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Network Address Translation (NAT) Behavioral Requirements Updates  
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## Abstract

This document clarifies and updates several requirements of [RFC4787](#), [RFC5382](#) and [RFC5508](#) based on operational and development experience. The focus of this document is NAPT44.

## Requirements Language

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#) [[RFC2119](#)].

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Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

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## Table of Contents

<a href="#">1.</a>	Terminology . . . . .	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">2.</a>	Introduction . . . . .	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">2.1.</a>	Scope . . . . .	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">3.</a>	TCP Session Tracking . . . . .	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">3.1.</a>	TCP Transitory Connection Idle-Timeout . . . . .	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">3.2.</a>	TIME_WAIT State . . . . .	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">3.2.1.</a>	Proposal: Apply <a href="#">RFC6191</a> and PAWS to NAT . . . . .	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">3.3.</a>	TCP RST . . . . .	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">4.</a>	Port Overlapping behavior . . . . .	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">5.</a>	Address Pooling Paired (APP) . . . . .	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">6.</a>	EIF Security . . . . .	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">7.</a>	EIF Protocol Independence . . . . .	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">8.</a>	EIF Mapping Refresh . . . . .	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">8.1.</a>	Outbound Mapping Refresh and Error Packets . . . . .	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">9.</a>	EIM Protocol Independence . . . . .	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">10.</a>	Port Parity . . . . .	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">11.</a>	Port Randomization . . . . .	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">12.</a>	IP Identification (IP ID) . . . . .	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">13.</a>	ICMP Query Mappings Timeout . . . . .	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">14.</a>	Hairpinning Support for ICMP Packets . . . . .	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">15.</a>	IANA Considerations . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">16.</a>	Security Considerations . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">17.</a>	Acknowledgements . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">18.</a>	References . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">18.1.</a>	Normative References . . . . .	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">18.2.</a>	Informative References . . . . .	<a href="#">12</a>
	Authors' Addresses . . . . .	<a href="#">13</a>

Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

## 1. Terminology

The reader should be familiar with all terms defined in [RFC2663](#) [[RFC2663](#)], [RFC4787](#) [[RFC4787](#)], [RFC5382](#) [[RFC5382](#)], [RFC5508](#) [[RFC5508](#)]

## 2. Introduction

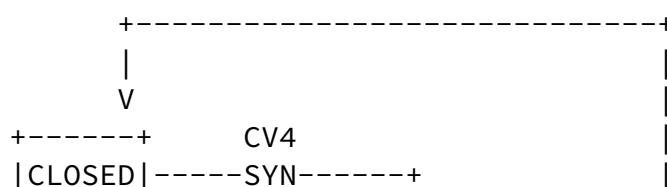
[RFC4787](#), [RFC5382](#) and [RFC5508](#) greatly advanced NAT interoperability and conformance. But with widespread deployment and evolution of NAT more development and operational experience was acquired some areas of the original documents need further clarification or updates. This documents provides such clarifications and updates.

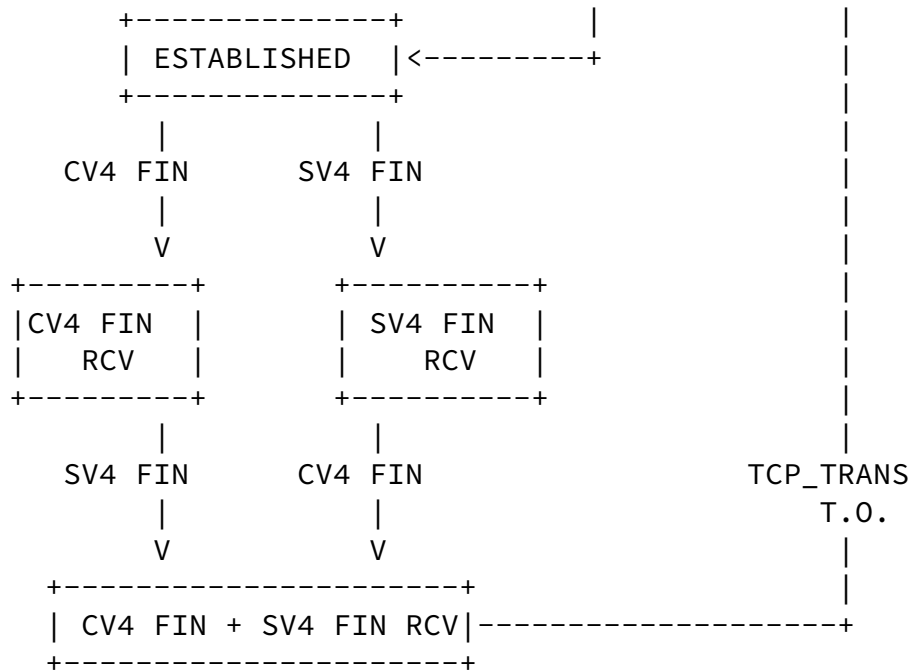
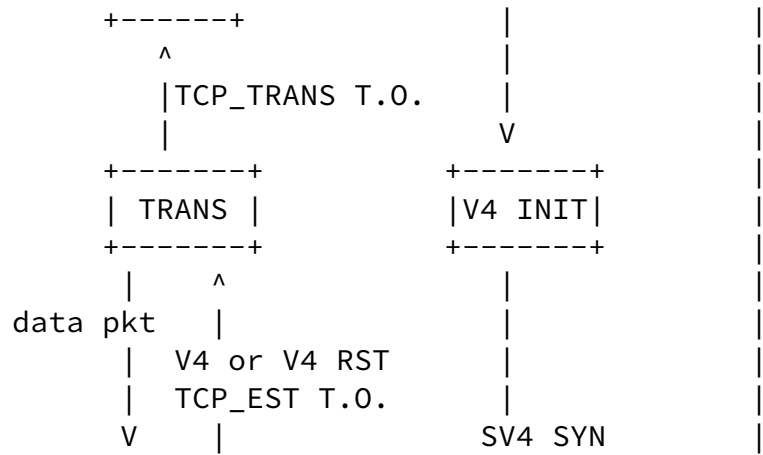
### 2.1. Scope

