

**SMTP Require TLS Option**  
**draft-ietf-uta-smtp-require-tls-09**

Abstract

The SMTP STARTTLS option, used in negotiating transport-level encryption of SMTP connections, is not as useful from a security standpoint as it might be because of its opportunistic nature; message delivery is, by default, prioritized over security. This document describes an SMTP service extension, REQUIRETLS, and message header field, TLS-Required. If the REQUIRETLS option or TLS-Required message header field is used when sending a message, it asserts a request on the part of the message sender to override the default negotiation of TLS, either by requiring that TLS be negotiated when the message is relayed, or by requesting that recipient-side policy mechanisms such as MTA-STS and DANE be ignored when relaying a message for which security is unimportant.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of [BCP 78](#) and [BCP 79](#).

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-Drafts is at <https://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/>.

Internet-Drafts are draft documents valid for a maximum of six months and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

This Internet-Draft will expire on February 3, 2020.

Copyright Notice

Copyright (c) 2019 IETF Trust and the persons identified as the document authors. All rights reserved.

This document is subject to [BCP 78](#) and the IETF Trust's Legal Provisions Relating to IETF Documents

(<https://trustee.ietf.org/license-info>) in effect on the date of publication of this document. Please review these documents carefully, as they describe your rights and restrictions with respect to this document. Code Components extracted from this document must include Simplified BSD License text as described in Section 4.e of the Trust Legal Provisions and are provided without warranty as described in the Simplified BSD License.

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">1.</a>	<a href="#">Introduction . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">1.1.</a>	<a href="#">Requirements Language . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">2.</a>	<a href="#">The REQUIRETLS Service Extension . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">3.</a>	<a href="#">The TLS-Required Header Field . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">4.</a>	<a href="#">REQUIRETLS Semantics . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">4.1.</a>	<a href="#">REQUIRETLS Receipt Requirements . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">4.2.</a>	<a href="#">REQUIRETLS Sender Requirements . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">4.2.1.</a>	<a href="#">Sending with TLS Required . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">4.2.2.</a>	<a href="#">Sending with TLS Optional . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">4.3.</a>	<a href="#">REQUIRETLS Submission . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">4.4.</a>	<a href="#">Delivery of REQUIRETLS messages . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">5.</a>	<a href="#">Non-delivery message handling . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">6.</a>	<a href="#">Reorigination considerations . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">7.</a>	<a href="#">IANA Considerations . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">8.</a>	<a href="#">Security Considerations . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">8.1.</a>	<a href="#">Passive attacks . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">8.2.</a>	<a href="#">Active attacks . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">8.3.</a>	<a href="#">Bad Actor MTAs . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">8.4.</a>	<a href="#">Policy Conflicts . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">9.</a>	<a href="#">Acknowledgements . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">10.</a>	<a href="#">Revision History . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">10.1.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -08 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">10.2.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -07 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">10.3.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -06 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">10.4.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -05 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">10.5.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -04 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">10.6.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -03 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">10.7.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -02 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">10.8.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -01 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">10.9.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since -00 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">10.10.</a>	<a href="#">Changes since fenton-03 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">10.11.</a>	<a href="#">Changes Since -02 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">10.12.</a>	<a href="#">Changes Since -01 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">10.13.</a>	<a href="#">Changes Since -00 Draft . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">11.</a>	<a href="#">References . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">11.1.</a>	<a href="#">Normative References . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">11.2.</a>	<a href="#">Informative References . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Appendix A.</a>	<a href="#">Examples . . . . .</a>	<a href="#">19</a>

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 2]

<a href="#">A.1.</a>	<a href="#">REQUIRETLS SMTP Option</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">A.2.</a>	<a href="#">TLS-Required Header Field</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
	<a href="#">Author's Address</a>	<a href="#">21</a>

## **1. Introduction**

The SMTP [[RFC5321](#)] STARTTLS service extension [[RFC3207](#)] provides a means by which an SMTP server and client can establish a Transport Layer Security (TLS) protected session for the transmission of email messages. By default, TLS is used only upon mutual agreement (successful negotiation) of STARTTLS between the client and server; if this is not possible, the message is sent without transport encryption. Furthermore, it is common practice for the client to negotiate TLS even if the SMTP server's certificate is invalid.

