after it has been returned to the IP address pool. Increasing the delay prevents problems the security appliance may experience when an IP address is returned to the pool and reassigned quickly. In ASDM, see Configure > Remote Access VPN > Network (Client) Access > Address Assignment > Assignment Policy.
WAAS Inspection	Added support for Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) inspection. WAAS gives branch and remote offices LAN-like access to WAN and MAN services. See the inspect waas command. In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Service Policy Rules > Add/Edit Service Policy Rule > Rule Actions > Protocol Inspection.
DNS Guard Enhancement	Added an option to enable or disable DNS guard. When enabled, this feature allows only one DNS response back from a DNS request. In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Objects > Inspect maps > DNS.

Table 2-4 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(3) (continued)

Feature	Description
Fully Qualified Domain Name Support Enhancement	Added option in the redirect-fqdn command to send either the fully qualified domain name (FQDN) or the IP address to the client in a VPN load balancing cluster. In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > High Availability > VPN Load Balancing or Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Load Balancing.
Clientless SSL VPN Caching Static Content Enhancement	Added a new command to allow clientless SSL VPN users to cache the static content, cache-static-content enable. In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Clientless SSL VPN Access > Advanced > Content Cache.
DHCP Client Enhancements	Added two new items for the DHCP client. The first option configures DHCP Option 61 to send either the MAC or the string "cisco-<MAC>-<interface>-<hostname>", where < > represents the corresponding values as the client identifier. The second option either sets or clears the broadcast flag for DHCP discover when the DHCP request has the broadcast flag enabled. In ASDM, see Configuration > Device Management > DHCP > DHCP Server; then click on Advanced button.
ASDM Banner	When you start ASDM, new banner text appears in a dialog box with the option to continue or disconnect. See the banner asdm command. In ASDM, see Configuration > Properties > Device Administration > Banner.
ESMTP Enhancement	Added an option for Extended Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (ESMTP) inspection to work over Transport Layer Security (TLS). In ASDM, see Configuration > Firewall > Objects > Inspect Map > ESMTP.
Smart Card Removal Enhancement	Added option in the VPN group policy to specify whether tunnels stay connected or not when the Smart Card is removed. Previously, the tunnels were always disconnected. See the smartcard-removal-disconnect command. In ASDM, see Configuration > Remote Access VPN > Network (Client) Access > Group Policies > Add/Edit Internal/External Group Policies > More Options.

New Features in Version 8.0(2)

Table 2-5 lists the new features for Version 8.0(2).



