



Overview

This chapter contains the following sections:

- [Licensing Requirements, on page 1](#)
- [SAN Switching Overview, on page 1](#)
- [SAN Switching General Guidelines and Limitations, on page 3](#)

Licensing Requirements

For a complete explanation of Cisco NX-OS licensing recommendations and how to obtain and apply licenses, see the [Cisco NX-OS Licensing Guide](#) and the [Cisco NX-OS Licensing Options Guide](#).

SAN Switching Overview

This chapter provides an overview of SAN switching for Cisco Nexus 9000 devices. This chapter includes the following sections:

Domain Parameters

The Fibre Channel domain (fcdomain) feature performs principal switch selection, domain ID distribution, FC ID allocation, and fabric reconfiguration functions as described in the FC-SW-2 standards. The domains are configured per VSAN . If you do not configure a domain ID, the local switch uses a random ID.

N port virtualizer (NPV) is a complementary feature that reduces the number of Fibre Channel domain IDs in core-edge SANs. Cisco Nexus 9000 series fabric switches operating in the NPV mode do not join a fabric; they only pass traffic between core switch links and end devices, which eliminates the domain IDs for these switches. NPIV is used by edge switches in the NPV mode to log in to multiple end devices that share a link to the core switch.

VSAN Trunking

Trunking, also known as VSAN trunking, enables interconnect ports to transmit and receive frames in more than one VSAN over the same physical link. Trunking is supported on E ports and F ports.

Virtual SANs

Virtual SANs (VSANs) partition a single physical SAN into multiple VSANs. VSANs allow the Cisco NX-OS software to logically divide a large physical fabric into separate, isolated environments to improve Fibre Channel SAN scalability, availability, manageability, and network security.

Each VSAN is a logically and functionally separate SAN with its own set of Fibre Channel fabric services. This partitioning of fabric services greatly reduces network instability by containing fabric reconfiguration and error conditions within an individual VSAN. The strict traffic segregation provided by VSANs can ensure that the control and data traffic of a specified VSAN are confined within the VSAN's own domain, which increases SAN security. VSANs can reduce costs by facilitating consolidation of isolated SAN islands into a common infrastructure without compromising availability.

You can create administrator roles that are limited in scope to certain VSANs. For example, you can set up a network administrator role to allow configuration of all platform-specific capabilities and other roles to allow configuration and management only within specific VSANs. This approach improves the manageability of large SANs and reduces disruptions due to human error by isolating the effect of a user action to a specific VSAN whose membership can be assigned based on switch ports or the worldwide name (WWN) of attached devices.

Zoning

Zoning provides access control for devices within a SAN. The Cisco NX-OS software supports the following types of zoning:

- N port zoning-Defines zone members based on the end-device (host and storage) port.
 - WWN
 - Fibre Channel identifier (FC-ID)

To provide strict network security, zoning is always enforced per frame using access control lists (ACLs) that are applied at the ingress switch. All zoning polices are enforced in the hardware, and none of them cause performance degradation.

Device Alias Services

The software supports Device Alias Services (device alias) fabric wide. Device alias distribution allows you to move host bus adapters (HBAs) between VSANs without manually reentering alias names.

Fibre Channel Routing

Fabric Shortest Path First (FSPF) is the protocol used by Fibre Channel fabrics. FSPF is enabled by default on all Fibre Channel switches. You do not need to configure any FSPF services except in configurations that require special consideration. FSPF automatically calculates the best path between any two switches in a fabric. Specifically, FSPF is used to perform these functions:

- Dynamically compute routes throughout a fabric by establishing the shortest and quickest path between any two switches.
- Select an alternative path if a failure occurs on a given path. FSPF supports multiple paths and automatically computes an alternative path around a failed link. FSPF provides a preferred route when two equal paths are available.

Advanced Fibre Channel Features

You can configure Fibre Channel protocol-related timer values for distributed services, error detection, and resource allocation.

You must uniquely associate the WWN to a single switch. The principal switch selection and the allocation of domain IDs rely on the WWN. .

Fibre Channel standards require that you allocate a unique FC ID to an N port that is attached to an F port in any switch.

Fabric Configuration Servers

The Fabric Configuration Server (FCS) provides discovery of topology attributes and maintains a repository of configuration information of fabric elements. A management application is usually connected to the FCS on the switch through an N port. Multiple VSANs constitute a fabric, where one instance of the FCS is present per VSAN.

SAN Switching General Guidelines and Limitations

The following are the general following guidelines and limitations of SAN switching:

- SAN switching is supported only on Cisco Nexus C93180YC-FX switches.
- Beginning with 9.3(5), smart-zoning is supported.
- VE-port or virtual expansion port (ISL) is not supported.
- Dynamic Port VSAN Membership (DPVM) not supported.
- Fabric Extender (FEX) with switch mode is not supported
- IP over Fibre Channel (IPFC) function is not supported.
- Inter VSAN Routing (IVR) is not supported
- XML and DME of CLIs are not supported.
- 100G FCoE is not supported.
- OBFL (show logging onboard) feature support is limited to the error statistics.



Note For more information on OBFL, see: *Cisco Nexus 9000 Series NX-OS Troubleshooting Guide, Release 9.3(x)*

- Nexus 9000 only supports the IDLE fill pattern on 8 Gbps Fibre Channel interfaces. For Nexus 9000 FC interface to operate at 8 Gbps, peer device must be configured to use a matching IDLE fill pattern. Most server and target FC interfaces do not support this and thus cannot connect to Nexus 9000 at 8 Gbps. To interoperate with other Fibre Channel switches at 8 Gbps ensure the peer switch FC interface also uses a matching IDLE fill pattern. For Cisco MDS switches, configure using the **switchport fill-pattern** interface configuration command. To connect to a peer Nexus 9000 at 8 Gbps, use no fill pattern configuration, as both devices use matching IDLE fill patterns by default.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), 25G FCoE is supported.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), enhanced zoning is supported.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), enhanced device alias is supported.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), FDMI is supported.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), FCoE over vPC is supported.
- Beginning with Cisco NX-OS Release 9.3(5), ISSU is supported in switch mode.