Policy mechanisms such as DANE [[RFC7672](#)] and MTA-STS [[RFC8461](#)] may impose requirements for the use of TLS for email destined for some domains. However, such policies do not allow the sender to specify which messages are more sensitive and require transport-level encryption, and which ones are less sensitive and ought to be relayed even if TLS cannot be negotiated successfully.

The default opportunistic nature of SMTP TLS enables several "on the wire" attacks on SMTP security between MTAs. These include passive eavesdropping on connections for which TLS is not used, interference in the SMTP protocol to prevent TLS from being negotiated (presumably accompanied by eavesdropping), and insertion of a man-in-the-middle attacker exploiting the lack of server authentication by the client. Attacks are described in more detail in the Security Considerations section of this document.

REQUIRETLS consists of two mechanisms: an SMTP service extension and a message header field. The service extension is used to specify that a given message sent during a particular session **MUST** be sent over a TLS-protected session with specified security characteristics. It also requires that the SMTP server advertise that it supports REQUIRETLS, in effect promising that it will honor the requirement to enforce TLS transmission and REQUIRETLS support for onward transmission of those messages.

The TLS-Required message header field is used to convey a request to ignore recipient-side policy mechanisms such as MTA-STS and DANE, thereby prioritizing delivery over ability to negotiate TLS. Unlike the service extension, the TLS-Required header field allows the message to transit through one or more MTAs that do not support REQUIRETLS.

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 3]

### **1.1. Requirements Language**

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [BCP 14](#) [[RFC2119](#)] [[RFC8174](#)] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

The formal syntax uses the Augmented Backus-Naur Form (ABNF) [[RFC5234](#)] including the core rules defined in [Appendix B](#) of that document.

## **2. The REQUIRETLS Service Extension**

1. The textual name of the extension is "Require TLS".
2. The EHLO keyword value associated with this extension is "REQUIRETLS".
3. No additional SMTP verbs are defined by this extension.
4. One optional parameter ("REQUIRETLS") is added to the MAIL FROM command by this extension. No value is associated with this parameter.
5. The maximum length of a MAIL FROM command line is increased by 11 octets by the possible addition of a space and the REQUIRETLS keyword.
6. One new SMTP status code is defined by this extension to convey an error condition resulting from failure of the client to send to a server not also supporting the REQUIRETLS extension.
7. The REQUIRETLS extension is valid for message relay [[RFC5321](#)], submission [[RFC6409](#)], and the Local Mail Transfer Protocol (LMTP) [[RFC2033](#)]
8. The ABNF syntax for the MAIL FROM parameter is as follows:

```
requiretls-param = "REQUIRETLS"
                  ; where requiretls-param is an instance of an
                  ; esmtp-param used in Mail-parameters in
                  ; RFC 5321 Section 4.1.2. There is no esmtp-value
                  ; associated with requiretls-param.
```

In order to specify REQUIRETLS treatment for a given message, the REQUIRETLS option is specified on the MAIL FROM command when that message is transmitted. This option MUST only be specified in the

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 4]

context of an SMTP session meeting the security requirements of REQUIRETLS:

- o The session itself MUST employ TLS transmission.
- o If the SMTP server to which the message is being transmitted is identified through an MX record lookup, its name MUST be validated via a DNSSEC signature on the recipient domain's MX record, or the MX hostname MUST be validated by an MTA-STS policy as described in [Section 4.1 of RFC 8461](#) [RFC8461]. DNSSEC is defined in [RFC 4033](#) [RFC4033], [RFC 4034](#) [RFC4034], and [RFC 4035](#) [RFC4035].
- o The certificate presented by the SMTP server MUST either verify successfully in a trust chain leading to a certificate trusted by the SMTP client or it MUST verify successfully using DANE as specified in [RFC 7672](#) [RFC7672]. For trust chains, the choice of trusted (root) certificates is at the discretion of the SMTP client.
- o Following the negotiation of STARTTLS, the SMTP server MUST advertise in the subsequent EHLO response that it supports REQUIRETLS.