Note

There was no ASA or PIX 8.0(1) release.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
General Features		
Routing	EIGRP routing	The security appliance supports EIGRP or EIGRP stub routing.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
High Availability	Remote command execution in Failover pairs	You can execute commands on the peer unit in a failover pair without having to connect directly to the peer. This works for both Active/Standby and Active/Active failover.
	CSM configuration rollback support	Adds support for the Cisco Security Manager configuration rollback feature in failover configurations.
	Failover pair Auto Update support	You can use an Auto Update server to update the platform image and configuration in failover pairs.
	Stateful Failover for SIP signaling	SIP media and signaling connections are replicated to the standby unit.
	Redundant interfaces	A logical redundant interface pairs an active and a standby physical interface. When the active interface fails, the standby interface becomes active and starts passing traffic. You can configure a redundant interface to increase the security appliance reliability. This feature is separate from device-level failover, but you can configure redundant interfaces as well as failover if desired. You can configure up to eight redundant interface pairs.
SSMs	Password reset	You can reset the password on the SSM hardware module.
VPN Features¹		
Authentication Enhancements	Combined certificate and username/password login	An administrator requires a username and password in addition to a certificate for login to SSL VPN connections.
	Internal domain username/password	Provides a password for access to internal resources for users who log in with credentials other than a domain username and password, for example, with a one-time password. This is a password in addition to the one a user enters when logging in.
	Generic LDAP support	This includes OpenLDAP and Novell LDAP. Expands LDAP support available for authentication and authorization.
	Onscreen keyboard	The security appliance includes an onscreen keyboard option for the login page and subsequent authentication requests for internal resources. This provides additional protection against software-based keystroke loggers by requiring a user to use a mouse to click characters in an onscreen keyboard for authentication, rather than entering the characters on a physical keyboard.
	SAML SSO verified with RSA Access Manager	The security appliance supports Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) protocol for Single Sign On (SSO) with RSA Access Manager (Cleartrust and Federated Identity Manager).
	NTLMv2	Version 8.0(2) adds support for NTLMv2 authentication for Windows-based clients.
Certificates	Local certificate authority	Provides a certificate authority on the security appliance for use with SSL VPN connections, both browser- and client-based.
	OCSP CRL	Provides OCSP revocation checking for SSL VPN.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
Cisco Secure Desktop	Host Scan	<p>As a condition for the completion of a Cisco AnyConnect or clientless SSL VPN connection, the remote computer scans for a greatly expanded collection of antivirus and antispyware applications, firewalls, operating systems, and associated updates. It also scans for any registry entries, filenames, and process names that you specify. It sends the scan results to the security appliance. The security appliance uses both the user login credentials and the computer scan results to assign a Dynamic Access Policy (DAP).</p> <p>With an Advanced Endpoint Assessment License, you can enhance Host Scan by configuring an attempt to update noncompliant computers to meet version requirements.</p> <p>Cisco can provide timely updates to the list of applications and versions that Host Scan supports in a package that is separate from Cisco Secure Desktop.</p>
	Simplified prelogin assessment and periodic checks	<p>Cisco Secure Desktop now simplifies the configuration of prelogin and periodic checks to perform on remote Microsoft Windows computers. Cisco Secure Desktop lets you add, modify, remove, and place conditions on endpoint checking criteria using a simplified, graphical view of the checks. As you use this graphical view to configure sequences of checks, link them to branches, deny logins, and assign endpoint profiles, Cisco Secure Desktop Manager records the changes to an XML file. You can configure the security appliance to use returned results in combination with many other types of data, such as the connection type and multiple group settings, to generate and apply a DAP to the session.</p>
Access Policies	Dynamic access policies (DAP)	<p>VPN gateways operate in dynamic environments. Multiple variables can affect each VPN connection, for example, intranet configurations that frequently change, the various roles each user may inhabit within an organization, and logins from remote access sites with different configurations and levels of security. The task of authorizing users is much more complicated in a VPN environment than it is in a network with a static configuration.</p> <p>Dynamic Access Policies (DAP) on the security appliance let you configure authorization that addresses these many variables. You create a dynamic access policy by setting a collection of access control attributes that you associate with a specific user tunnel or session. These attributes address issues of multiple group membership and endpoint security. That is, the security appliance grants access to a particular user for a particular session based on the policies you define. It generates a DAP at the time the user connects by selecting and/or aggregating attributes from one or more DAP records. It selects these DAP records based on the endpoint security information of the remote device and the AAA authorization information for the authenticated user. It then applies the DAP record to the user tunnel or session.</p>
	Administrator differentiation	<p>Lets you differentiate regular remote access users and administrative users under the same database, either RADIUS or LDAP. You can create and restrict access to the console via various methods (TELNET and SSH, for example) to administrators only. It is based on the IETF RADIUS service-type attribute.</p>