This document focuses solely on NAPT44 and its goal is to clarify, fill gaps or update requirements of [RFC4787](#), [RFC5382](#) and [RFC5508](#). It is out of the scope of this document the creation of completely new requirements not associated with the documents cited above. New requirements would be better served elsewhere and if they are CGN specific in an update to [RFC6888](#).

## 3. TCP Session Tracking

[RFC5382](#) specifies TCP timers associated with various connection states but does not specify the TCP state machine a NAPT44 should use as a basis to apply such timers. The TCP state machine below, adapted from [RFC6146](#), provides guidance on how TCP session tracking could be implemented - it is non-normative.





### 3.1. TCP Transitory Connection Idle-Timeout

[RFC5382]:REQ-5 The transitory connection idle-timeout is defined as the minimum time a TCP connection in the partially open or closing phases must remain idle before the NAT considers the associated session a candidate for removal. But the document does not clearly states if these can be configured separately. This document clarifies that a NAT device SHOULD provide different knobs for configuring the open and closing idle timeouts. This document further acknowledges that most TCP flows are very short (less than 10

seconds) [[FLOWRATE](#)][TCPWILD] and therefore a partially open timeout of 4 minutes might be excessive if security is a concern. Therefore it MAY be configured to be less than 4 minutes in such cases. There also may be cases that a timeout of 4 minutes might be excessive. The case and the solution are written below.

### [3.2.](#) TIME\_WAIT State

The TCP TIME\_WAIT state is described in [[RFC0793](#)]. The TCP TIME\_WAIT state needs to be kept for 2MSL before a connection is CLOSED, for the reasons below.

- 1: In the event that packets from a session are delayed in the in-between network, and delivered to the end relatively later, we should prevent the packets from being transferred and interpreted as a packet that belongs to a new session.

- 2: If the remote TCP has not received the acknowledgment of its connection termination request, it will re-send the FIN packet several times.

These points are important for the TCP to work without problems.

[RFC5283] leaves the handling of TCP connections in TIME\_WAIT state unspecified and mentions that TIME\_WAIT state is not part of the transitory connection idle-timeout. If the NAT device honors the TIME\_WAIT state, each TCP connection and its associated resources is kept for a certain period, typically for four minutes, which consumes port resources.