### 3. The TLS-Required Header Field

One new message header field [RFC5322], TLS-Required, is defined by this specification. It is used for messages for which the originator requests that recipient TLS policy (including MTA-STS [RFC8461] and DANE [RFC7672]) be ignored. This might be done, for example, to report a misconfigured mail server, such as an expired TLS certificate.

The TLS-Required header field has a single REQUIRED parameter:

- o No - The SMTP client SHOULD attempt to send the message regardless of its ability to negotiate STARTTLS with the SMTP server, ignoring policy-based mechanisms (including MTA-STS and DANE), if any, asserted by the recipient domain. Nevertheless, the client SHOULD negotiate STARTTLS with the server if available.

More than one instance of the TLS-Required header field MUST NOT appear in a given message.

The ABNF syntax for the TLS-Required header field is as follows:



Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 5]

```
requiretls-field = "TLS-Required:" [FWS] "No" CRLF
                  ; where requiretls-field in an instance of an
                  ; optional-field defined in RFC 5322 Section
                  ; 3.6.8.
FWS = <as defined in RFC 5322>
CRLF = <as defined in RFC 5322>
```

## **4. REQUIRETLS Semantics**

### **4.1. REQUIRETLS Receipt Requirements**

Upon receipt of the REQUIRETLS option on a MAIL FROM command during the receipt of a message, an SMTP server MUST tag that message as needing REQUIRETLS handling.

Upon receipt of a message not specifying the REQUIRETLS option on its MAIL FROM command but containing the TLS-Required header field in its message header, an SMTP server implementing this specification MUST tag that message with the option specified in the TLS-Required header field. If the REQUIRETLS MAIL FROM parameter is specified, the TLS-Required header field MUST be ignored but MAY be included in onward relay of the message.

The manner in which the above tagging takes place is implementation-dependent. If the message is being locally aliased and redistributed to multiple addresses, all instances of the message MUST be tagged in the same manner.

### **4.2. REQUIRETLS Sender Requirements**

#### **4.2.1. Sending with TLS Required**

When sending a message tagged as requiring TLS for which the MAIL FROM return-path is not empty (an empty MAIL FROM return-path indicating a bounce message), the sending (client) MTA MUST:

1. Look up the SMTP server to which the message is to be sent as described in [\[RFC5321\] Section 5.1](#).
2. If the server lookup is accomplished via the recipient domain's MX record (the usual case) and is not accompanied by a valid DNSSEC signature, the client MUST also validate the SMTP server name using MTA-STS as described in [RFC 8461](#) [\[RFC8461\] Section 4.1](#).
3. Open an SMTP session with the peer SMTP server using the EHLO verb.

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 6]

4. Establish a TLS-protected SMTP session with its peer SMTP server and authenticate the server's certificate as specified in [\[RFC6125\]](#) or [\[RFC7672\]](#) as applicable. The hostname from the MX record lookup (or the domain name in the absence of an MX record where an A record is used directly) MUST match the DNS-ID or CN-ID of the certificate presented by the server.
5. Ensure that the response to the subsequent EHLO following establishment of the TLS protection advertises the REQUIRETLS capability.

The SMTP client SHOULD follow the recommendations in [\[RFC7525\]](#) or its successor with respect to negotiation of the TLS session.

If any of the above steps fail, the client MUST issue a QUIT to the server and repeat steps 2-5 with each host on the recipient domain's list of MX hosts in an attempt to find a mail path that meets the sender's requirements. The client MAY send other, unprotected, messages to that server if it has any prior to issuing the QUIT. If there are no more MX hosts, the client MUST NOT transmit the message to the domain.

Following such a failure, the SMTP client MUST send a non-delivery notification to the reverse-path of the failed message as described in [section 3.6 of \[RFC5321\]](#). The following status codes [\[RFC5248\]](#) SHOULD be used:

- o REQUIRETLS not supported by server: 5.7.YYY REQUIRETLS needed
- o Unable to establish TLS-protected SMTP session: 5.7.10 Encryption needed

Refer to [Section 5](#) for further requirements regarding non-delivery messages.

If all REQUIRETLS requirements have been met, transmit the message, issuing the REQUIRETLS option on the MAIL FROM command with the required option(s), if any.