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
Platform Enhancements	VLAN support for remote access VPN connections	Provides support for mapping (tagging) of client traffic at the group or user level. This feature is compatible with clientless as well as IPsec and SSL tunnel-based connections.
	VPN load balancing for the ASA 5510	Extends load balancing support to ASA 5510 adaptive security appliances that have a Security Plus license.
	Crypto conditional debug	Lets users debug an IPsec tunnel on the basis of predefined crypto conditions such as the peer IP address, connection-ID of a crypto engine, and security parameter index (SPI). By limiting debug messages to specific IPsec operations and reducing the amount of debug output, you can better troubleshoot the security appliance with a large number of tunnels.
Browser-based SSL VPN Features	Enhanced portal design	Version 8.0(2) includes an enhanced end user interface that is more cleanly organized and visually appealing.
	Customization	Supports administrator-defined customization of all user-visible content.
	Support for FTP	You can provide file access via FTP in addition to CIFS (Windows-based).
	Plugin applets	Version 8.0(2) adds a framework for supporting TCP-based applications without requiring a pre-installed client application. Java applets let users access these applications from the browser-enabled SSL VPN portal. Initial support is for TELNET, SSH, RDP, and VNC.
	Smart tunnels	<p>A smart tunnel is a connection between an application and a remote site, using a browser-based SSL VPN session with the security appliance as the pathway. Version 8.0(2) lets you identify the applications to which you want to grant smart tunnel access, and lets you specify the path to the application and the SHA-1 hash of its checksum to check before granting it access. Lotus SameTime and Microsoft Outlook Express are examples of applications to which you might want to grant smart tunnel access.</p> <p>The remote host originating the smart tunnel connection must be running Microsoft Windows Vista, Windows XP, or Windows 2000, and the browser must be enabled with Java, Microsoft ActiveX, or both.</p>
	RSS newsfeed	Administrators can populate the clientless portal with RSS newsfeed information, which lets company news or other information display on a user screen.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
Browser-based SSL VPN Features (continued)	Personal bookmark support	Users can define their own bookmarks. These bookmarks are stored on a file server.
	Transformation enhancements	Adds support for several complex forms of web content over clientless connections, including Adobe flash and Java WebStart.
	IPv6	Allows access to IPv6 resources over a public IPv4 connection.
	Web folders	Lets browser-based SSL VPN users connecting from Windows operating systems browse shared file systems and perform the following operations: view folders, view folder and file properties, create, move, copy, copy from the local host to the remote host, copy from the remote host to the local host, and delete. Internet Explorer indicates when a web folder is accessible. Accessing this folder launches another window, providing a view of the shared folder, on which users can perform web folder functions, assuming the properties of the folders and documents permit them.
	Microsoft Sharepoint enhancement	Extends Web Access support for Microsoft Sharepoint, integrating Microsoft Office applications available on the machine with the browser to view, change, and save documents shared on a server. Version 8.0(2) supports Windows Sharepoint Services 2.0 in Windows Server 2003.
HTTP Proxy	PAC support	Lets you specify the URL of a proxy autoconfiguration file (PAC) to download to the browser. Once downloaded, the PAC file uses a JavaScript function to identify a proxy for each URL.
HTTPS Proxy	Proxy exclusion list	Lets you configure a list of URLs to exclude from the HTTP requests the security appliance can send to an external proxy server.
NAC	SSL VPN tunnel support	The security appliance provides NAC posture validation of endpoints that establish AnyConnect VPN client sessions.
	Support for audit services	You can configure the security appliance to pass the IP address of the client to an optional audit server if the client does not respond to a posture validation request. The audit server uses the host IP address to challenge the host directly to assess its health. For example, it might challenge the host to determine whether its virus checking software is active and up-to-date. After the audit server completes its interaction with the remote host, it passes a token to the posture validation server, indicating the health of the remote host. If the token indicates the remote host is healthy, the posture validation server sends a network access policy to the security appliance for application to the traffic on the tunnel.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
Firewall Features		
Application Inspection	Modular policy framework inspect class map	Traffic can match one of multiple match commands in an inspect class map; formerly, traffic had to match all match commands in a class map to match the class map.
	AIC for encrypted streams and AIC Arch changes	Provides HTTP inspection into TLS, which allows AIC/MPF inspection in WebVPN HTTP and HTTPS streams.
	TLS Proxy for SCCP and SIP ²	Enables inspection of encrypted traffic. Implementations include SSL encrypted VoIP signaling, namely Skinny and SIP, interacting with the Cisco CallManager.
	SIP enhancements for CCM	Improves interoperability with CCM 5.0 and 6.x with respect to signaling pinholes.
	Full RTSP PAT support	Provides TCP fragment reassembly support, a scalable parsing routine on RTSP, and security enhancements that protect RTSP traffic.
Access Lists	Enhanced service object group	Lets you configure a service object group that contains a mix of TCP services, UDP services, ICMP-type services, and any protocol. It removes the need for a specific ICMP-type object group and protocol object group. The enhanced service object group also specifies both source and destination services. The access list CLI now supports this behavior.
	Ability to rename access list	Lets you rename an access list.
	Live access list hit counts	Includes the hit count for ACEs from multiple access lists. The hit count value represents how many times traffic hits a particular access rule.
Attack Prevention	Set connection limits for management traffic to the adaptive security appliance	For a Layer 3/4 management class map, you can specify the set connection command.
	Threat detection	You can enable basic threat detection and scanning threat detection to monitor attacks such as DoS attacks and scanning attacks. For scanning attacks, you can automatically shun attacking hosts. You can also enable scan threat statistics to monitor both valid and invalid traffic for hosts, ports, protocols, and access lists.
NAT	Transparent firewall NAT support	You can configure NAT for a transparent firewall.
IPS	Virtual IPS sensors with the AIP SSM	The AIP SSM running IPS software Version 6.0 and above can run multiple virtual sensors, which means you can configure multiple security policies on the AIP SSM. You can assign each context or single mode adaptive security appliance to one or more virtual sensors, or you can assign multiple security contexts to the same virtual sensor. See the IPS documentation for more information about virtual sensors, including the maximum number of sensors supported.

