



Configuring Repeater and Standby Access Points

This chapter describes how to configure your access point as a hot standby unit or as a repeater unit. This chapter contains these sections:

- [Understanding Repeater Access Points, page 19-2](#)
- [Configuring a Repeater Access Point, page 19-3](#)
- [Understanding Hot Standby, page 19-8](#)
- [Configuring a Hot Standby Access Point, page 19-8](#)

Understanding Repeater Access Points

A repeater access point is not connected to the wired LAN; it is placed within radio range of an access point connected to the wired LAN to extend the range of your infrastructure or to overcome an obstacle that blocks radio communication. You can configure either the 2.4-GHz radio or the 5-GHz radio as a repeater. In access points with two radios, only one radio can be a repeater; the other radio must be configured as a root radio.

The repeater forwards traffic between wireless users and the wired LAN by sending packets to either another repeater or to an access point connected to the wired LAN. The data is sent through the route that provides the best performance for the client. When you configure an access point as a repeater, the access point's Ethernet port does not forward traffic.

You can set up a chain of several repeater access points, but throughput for client devices at the end of the repeater chain will be quite low. Because each repeater must receive and then re-transmit each packet on the same channel, throughput is cut in half for each repeater you add to the chain.

A repeater access point associates to the access point with which it has the best connectivity. However, you can specify the access point to which the repeater associates. Setting up a static, specific association between a repeater and a root access point improves repeater performance.

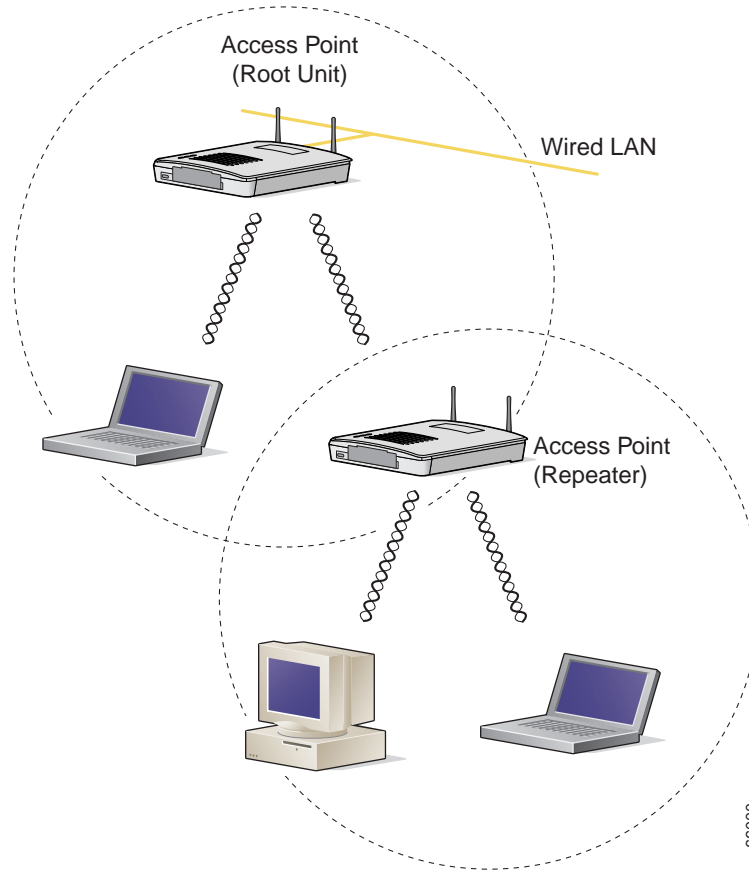
To set up repeaters, you must enable Aironet extensions on both the parent (root) access point and the repeater access points. Aironet extensions, which are enabled by default, improve the access point's ability to understand the capabilities of Cisco Aironet client devices associated with the access point. Disabling Aironet extensions sometimes improves the interoperability between the access point and non-Cisco client devices. Non-Cisco client devices might have difficulty communicating with repeater access points and the root access point to which repeaters are associated.



Note

Because access points create a virtual interface for each radio interface, repeater access points associate to the root access point twice: once for the actual interface and once for the virtual interface.

[Figure 19-1](#) shows an access point acting as a repeater.