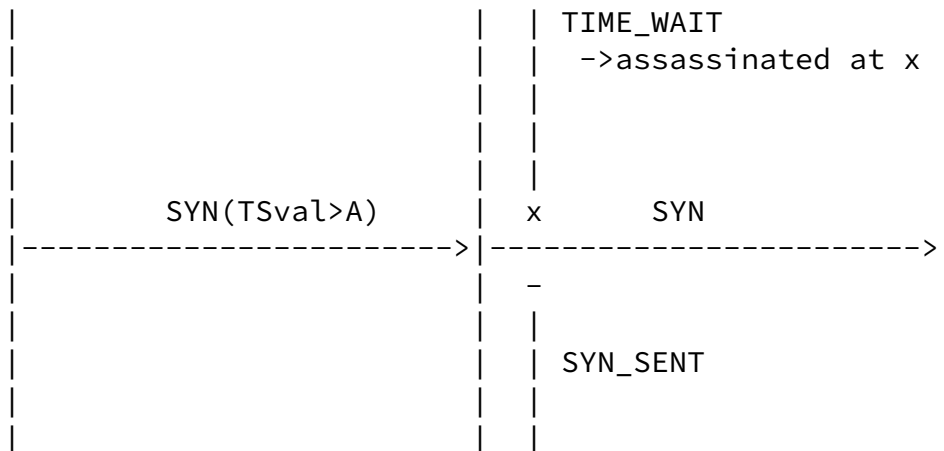
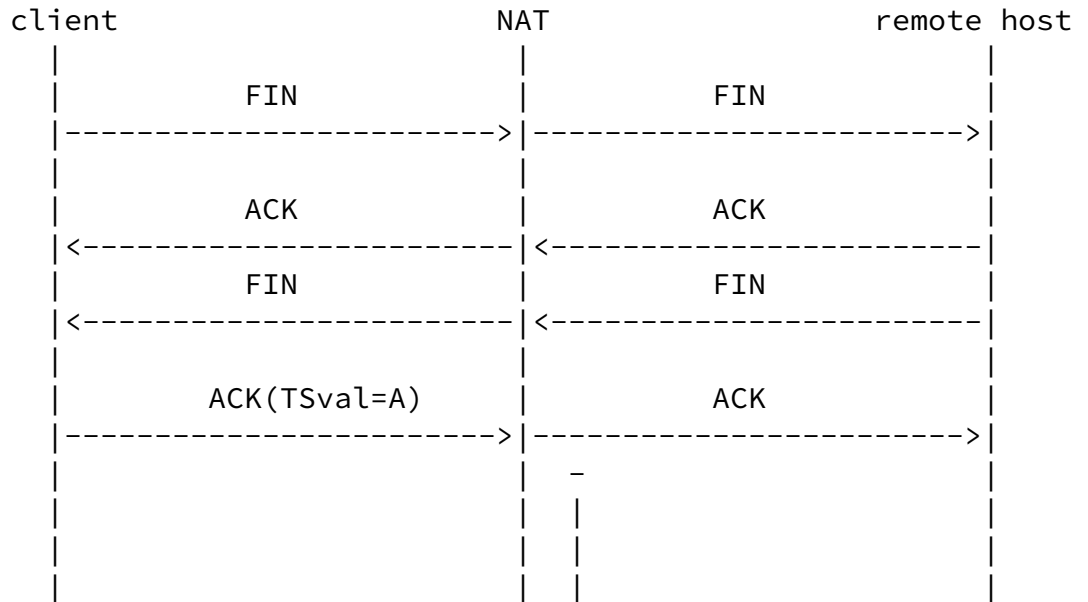
[RFC6191] explains that in certain situation it is necessary to reduce the TIME\_WAIT state and defines such a mechanism using TCP timestamps and sequence numbers. When a connection request is received with a four-tuple that is in the TIME-WAIT state, the connection request may be accepted if the sequence number or the timestamp of the incoming SYN segment is greater than the last sequence number seen on the previous incarnation of the connection.

[N.E] This document specifies that a NAT device should keep TCP

connections in TIME\_WAIT state unless it implements the proposal below?

3.2.1. Proposal: Apply [RFC6191](#) and PAWS to NAT

This section proposes to apply [[RFC6191](#)] mechanism at NAT. This mechanism MAY be adopted for both clients' and remote hosts' TCP active close.



(postamble)

Also, PAWS works to discard old duplicate packets at NAT. A packet can be discarded as an old duplicate if it is received with a timestamp or sequence number value less than a value recently received on the connection.

To make these mechanisms work, we should concern the case that there are several clients with nonsuccessive timestamp or sequence number values are connected to a NAT device (i.e. not monotonically increasing among clients). Two mechanisms to solve this mechanism and applying [[RFC6191](#)] and PAWS to NAT are described below. These mechanisms are optional.

#### 3.2.1.1. Rewrite timestamp and sequence number values at NAT

Rewrite timestamp and sequence number values of outgoing packets at NAT to be monotonically increasing. This can be done by adopting following mechanisms at NAT.

A: Store the newest rewritten value of timestamp and sequence number as the "max value at the time".

B: NAT rewrite timestamp and sequence number values of incoming packets to be monotonically increasing.

When packets come back as replies from remote hosts, NAT rewrite again the timestamp and sequence number values to be the original values. This can be done by adopting following mechanisms at NAT.