Table 2-5 New Features for ASA and PIX Version 8.0(2) (continued)

ASA Feature Type	Feature	Description
Logging	Secure logging	You can enable secure connections to the syslog server using SSL or TLS with TCP, and encrypted system log message content. Not supported on the PIX series adaptive security appliance.
IPv6	IPv6 support for SIP	The SIP inspection engine supports IPv6 addresses. IPv6 addresses can be used in URLs, in the Via header field, and SDP fields.

1. Clientless SSL VPN features are not supported on the PIX security appliance.
2. TLS proxy is not supported on the PIX security appliance.

Firewall Functional Overview

Firewalls protect inside networks from unauthorized access by users on an outside network. A firewall can also protect inside networks from each other, for example, by keeping a human resources network separate from a user network. If you have network resources that need to be available to an outside user, such as a web or FTP server, you can place these resources on a separate network behind the firewall, called a *demilitarized zone* (DMZ). The firewall allows limited access to the DMZ, but because the DMZ only includes the public servers, an attack there only affects the servers and does not affect the other inside networks. You can also control when inside users access outside networks (for example, access to the Internet), by allowing only certain addresses out, by requiring authentication or authorization, or by coordinating with an external URL filtering server.

When discussing networks connected to a firewall, the *outside* network is in front of the firewall, the *inside* network is protected and behind the firewall, and a *DMZ*, while behind the firewall, allows limited access to outside users. Because the security appliance lets you configure many interfaces with varied security policies, including many inside interfaces, many DMZs, and even many outside interfaces if desired, these terms are used in a general sense only.

This section includes the following topics:

- [Security Policy Overview, page 2-16](#)
- [Firewall Mode Overview, page 2-19](#)
- [Stateful Inspection Overview, page 2-19](#)

Security Policy Overview

A security policy determines which traffic is allowed to pass through the firewall to access another network. By default, the security appliance allows traffic to flow freely from an inside network (higher security level) to an outside network (lower security level). You can apply actions to traffic to customize the security policy. This section includes the following topics:

- [Permitting or Denying Traffic with Access Lists, page 2-17](#)
- [Applying NAT, page 2-17](#)
- [Protecting from IP Fragments, page 2-17](#)
- [Using AAA for Through Traffic, page 2-17](#)
- [Applying HTTP, HTTPS, or FTP Filtering, page 2-17](#)

- [Applying Application Inspection, page 2-17](#)
- [Sending Traffic to the Advanced Inspection and Prevention Security Services Module, page 2-18](#)
- [Sending Traffic to the Content Security and Control Security Services Module, page 2-18](#)
- [Applying QoS Policies, page 2-18](#)
- [Applying Connection Limits and TCP Normalization, page 2-18](#)

Permitting or Denying Traffic with Access Lists

You can apply an access list to limit traffic from inside to outside, or allow traffic from outside to inside. For transparent firewall mode, you can also apply an EtherType access list to allow non-IP traffic.