Figure 19-1 Access Point as a Repeater

Configuring a Repeater Access Point

This section provides instructions for setting up an access point as a repeater and includes these sections:

- [Default Configuration, page 19-4](#)
- [Guidelines for Repeaters, page 19-4](#)
- [Setting Up a Repeater, page 19-4](#)
- [Verifying Repeater Operation, page 19-5](#)
- [Setting Up a Repeater As a LEAP Client, page 19-6](#)
- [Setting Up a Repeater As a WPA Client, page 19-7](#)

Default Configuration

Access points are configured as root units by default. [Table 19-1](#) shows the default values for settings that control the access point's role in the wireless LAN.

Table 19-1 Default Settings for Role in Wireless LAN

Feature	Default Setting
Station role	Root
Parent	none
Extensions	Aironet

Guidelines for Repeaters

Follow these guidelines when configuring repeater access points:

- Use repeaters to serve client devices that do not require high throughput. Repeaters extend the coverage area of your wireless LAN, but they drastically reduce throughput.
- Use repeaters when most if not all client devices that associate with the repeaters are Cisco Aironet clients. Non-Cisco client devices sometimes have trouble communicating with repeater access points.
- Make sure that the data rates configured on the repeater access point match the data rates on the parent access point. For instructions on configuring data rates, see the [“Configuring Radio Data Rates”](#) section on page 6-4.



Note

Repeater access points running Cisco IOS cannot associate to parent access points that do not run IOS.



Note

Repeater access points do not support wireless domain services (WDS). Do not configure a repeater access point as a WDS candidate, and do not configure a WDS access point to fall back to repeater mode in case of Ethernet failure.

Setting Up a Repeater

Beginning in Privileged Exec mode, follow these steps to configure an access point as a repeater:

	Command	Purpose
Step 1	configure terminal	Enter global configuration mode.
Step 2	interface dot11radio { 0 1 }	Enter interface configuration mode for the radio interface. The 2.4-GHz radio is radio 0, and the 5-GHz radio is radio 1.
Step 3	ssid ssid-string	Create the SSID that the repeater uses to associate to a root access point; in the next step designate this SSID as an infrastructure SSID. If you created an infrastructure SSID on the root access point, create the same SSID on the repeater, also.

	Command	Purpose
Step 4	infrastructure-ssid [optional]	Designate the SSID as an infrastructure SSID. The repeater uses this SSID to associate to the root access point. Infrastructure devices must associate to the repeater access point using this SSID unless you also enter the optional keyword.
Step 5	exit	Exit SSID configuration mode and return to radio interface configuration mode.
Step 6	station-role repeater	Set the access point's role in the wireless LAN to repeater.
Step 7	dot11 extensions aironet	If Aironet extensions are disabled, enable Aironet extensions.
Step 8	parent {1-4} mac-address [timeout]	(Optional) Enter the MAC address for the access point to which the repeater should associate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can enter MAC addresses for up to four parent access points. The repeater attempts to associate to MAC address 1 first; if that access point does not respond, the repeater tries the next access point in its parent list. (Optional) You can also enter a timeout value in seconds that determines how long the repeater attempts to associate to a parent access point before trying the next parent in the list. Enter a timeout value from 0 to 65535 seconds.
Step 9	end	Return to privileged EXEC mode.
Step 10	copy running-config startup-config	(Optional) Save your entries in the configuration file.

This example shows how to set up a repeater access point with three potential parents:

```
AP# configure terminal
AP(config)# interface dot11radio 0
AP(config-if)# ssid chicago
AP(config-ssid)# infrastructure-ssid
AP(config-ssid)# exit
AP(config-if)# station-role repeater
AP(config-if)# dot11 extensions aironet
AP(config-if)# parent 1 0987.1234.h345 900
AP(config-if)# parent 2 7809.b123.c345 900
AP(config-if)# parent 3 6543.a456.7421 900
AP(config-if)# end
```

Verifying Repeater Operation

After you set up the repeater, check the LEDs on top of the repeater access point. If your repeater is functioning correctly, the LEDs on the repeater and the root access point to which it is associated behave like this:

- The status LED on the root access point is steady green, indicating that at least one client device is associated with it (in this case, the repeater).
- The status LED on the repeater access point is steady green when it is associated with the root access point and the repeater has client devices associated to it. The repeater's status LED flashes (steady green for 7/8 of a second and off for 1/8 of a second) when it is associated with the root access point but the repeater has no client devices associated to it.

The repeater access point should also appear as associated with the root access point in the root access point's Association Table.