#### **[4.2.2.](#) Sending with TLS Optional**

Messages tagged TLS-Required: No are handled as follows. When sending such a message, the sending (client) MTA MUST:

- o Look up the SMTP server to which the message is to be sent as described in [\[RFC5321\] Section 5.1](#).

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 7]

- o Open an SMTP session with the peer SMTP server using the EHLO verb. Attempt to negotiate STARTTLS if possible, and follow any policy published by the recipient domain, but do not fail if this is unsuccessful.

Some SMTP servers may be configured to require STARTTLS connections as a matter of policy and not accept messages in the absence of STARTTLS. A non-delivery notification MUST be returned to the sender if message relay fails due to an inability to negotiate STARTTLS when required by the server.

Since messages tagged with TLS-Required: No will sometimes be sent to SMTP servers not supporting REQUIRETLS, that option will not be uniformly observed by all SMTP relay hops.

#### **4.3. REQUIRETLS Submission**

An MUA or other agent making the initial introduction of a message has the option to decide whether to require TLS. If TLS is to be required, it MUST do so by negotiating STARTTLS and REQUIRETLS and include the REQUIRETLS option on the MAIL FROM command, as is done for message relay.

When TLS is not to be required, the sender MUST include the TLS-Required header field in the message. SMTP servers implementing this specification MUST interpret this header field as described in [Section 4.1](#).

In either case, the decision whether to specify REQUIRETLS MAY be done based on a user interface selection or based on a ruleset or other policy. The manner in which the decision to require TLS is made is implementation-dependent and is beyond the scope of this specification.

#### **4.4. Delivery of REQUIRETLS messages**

Messages are usually retrieved by end users using protocols other than SMTP such as IMAP [[RFC3501](#)], POP [[RFC1939](#)], or web mail systems. Mail delivery agents supporting the REQUIRETLS SMTP option SHOULD observe the guidelines in [[RFC8314](#)].

### **5. Non-delivery message handling**

Non-delivery ("bounce") messages usually contain important metadata about the message to which they refer, including the original message header. They therefore MUST be protected in the same manner as the original message. All non-delivery messages resulting from messages with the REQUIRETLS SMTP option, whether resulting from a REQUIRETLS

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 8]

error or some other, MUST also specify the REQUIRETLS SMTP option unless redacted as described below.

The path from the origination of an error bounce message back to the MAIL FROM address may not share the same REQUIRETLS support as the forward path. Therefore, users requiring TLS are advised to make sure that they are capable of receiving mail using REQUIRETLS as well. Otherwise, such non-delivery messages will be lost.

If a REQUIRETLS message is bounced, the server MUST behave as if RET=HDRS was present as described in [\[RFC3461\]](#). If both RET=FULL and REQUIRETLS are present, the RET=FULL MUST be disregarded. The SMTP client for a REQUIRETLS bounce message uses an empty MAIL FROM return-path as required by [\[RFC5321\]](#). When the MAIL FROM return-path is empty, the REQUIRETLS parameter SHOULD NOT cause a bounce message to be discarded even if the next-hop relay does not advertise REQUIRETLS.

Senders of messages requiring TLS are advised to consider the possibility that bounce messages will be lost as a result of REQUIRETLS return path failure, and that some information could be leaked if a bounce message is not able to be transmitted with REQUIRETLS.

## **6. Reorigination considerations**

In a number of situations, a mediator [\[RFC5598\]](#) originates a new message as a result of an incoming message. These situations include, but are not limited to, mailing lists (including administrative traffic such as message approval requests), Sieve [\[RFC5228\]](#), "vacation" responders, and other filters to which incoming messages may be piped. These newly originated messages may essentially be copies of the incoming message, such as with a forwarding service or a mailing list expander. In other cases, such as with a vacation message or a delivery notification, they will be different but might contain parts of the original message or other information for which the original message sender wants to influence the requirement to use TLS transmission.

Mediators that reoriginate messages should apply REQUIRETLS requirements in incoming messages (both requiring TLS transmission and requesting that TLS not be required) to the reoriginated messages to the extent feasible. A limitation to this might be that for a message requiring TLS, redistribution to multiple addresses while retaining the TLS requirement could result in the message not being delivered to some of the intended recipients.



Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 9]

User-side mediators (such as use of Sieve rules on a user agent) typically do not have access to the SMTP details, and therefore may not be aware of the REQUIRETLS requirement on a delivered message. Recipients that expect sensitive traffic should avoid the use of user-side mediators. Alternatively, if operationally feasible (such as when forwarding to a specific, known address), they should apply REQUIRETLS to all reoriginated messages that do not contain the "TLS-Required: No" header field.

## 7. IANA Considerations

If published as an RFC, this draft requests the addition of the following keyword to the SMTP Service Extensions Registry [[MailParams](#)]:

Textual name:	Require TLS
EHLO keyword value:	REQUIRETLS
Syntax and parameters:	(no parameters)
Additional SMTP verbs:	none
MAIL and RCPT parameters:	REQUIRETLS parameter on MAIL
Behavior:	Use of the REQUIRETLS parameter on the MAIL verb causes that message to require the use of TLS and tagging with REQUIRETLS for all onward relay.
Command length increment:	11 characters

If published as an RFC, this draft requests the addition of an entry to the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) Enhanced Status Codes Registry [[SMTPStatusCodes](#)]:

Code:	5.7.YYY
Sample Text:	REQUIRETLS support required
Associated basic status code:	550
Description:	This indicates that the message was not able to be forwarded because it was received with a REQUIRETLS requirement and none of the SMTP servers to which the message should be forwarded provide this support.
Reference:	(this document)
Submitter:	J. Fenton
Change controller:	IESG

If published as an RFC, this draft requests the addition of an entry to the Permanent Message Header Field Names Registry [[PermMessageHeaderFields](#)]:

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 10]

Header field name: TLS-Required  
Applicable protocol: mail  
Status: standard  
Author/change controller: IETF  
Specification document: (this document)

This section is to be updated for publication by the RFC Editor.

## **8. Security Considerations**

The purpose of REQUIRETLS is to give the originator of a message control over the security of email they send, either by conveying an expectation that it will be transmitted in an encrypted form "over the wire" or explicitly that transport encryption is not required if it cannot be successfully negotiated.

The following considerations apply to the REQUIRETLS service extension but not the TLS-Required header field, since messages specifying the header field are less concerned with transport security.

### **8.1. Passive attacks**

REQUIRETLS is generally effective against passive attackers who are merely trying to eavesdrop on an SMTP exchange between an SMTP client and server. This assumes, of course, the cryptographic integrity of the TLS connection being used.

### **8.2. Active attacks**

Active attacks against TLS encrypted SMTP connections can take many forms. One such attack is to interfere in the negotiation by changing the STARTTLS command to something illegal such as XXXXXXXX. This causes TLS negotiation to fail and messages to be sent in the clear, where they can be intercepted. REQUIRETLS detects the failure of STARTTLS and declines to send the message rather than send it insecurely.

A second form of attack is a man-in-the-middle attack where the attacker terminates the TLS connection rather than the intended SMTP server. This is possible when, as is commonly the case, the SMTP client either does not verify the server's certificate or establishes the connection even when the verification fails. REQUIRETLS requires successful certificate validation before sending the message.

Another active attack involves the spoofing of DNS MX records of the recipient domain. An attacker having this capability could potentially cause the message to be redirected to a mail server under

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 11]

the attacker's own control, which would presumably have a valid certificate. REQUIRETLS requires that the recipient domain's MX record lookup be validated either using DNSSEC or via a published MTA-STS policy that specifies the acceptable SMTP server hostname(s) for the recipient domain.

### **8.3. Bad Actor MTAs**

A bad-actor MTA along the message transmission path could misrepresent its support of REQUIRETLS and/or actively strip REQUIRETLS tags from messages it handles. However, since intermediate MTAs are already trusted with the cleartext of messages they handle, and are not part of the threat model for transport-layer security, they are also not part of the threat model for REQUIRETLS.

It should be reemphasized that since SMTP TLS is a transport-layer security protocol, messages sent using REQUIRETLS are not encrypted end-to-end and are visible to MTAs that are part of the message delivery path. Messages containing sensitive information that MTAs should not have access to MUST be sent using end-to-end content encryption such as OpenPGP [[RFC4880](#)] or S/MIME [[RFC8551](#)].