Applying NAT

Some of the benefits of NAT include the following:

- You can use private addresses on your inside networks. Private addresses are not routable on the Internet.
- NAT hides the local addresses from other networks, so attackers cannot learn the real address of a host.
- NAT can resolve IP routing problems by supporting overlapping IP addresses.

Protecting from IP Fragments

The security appliance provides IP fragment protection. This feature performs full reassembly of all ICMP error messages and virtual reassembly of the remaining IP fragments that are routed through the security appliance. Fragments that fail the security check are dropped and logged. Virtual reassembly cannot be disabled.

Using AAA for Through Traffic

You can require authentication and/or authorization for certain types of traffic, for example, for HTTP. The security appliance also sends accounting information to a RADIUS or TACACS+ server.

Applying HTTP, HTTPS, or FTP Filtering

Although you can use access lists to prevent outbound access to specific websites or FTP servers, configuring and managing web usage this way is not practical because of the size and dynamic nature of the Internet. We recommend that you use the security appliance in conjunction with a separate server running one of the following Internet filtering products:

- Websense Enterprise
- Secure Computing SmartFilter

Applying Application Inspection

Inspection engines are required for services that embed IP addressing information in the user data packet or that open secondary channels on dynamically assigned ports. These protocols require the security appliance to do a deep packet inspection.

Sending Traffic to the Advanced Inspection and Prevention Security Services Module

If your model supports the AIP SSM for intrusion prevention, then you can send traffic to the AIP SSM for inspection. The AIP SSM is an intrusion prevention services module that monitors and performs real-time analysis of network traffic by looking for anomalies and misuse based on an extensive, embedded signature library. When the system detects unauthorized activity, it can terminate the specific connection, permanently block the attacking host, log the incident, and send an alert to the device manager. Other legitimate connections continue to operate independently without interruption. For more information, see *Configuring the Cisco Intrusion Prevention System Sensor Using the Command Line Interface*.

Sending Traffic to the Content Security and Control Security Services Module

If your model supports it, the CSC SSM provides protection against viruses, spyware, spam, and other unwanted traffic. It accomplishes this by scanning the FTP, HTTP, POP3, and SMTP traffic that you configure the adaptive security appliance to send to it.

Applying QoS Policies

Some network traffic, such as voice and streaming video, cannot tolerate long latency times. QoS is a network feature that lets you give priority to these types of traffic. QoS refers to the capability of a network to provide better service to selected network traffic.

Applying Connection Limits and TCP Normalization

You can limit TCP and UDP connections and embryonic connections. Limiting the number of connections and embryonic connections protects you from a DoS attack. The security appliance uses the embryonic limit to trigger TCP Intercept, which protects inside systems from a DoS attack perpetrated by flooding an interface with TCP SYN packets. An embryonic connection is a connection request that has not finished the necessary handshake between source and destination.

TCP normalization is a feature consisting of advanced TCP connection settings designed to drop packets that do not appear normal.

Enabling Threat Detection

You can configure scanning threat detection and basic threat detection, and also how to use statistics to analyze threats.

Basic threat detection detects activity that might be related to an attack, such as a DoS attack, and automatically sends a system log message.

A typical scanning attack consists of a host that tests the accessibility of every IP address in a subnet (by scanning through many hosts in the subnet or sweeping through many ports in a host or subnet). The scanning threat detection feature determines when a host is performing a scan. Unlike IPS scan detection that is based on traffic signatures, the security appliance scanning threat detection feature maintains an extensive database that contains host statistics that can be analyzed for scanning activity.

The host database tracks suspicious activity such as connections with no return activity, access of closed service ports, vulnerable TCP behaviors such as non-random IPID, and many more behaviors.

You can configure the security appliance to send system log messages about an attacker or you can automatically shun the host.

Firewall Mode Overview

The security appliance runs in two different firewall modes:

- Routed
- Transparent

In routed mode, the security appliance is considered to be a router hop in the network.

In transparent mode, the security appliance acts like a “bump in the wire,” or a “stealth firewall,” and is not considered a router hop. The security appliance connects to the same network on its inside and outside interfaces.