Setting Up a Repeater As a LEAP Client

You can set up a repeater access point to authenticate to your network like other wireless client devices. After you provide a network username and password for the repeater access point, it authenticates to your network using LEAP, Cisco's wireless authentication method, and receives and uses dynamic WEP keys.

Setting up a repeater as a LEAP client requires three major steps:

1. Create an authentication username and password for the repeater on your authentication server.
2. Configure LEAP authentication on the root access point to which the repeater associates. The access point to which the repeater associates is called the parent access point. See [Chapter 10, "Configuring Authentication Types,"](#) for instructions on setting up authentication.



Note On the repeater access point, you must enable the same cipher suite or WEP encryption method and WEP features that are enabled on the parent access point.

3. Configure the repeater to act as a LEAP client. Beginning in Privileged Exec mode, follow these instructions to set up the repeater as a LEAP client:

	Command	Purpose
Step 1	configure terminal	Enter global configuration mode.
Step 2	interface dot11radio { 0 1 }	Enter interface configuration mode for the radio interface. The 2.4-GHz radio is radio 0, and the 5-GHz radio is radio 1.
Step 3	ssid <i>ssid-string</i>	Create an SSID and enter SSID configuration mode for the new SSID. The SSID can consist of up to 32 alphanumeric characters, but they should not include spaces. SSIDs are case-sensitive.
Step 4	authentication network-eap <i>list-name</i>	Enable LEAP authentication on the repeater so that LEAP-enabled client devices can authenticate through the repeater. For <i>list-name</i> , specify the list name you want to use for EAP authentication. You define list names for EAP and for MAC addresses using the aaa authentication login command. These lists define the authentication methods activated when a user logs in and indirectly identify the location where the authentication information is stored.
Step 5	authentication client username <i>username</i> password <i>password</i>	Configure the username and password that the repeater uses when it performs LEAP authentication. This username and password must match the username and password that you set up for the repeater on the authentication server.

	Command	Purpose
Step 6	infrastructure ssid [optional]	(Optional) Designate the SSID as the SSID that other access points and workgroup bridges use to associate to this access point. If you do not designate an SSID as the infrastructure SSID, infrastructure devices can associate to the access point using any SSID. If you designate an SSID as the infrastructure SSID, infrastructure devices must associate to the access point using that SSID unless you also enter the optional keyword.
Step 7	end	Return to privileged EXEC mode.
Step 8	copy running-config startup-config	(Optional) Save your entries in the configuration file.

Setting Up a Repeater As a WPA Client

WPA key management uses a combination of encryption methods to protect communication between client devices and the access point. You can set up a repeater access point to authenticate to your network like other WPA-enabled client devices.

Beginning in Privileged Exec mode, follow these steps to set up the repeater as a WPA client:

	Command	Purpose
Step 1	configure terminal	Enter global configuration mode.
Step 2	interface dot11radio { 0 1 }	Enter interface configuration mode for the radio interface. The 2.4-GHz radio is radio 0, and the 5-GHz radio is radio 1.
Step 3	ssid <i>ssid-string</i>	Create an SSID and enter SSID configuration mode for the new SSID. The SSID can consist of up to 32 alphanumeric characters. SSIDs are case sensitive.
Step 4	authentication open	Enable open authentication for the SSID.
Step 5	authentication key-management wpa	Enable WPA authenticated key management for the SSID.
Step 6	infrastructure ssid	Designate the SSID as the SSID that the repeater uses to associate to other access points.
Step 7	wpa-psk { hex ascii } [0 7] <i>encryption-key</i>	Enter a pre-shared key for the repeater. Enter the key using either hexadecimal or ASCII characters. If you use hexadecimal, you must enter 64 hexadecimal characters to complete the 256-bit key. If you use ASCII, you must enter from 8 to 63 ASCII characters, and the access point expands the key for you.
Step 8	end	Return to privileged EXEC mode.
Step 9	copy running-config startup-config	(Optional) Save your entries in the configuration file.

Understanding Hot Standby

Hot Standby mode designates an access point as a backup for another access point. The standby access point is placed near the access point it monitors, configured exactly the same as the monitored access point. The standby access point associates with the monitored access point as a client and queries the monitored access point regularly through both the Ethernet and the radio ports. If the monitored access point fails to respond, the standby access point comes online and takes the monitored access point's place in the network.