### **8.4. Policy Conflicts**

In some cases, the use of the TLS-Required header field may conflict with a recipient domain policy expressed through the DANE [[RFC7672](#)] or MTA-STS [[RFC8461](#)] protocols. Although these protocols encourage the use of TLS transport by advertising availability of TLS, the use of "TLS-Required: No" header field represents an explicit decision on the part of the sender not to require the use of TLS, such as to overcome a configuration error. The recipient domain has the ultimate ability to require TLS by not accepting messages when STARTTLS has not been negotiated; otherwise, "TLS-Required: No" is effectively directing the client MTA to behave as if it does not support DANE nor MTA-STS.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

The author would like to acknowledge many helpful suggestions on the ietf-smtp and uta mailing lists, in particular those of Viktor Dukhovni, Chris Newman, Tony Finch, Jeremy Harris, Arvel Hathcock, John Klensin, Barry Leiba, John Levine, Rolf Sonneveld, and Per Thorsheim.

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 12]

## **10. Revision History**

To be removed by RFC Editor upon publication as an RFC.

### **10.1. Changes since -08 Draft**

Additional changes in response to IESG review:

- o Unify wording describing TLS-Required in [Appendix A.2](#).
- o Add specifics on verification of mail server hostnames with certificates.
- o Wording tweak in 4.3 to emphasize optional nature of REQUIRETLS.
- o Update S/MIME reference from [RFC 5751](#) to 8551

### **10.2. Changes since -07 Draft**

Changes in response to IESG review and IETF Last Call comments:

- o Change associated status code for 5.7.YYY from 530 to 550.
- o Correct textual name of extension in IANA Considerations for consistency with the rest of the document.
- o Remove special handling of bounce messages in [Section 4.1](#).
- o Change name of header field from RequireTLS to TLS-Required and make capitalization of parameter consistent.
- o Remove mention of transforming RET=FULL to RET=HDRS on relay in [Section 5](#).
- o Replace [Section 6](#) dealing with mailing lists with a more general section on reorigination by mediators.
- o Add security considerations section on policy conflicts.

### **10.3. Changes since -06 Draft**

Various changes in response to AD review:

- o Reference [RFC 7525](#) for TLS negotiation recommendations.
- o Make reference to requested 5.7.YYY error code consistent.
- o Clarify applicability to LMTP and submission.





- o Provide ABNF for syntax of SMTP option and header field and examples in [Appendix A](#).
- o Correct use of normative language in [Section 5](#).
- o Clarify case where REQUIRETLS option is used on bounce messages.
- o Improve Security Requirements wording to be inclusive of both SMTP option and header field.

#### **[10.4.](#) Changes since -05 Draft**

Corrected IANA Permanent Message Header Fields Registry request.

#### **[10.5.](#) Changes since -04 Draft**

Require validation of SMTP server hostname via DNSSEC or MTA-STS policy when TLS is required.

#### **[10.6.](#) Changes since -03 Draft**

Working Group Last Call changes, including:

- o Correct reference for SMTP DANE
- o Clarify that RequireTLS: NO applies to both MTA-STS and DANE policies
- o Correct newly-defined status codes
- o Update MTA-STS references to RFC

#### **[10.7.](#) Changes since -02 Draft**

- o More complete documentation for IANA registration requests.
- o Changed bounce handling to use RET parameters of [[RFC3461](#)], along with slightly more liberal transmission of bounces even if REQUIRETLS can't be negotiated.

#### **[10.8.](#) Changes since -01 Draft**

- o Converted DEEP references to [RFC 8314](#).
- o Removed REQUIRETLS options: CHAIN, DANE, and DNSSEC.
- o Editorial corrections, notably making the header field name consistent (RequireTLS rather than Require-TLS).

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 14]

**10.9. Changes since -00 Draft**

- o Created new header field, Require-TLS, for use by "NO" option.
- o Removed "NO" option from SMTP service extension.
- o Recommend DEEP requirements for delivery of messages requiring TLS.
- o Assorted copy edits

**10.10. Changes since fenton-03 Draft**

- o Wording improvements from Rolf Sonneveld review 22 July 2017
- o A few copy edits
- o Conversion from individual to UTA WG draft

**10.11. Changes Since -02 Draft**

- o Incorporation of "MAY TLS" functionality as REQUIRETLS=NO per suggestion on UTA WG mailing list.
- o Additional guidance on bounce messages

**10.12. Changes Since -01 Draft**

- o Specified retries when multiple MX hosts exist for a given domain.
- o Clarified generation of non-delivery messages
- o Specified requirements for application of REQUIRETLS to mail forwarders and mailing lists.
- o Clarified DNSSEC requirements to include MX lookup only.
- o Corrected terminology regarding message retrieval vs. delivery.
- o Changed category to standards track.