C: Store the values of original timestamp and sequence number of packets, and rewritten values of those.

#### 3.2.1.2. Split an assignable number of port space to each client

Adopt following mechanisms at NAT.

A: Choose clients that can be assigned ports.

B: Split assignable port numbers between clients.

Packets from other clients which are not chosen by these mechanisms are rejected at NAT, unless there is unassigned port left.

#### [3.2.1.3](#). Resend the last ACK to the retransmitted FIN

We need to solve another scenario to make [RFC6191](#) work with NAT. In the case the remote TCP could not receive the acknowledgment of its connection termination request, the NAT device, on behalf of clients, resends the last ACK packet when it receives a FIN packet of the previous connection, and when the state of the previous connection has been deleted from the NAT. This mechanism MAY be used when clients starts closing process, and the remote host could not receive the last ACK.

#### [3.2.1.4](#). Remote host behavior of several implementations

To solve the port shortage problem on the client side, the behavior of remote host should be compliant to [RFC6191](#) or the mechanism written in 4.2.2.13 of [RFC1122](#), since NAT may reuse the same 5 tuple for a new connection. We have investigated behaviors of OSes (e.g., Linux, FreeBSD, Windows, MacOS), and found that they implemented the server side behavior of the above two.

### [3.3](#). TCP RST

[RFC5382] leaves the handling of TCP RST packets unspecified. This document does not try standardize such behavior but clarifies based on operational experience that a NAT that receives a TCP RST for an active mapping and performs session tracking MAY immediately delete the sessions and remove any state associated with it. If the NAT device that performs TCP session tracking receives a TCP RST for the first session that created a mapping, it MAY remove the session and the mapping immediately.

## [4](#). Port Overlapping behavior



[RFC4787] [[RFC5382](#)]: REQ-1 Current RFCs specify a specific port overlapping behavior, i.e., that the external IP:port can be reused for connections originating from the same internal source IP:port irrespective of the destination. This is known as endpoint-independent mapping. This document clarifies that this port overlapping behavior can be extended to connections originating from different internal source IP:ports as long as their destinations are different. This known as EDM (Endpoint Dependent Mapping). The mechanism below MAY be one optional implement to NAT.

If destination addresses and ports are different for outgoing connections started by local clients, NAT MAY assign the same external port as the source ports for the connections. The port overlapping mechanism manages mappings between external packets and internal packets by looking at and storing their 5-tuple (protocol, source address, source port, destination address, destination port) . This enables concurrent use of a single NAT external port for multiple transport sessions, which enables NAT to work correctly in IP address resource limited network.

#### Discussions:

[RFC4787] and [[RFC5382](#)] requires "endpoint-independent mapping" at NAT, and port overlapping NAT cannot meet the requirement. This mechanism can degrade the transparency of NAT in that its mapping mechanism is endpoint-dependent and makes NAT traversal harder. However, if a NAT adopts endpoint-independent mapping together with endpoint-dependent filtering, then the actual behavior of the NAT will be the same as port overlapping NAT.

#### 5. Address Pooling Paired (APP)

[RFC4787]: REQ-2 [[RFC5382](#)]:ND Address Pooling Paired behavior for NAT is recommended in previous documents but behavior when a public IPv4 run out of ports is left undefined. This document clarifies that if APP is enabled new sessions from a subscriber that already has a mapping associated with a public IP that ran out of ports SHOULD be dropped. The administrator MAY provide a knob that allows a NAT device to starting using ports from another public IP when the one that anchored the APP mapping ran out of ports. This is trade-off between subscriber service continuity and APP strict enforcement. (NE: It is sometimes referred as 'soft-APP')

#### 6. EIF Security

[[RFC4787](#)]:REQ-8 and [[RFC5382](#)]:REQ-3 End-point independent filtering could potentially result in security attacks from the public realm. In order to handle this, when possible there MUST be strict filtering checks in the inbound direction. A knob SHOULD be provided to limit the number of inbound sessions and a knob SHOULD be provided to enable or disable EIF on a per application basis. This is specially important in the case of Mobile networks where such attacks can consume radio resources and count against the user quota.

## 7. EIF Protocol Independence

[[RFC4787](#)]:REQ-8 and [[RFC5382](#)]: REQ-3 Current RFCs do not specify whether EIF mappings are protocol independent. In other words, if an outbound TCP SYN creates a mapping, it is left undefined whether inbound UDP packets destined to that mapping should be forwarded. This document specifies that EIF mappings SHOULD be protocol independent in order allow inbound packets for protocols that multiplex TCP and UDP over the same IP: port through the NAT and also maintain compatibility with stateful NAT64 [RFC6146](#) [[RFC6146](#)]. But the administrator MAY provide a configuration knob to make it protocol dependent.