Except for the IP address, the standby access point's settings should be identical to the settings on the monitored access point. If the monitored access point goes offline and the standby access point takes its place in the network, matching settings ensures that client devices can switch easily to the standby access point.

The standby access point monitors another access point in a device-to-device relationship, not in an interface-to-interface relationship. For example, you cannot configure the standby access point's 5-GHz radio to monitor the 5-GHz radio in access point alpha and the standby's 2.4-GHz radio to monitor the 2.4-GHz radio in access point bravo.

Hot standby mode is disabled by default.

**Note**

If the monitored access point malfunctions and the standby access point takes its place, repeat the hot standby setup on the standby access point when you repair or replace the monitored access point. The standby access point does not revert to standby mode automatically.

Configuring a Hot Standby Access Point

When you set up the standby access point, you must enter the MAC address of the access point that the standby unit will monitor. Record the MAC address of the monitored access point before you configure the standby access point.

The standby access point also must duplicate several key settings on the monitored access point. These settings are:

- Primary SSID (as well as additional SSIDs configured on the monitored access point)
- Default IP Subnet Mask
- Default Gateway
- Data rates
- WEP settings
- Authentication types and authentication servers

Check the monitored access point and record these settings before you set up the standby access point.

**Note**

Wireless client devices associated to the standby access point lose their connections during the hot standby setup process.



Tip

On the monitored access point, set the role in radio network to **Access Point Root (Fallback to Radio Shutdown)**. This radio role prevents client devices from remaining associated to the monitored access point if it loses its connection to the wired LAN. If the monitored access point malfunctions, it shuts down its radio and associated client devices roam immediately to the standby access point.



Tip

To quickly duplicate the monitored access point's settings on the standby access point, save the monitored access point configuration and load it on the standby access point. See the [“Working with Configuration Files” section on page 20-8](#) for instructions on uploading and downloading configuration files.

Beginning in Privileged Exec mode, follow these steps to enable hot standby mode on an access point:

	Command	Purpose
Step 1	configure terminal	Enter global configuration mode.
Step 2	iapp standby <i>mac-address</i>	Puts the access point into standby mode and specifies the MAC address of radio on the monitored access point. Note When you configure a 1200 Series access point with two radios to monitor a 1200 Series access point with two radios, you must enter the MAC addresses of both the monitored 2.4-GHz and 5-GHz radios. Enter the 2.4-GHz radio MAC address first, followed by the 5-GHz radio MAC address.
Step 3	interface dot11radio { 0 1 }	Enter interface configuration mode for the radio interface. The 2.4-GHz radio is radio 0, and the 5-GHz radio is radio 1.
Step 4	ssid <i>ssid-string</i>	Create the SSID that the standby access point uses to associate to the monitored access point; in the next step designate this SSID as an infrastructure SSID. If you created an infrastructure SSID on the monitored access point, create the same SSID on the standby access point, also.
Step 5	infrastructure-ssid [optional]	Designate the SSID as an infrastructure SSID. The standby uses this SSID to associate to the monitored access point. If the standby access point takes the place of the monitored access point, infrastructure devices must associate to the standby access point using this SSID unless you also enter the optional keyword.
Step 6	exit	Exit SSID configuration mode and return to radio interface configuration mode.
Step 7	iapp standby poll-frequency <i>seconds</i>	Sets the number of seconds between queries that the standby access point sends to the monitored access point's radio and Ethernet ports.
Step 8	iapp standby timeout <i>seconds</i>	Sets the number of seconds the standby access point waits for a response from the monitored access point before it assumes that the monitored access point has malfunctioned.

	Command	Purpose
Step 9	show iapp standby-parms	Verify your entries. If the access point is in standby mode, this command displays the standby parameters, including the MAC address of the monitored access point and the poll-frequency and timeout values. If the access point is not in standby mode, <i>no iapp standby mac-address</i> appears.
Step 10	end	Return to privileged EXEC mode.
Step 11	copy running-config startup-config	(Optional) Save your entries in the configuration file.

After you enable standby mode, configure the settings that you recorded from the monitored access point to match on the standby access point.

Use this command to check the standby configuration:

show iapp standby-parms

This command displays the MAC address of the standby access point, the standby timeout, and the poll-frequency values. If no standby access point is configured, this message appears:

```
no iapp standby mac-address
```

If a standby access point takes over for the monitored access point, you can use the **show iapp statistics** command to help determine the reason that the standby access point took over.