You might use a transparent firewall to simplify your network configuration. Transparent mode is also useful if you want the firewall to be invisible to attackers. You can also use a transparent firewall for traffic that would otherwise be blocked in routed mode. For example, a transparent firewall can allow multicast streams using an EtherType access list.

Stateful Inspection Overview

All traffic that goes through the security appliance is inspected using the Adaptive Security Algorithm and either allowed through or dropped. A simple packet filter can check for the correct source address, destination address, and ports, but it does not check that the packet sequence or flags are correct. A filter also checks every packet against the filter, which can be a slow process.

A stateful firewall like the security appliance, however, takes into consideration the state of a packet:

- Is this a new connection?

If it is a new connection, the security appliance has to check the packet against access lists and perform other tasks to determine if the packet is allowed or denied. To perform this check, the first packet of the session goes through the “session management path,” and depending on the type of traffic, it might also pass through the “control plane path.”

The session management path is responsible for the following tasks:

- Performing the access list checks
- Performing route lookups
- Allocating NAT translations (xlates)
- Establishing sessions in the “fast path”



Note The session management path and the fast path make up the “accelerated security path.”

Some packets that require Layer 7 inspection (the packet payload must be inspected or altered) are passed on to the control plane path. Layer 7 inspection engines are required for protocols that have two or more channels: a data channel, which uses well-known port numbers, and a control channel, which uses different port numbers for each session. These protocols include FTP, H.323, and SNMP.

- Is this an established connection?

If the connection is already established, the security appliance does not need to re-check packets; most matching packets can go through the fast path in both directions. The fast path is responsible for the following tasks:

- IP checksum verification

- Session lookup
- TCP sequence number check
- NAT translations based on existing sessions
- Layer 3 and Layer 4 header adjustments

For UDP or other connectionless protocols, the security appliance creates connection state information so that it can also use the fast path.

Data packets for protocols that require Layer 7 inspection can also go through the fast path.

Some established session packets must continue to go through the session management path or the control plane path. Packets that go through the session management path include HTTP packets that require inspection or content filtering. Packets that go through the control plane path include the control packets for protocols that require Layer 7 inspection.

VPN Functional Overview

A VPN is a secure connection across a TCP/IP network (such as the Internet) that appears as a private connection. This secure connection is called a tunnel. The security appliance uses tunneling protocols to negotiate security parameters, create and manage tunnels, encapsulate packets, transmit or receive them through the tunnel, and unencapsulate them. The security appliance functions as a bidirectional tunnel endpoint: it can receive plain packets, encapsulate them, and send them to the other end of the tunnel where they are unencapsulated and sent to their final destination. It can also receive encapsulated packets, unencapsulate them, and send them to their final destination. The security appliance invokes various standard protocols to accomplish these functions.

The security appliance performs the following functions:

- Establishes tunnels
- Negotiates tunnel parameters
- Authenticates users
- Assigns user addresses
- Encrypts and decrypts data
- Manages security keys
- Manages data transfer across the tunnel
- Manages data transfer inbound and outbound as a tunnel endpoint or router

The security appliance invokes various standard protocols to accomplish these functions.

Security Context Overview

You can partition a single security appliance into multiple virtual devices, known as security contexts. Each context is an independent device, with its own security policy, interfaces, and administrators. Multiple contexts are similar to having multiple standalone devices. Many features are supported in multiple context mode, including routing tables, firewall features, IPS, and management. Some features are not supported, including VPN and dynamic routing protocols.

In multiple context mode, the security appliance includes a configuration for each context that identifies the security policy, interfaces, and almost all the options you can configure on a standalone device. The system administrator adds and manages contexts by configuring them in the system configuration,

which, like a single mode configuration, is the startup configuration. The system configuration identifies basic settings for the security appliance. The system configuration does not include any network interfaces or network settings for itself; rather, when the system needs to access network resources (such as downloading the contexts from the server), it uses one of the contexts that is designated as the admin context.

The admin context is just like any other context, except that when a user logs into the admin context, then that user has system administrator rights and can access the system and all other contexts.

**Note**

You can run all your contexts in routed mode or transparent mode; you cannot run some contexts in one mode and others in another.

Multiple context mode supports static routing only.
