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Introduction

This document is about the counters used to check the number of attach failures, which happens due to the silent drops of attach procedures in Mobility Management Entity (MME).

Problem: MME Attach Failure because of Silent Drops

Basic call flow for the Attach Procedure in Evolved Packet System (EPS).

Main steps during the attach procedure.

1. User Equipment (UE) sends **Attach Request** towards MME. This **Attach Request** also contains **PDN Connectivity Request**.
2. MME perform all Authentication and ciphering related procedure with UE.
3. MME sends the **Create Session Request** to Serving Gateway (SGW) and SGW creates a session with Packet Data Network (PDN) Gateway (PGW) and SGW respond with **Create Session Response** to MME.
4. MME sends **Attach Accept** to UE and **Initial Context Setup Request** to eNodeB.
5. eNodeB performs the E-RAB (Evolved – Radio Access Bearer) setup procedure with UE.
6. eNodeB sends **Initial Context Setup Response** to MME after E-RAB with UE was set up.
7. UE sends **Attach Complete** to MME and here attach procedure is considered as successful.
8. MME sends **Modify Bearer Request** to SGW to send eNodeB S1-U (S1-User Plane) information to SGW.

Attach procedure gets failed due to various reasons but here are the 2 ways to handle those failures:

1. MME sends an **Attach Reject** message to UE.
2. MME does not send an **Attach Reject** message to UE and silently discard the Attach Procedure.

When MME sends an **Attach Reject** then you either have EPS Mobility Management (EMM) or EPS Session Management (ESM) cause associated with that **Attach Reject** and MME have various counters to track these values.

MME can discard **Attach Procedure** silently without sending any **Attach Reject** to UE. Here are a few possible reasons:

- Authentication Failed : If an **Attach Request** fails because of **Authentication Failure** and no **Attach Reject** is sent or when there is a maximum re-transmissions of **Authentication**

Requests or **Security Mode Command** reached then also MME doesn't send **Attach Reject**.

- UE Initiated Detach: When UE sends a **Detach Request** while Attach Procedure is still going on.
- Different **Attach Procedure** Received: More than one **Attach Request** is received and no **Attach Accept** or **Attach Accept** is sent.
- Detach In Progress: When Detach and Attach procedure collision happens.
- Radio Setup Failure: Whenever there is some issue at radio network. This can happen because of various issues like radio link issue between UE and eNodeB, network issue between MME and eNodeB, etc.

Before software release 17.0, MME does not have statistics to count the silent attach procedure discards.

Solution

From release 17.0 onwards, counters are added which count the silent drops of **Attach Procedure**.

Same can be checked with commands **show mme-service statistics** and **show mme-service statistics verbose**.

These are the description of counters mentioned in **show mme-service statistics verbose**.

- Attach Failure: Total numbers of Attach procedures failed at MME. It also includes attach failures for which attach rejects were sent.
- Max retx auth req: Total numbers of attached triggered authentication procedure failed due to maximum re-transmissions of Authentication requests.
- Max retx sec mode cmd: Total numbers of attached triggered authentication procedure failed due to maximum re-transmissions of Security Mode Commands.
- Max retx attach accept: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to maximum retransmissions of attach accept.
- Setup timeout expiry: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to expiry of setup timeout.
- SCTP/S1-Failure: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to Stream Control Transmission Protocol (SCTP) down.
- Internal guard timeout: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to expiry of internal guard timeout. This also includes internal guard timeout for auth procedures. If auth procedure is called and auth procedure is aborted due to its guard timer then also this timer will be increased.

- UE context release: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to UE context release from the eNodeB.
- Max retx ESM info req: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to maximum re-transmissions of ESM info requests.
- Other reasons: Total numbers of attach procedures failed due to unknown reasons.

These are the bulkstats counters corresponding to the above mentioned CLI (command line interface) output:

show mme-service statistics

| Bulkstats Counter | CLI Counter |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| emm-msgtx-attach-no-rej-send-total | No Attach Reject/Accept |
| emm-msgtx-attach-auth-failed | Authentication Fail |
| emm-msgtx-attach-ue-initiated-detach | UE initiated detach |
| emm-msgtx-attach-detach-in-progress | Detach in progress |
| emm-msgtx-attach-diff-attach-recvd | Different Attach Recvd |

show mme-service statistics verbose

| Bulkstats Counter | CLI Counter |
|---|------------------------|
| attach-proc-fail-total | Attach failure |
| attach-proc-fail-max-retx-auth-req | Max retx auth req |
| attach-proc-fail-max-retx-sec-mode-cmd | Max retx sec mode cmd |
| attach-proc-fail-max-retx-attach-accept | Max retx attach accept |
| attach-proc-fail-setup-timeout-exp | Setup timeout expiry |
| attach-proc-fail-sctp-fail | SCTP/S1-failure |
| attach-proc-fail-guard-timeout-exp | Internal guard timeout |
| attach-proc-fail-ue-ctxt-release | UE context release |
| attach-proc-fail-max-retx-esm-info-req | Max retx ESM info req |
| attach-proc-fail-other-reason | Other reasons |

These counters are taken into account while calculating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) so that the attach procedure failure due to silent failures are accounted properly.

Related Information

- [Rel 17.0 Stats-Count-Reference](#)
- [3GPP Specifications 23.401](#)
- [3GPP specifications 24.301](#)
- [Rel 17.0 MME Admin Guide](#)