## 8. EIF Mapping Refresh

[[RFC4787](#)]: REQ-6 [[RFC5382](#)]: ND The NAT mapping Refresh direction MAY have a "NAT Inbound refresh behavior" of "True" but it does not clarify how this applies to EIF mappings. The issue in question is whether inbound packets that match an EIF mapping but do not create a new session due to a security policy should refresh the mapping timer. This document clarifies that even when a NAT device has a inbound refresh behavior of TRUE, such packets SHOULD NOT refresh the mapping. Otherwise a simple attack of a packet every 2 minutes can keep the mapping indefinitely.

### 8.1. Outbound Mapping Refresh and Error Packets

In the case of NAT outbound refresh behavior there are certain types of packets that should not refresh the mapping even if their direction is outbound. For example, if the mapping is kept alive by ICMP Errors or TCP RST outbound packets sent as response to inbound packets, these SHOULD NOT refresh the mapping.

## 9. EIM Protocol Independence

[[RFC4787](#)] [[RFC5382](#)]: REQ-1 Current RFCs do not specify whether EIM are protocol independent. In other words, if a outbound TCP SYN

creates a mapping it is left undefined whether outbound UDP can reuse such mapping and create session. On the other hand, Stateful NAT64

Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

[RFC6146] clearly specifies three binding information bases (TCP, UDP, ICMP). This document clarifies that EIM mappings SHOULD be protocol dependent. A knob MAY be provided in order allow protocols that multiplex TCP and UDP over the same source IP and port to use a single mapping.

#### 10. Port Parity

A NAT devices MAY disable port parity preservation for dynamic mappings. Nevertheless, A NAT SHOULD support means to explicitly request to preserve port parity (e.g., [I-D.pcp-port-set]).

#### 11. Port Randomization

A NAT SHOULD follow the recommendations specified in [Section 4 of \[RFC6056\]](#) especially: "A NAPT that does not implement port preservation [\[RFC4787\]](#) [\[RFC5382\]](#) SHOULD obfuscate selection of the ephemeral port of a packet when it is changed during translation of that packet. A NAPT that does implement port preservation SHOULD obfuscate the ephemeral port of a packet only if the port must be changed as a result of the port being already in use for some other session. A NAPT that performs parity preservation and that must change the ephemeral port during translation of a packet SHOULD obfuscate the ephemeral ports. The algorithms described in this document could be easily adapted such that the parity is preserved (i.e., force the lowest order bit of the resulting port number to 0 or 1 according to whether even or odd parity is desired)."

#### 12. IP Identification (IP ID)

A NAT SHOULD handle the Identification field of translated IPv4 packets as specified in [Section 9](#) of [I-D.ietf-intarea-ipv4-id-update].

#### 13. ICMP Query Mappings Timeout

[Section 3.1 of \[RFC5508\]](#) says that ICMP Query Mappings are to be maintained by NAT device. However, RFC doesn't discuss about the Query Mapping timeout values. [Section 3.2](#) of that RFC only discusses

about ICMP Query Session Timeouts. ICMP Query Mappings MAY be deleted once the last the session using the mapping is deleted.

#### 14. Hairpinning Support for ICMP Packets

[RFC5508]:REQ-7 This requirement specifies that NAT devices enforcing Basic NAT MUST support traversal of hairpinned ICMP Query sessions. This implicitly means that address mappings from external address to internal address (similar to Endpoint Independent Filters) MUST be

Penno, et al.

Expires May 23, 2014

[Page 10]

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Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

maintained to allow inbound ICMP Query sessions. If an ICMP Query is received on an external address, NAT device can then translate to an internal IP. [RFC5508]:REQ-7 This requirement specifies that all NAT devices (i.e., Basic NAT as well as NAPT devices) MUST support the traversal of hairpinned ICMP Error messages. This too requires NAT devices to maintain address mappings from external IP address to internal IP address in addition to the ICMP Query Mappings described in [section 3.1](#) of that RFC.

#### 15. IANA Considerations

TBD

#### 16. Security Considerations

In the case of EIF mappings due to high risk of resource crunch, a NAT device MAY provide a knob to limit the number of inbound sessions spawned from a EIF mapping.

[TCP-Security] contains a detailed discussion of the security implications of TCP Timestamps and of different timestamp generation algorithms.

#### 17. Acknowledgements

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Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

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Penno, et al.

Expires May 23, 2014

[Page 12]

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Internet-Draft [draft-ietf-tsvwg-behave-requirements-update](#) November 2013

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