**10.13. Changes Since -00 Draft**

- o Conversion of REQUIRETLS from an SMTP verb to a MAIL FROM parameter to better associate REQUIRETLS requirements with transmission of individual messages.



- o Addition of an option to require DNSSEC lookup of the remote mail server, since this affects the common name of the certificate that is presented.
- o Clarified the wording to more clearly state that TLS sessions must be established and not simply that STARTTLS is negotiated.
- o Introduced need for minimum encryption standards (key lengths and algorithms)
- o Substantially rewritten Security Considerations section

## **11. References**

### **11.1. Normative References**

#### [MailParams]

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), "IANA Mail Parameters", 2007,  
<<http://www.iana.org/assignments/mail-parameters>>.

#### [PermMessageHeaderFields]

Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), "Permanent Message Header Field Names Registry", 2004,  
<<https://www.iana.org/assignments/message-headers/message-headers.xhtml#perm-headers>>.

[RFC2119] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2119, March 1997,  
<<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2119>>.

[RFC3207] Hoffman, P., "SMTP Service Extension for Secure SMTP over Transport Layer Security", [RFC 3207](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3207, February 2002, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3207>>.

[RFC3461] Moore, K., "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) Service Extension for Delivery Status Notifications (DSNs)", [RFC 3461](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3461, January 2003,  
<<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3461>>.

[RFC4033] Arends, R., Austein, R., Larson, M., Massey, D., and S. Rose, "DNS Security Introduction and Requirements", [RFC 4033](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4033, March 2005,  
<<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4033>>.

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 16]

- [RFC4034] Arends, R., Austein, R., Larson, M., Massey, D., and S. Rose, "Resource Records for the DNS Security Extensions", [RFC 4034](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4034, March 2005, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4034>>.
- [RFC4035] Arends, R., Austein, R., Larson, M., Massey, D., and S. Rose, "Protocol Modifications for the DNS Security Extensions", [RFC 4035](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4035, March 2005, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4035>>.
- [RFC5234] Crocker, D., Ed. and P. Overell, "Augmented BNF for Syntax Specifications: ABNF", STD 68, [RFC 5234](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5234, January 2008, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5234>>.
- [RFC5248] Hansen, T. and J. Klensin, "A Registry for SMTP Enhanced Mail System Status Codes", [BCP 138](#), [RFC 5248](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5248, June 2008, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5248>>.
- [RFC5321] Klensin, J., "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol", [RFC 5321](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5321, October 2008, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5321>>.
- [RFC5322] Resnick, P., Ed., "Internet Message Format", [RFC 5322](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5322, October 2008, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5322>>.
- [RFC6125] Saint-Andre, P. and J. Hodges, "Representation and Verification of Domain-Based Application Service Identity within Internet Public Key Infrastructure Using X.509 (PKIX) Certificates in the Context of Transport Layer Security (TLS)", [RFC 6125](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC6125, March 2011, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6125>>.
- [RFC7525] Sheffer, Y., Holz, R., and P. Saint-Andre, "Recommendations for Secure Use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Datagram Transport Layer Security (DTLS)", [BCP 195](#), [RFC 7525](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC7525, May 2015, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7525>>.
- [RFC7672] Dukhovni, V. and W. Hardaker, "SMTP Security via Opportunistic DNS-Based Authentication of Named Entities (DANE) Transport Layer Security (TLS)", [RFC 7672](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC7672, October 2015, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7672>>.



Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 17]

- [RFC8174] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in [RFC 2119](#) Key Words", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 8174](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8174>>.
- [RFC8314] Moore, K. and C. Newman, "Cleartext Considered Obsolete: Use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) for Email Submission and Access", [RFC 8314](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC8314, January 2018, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8314>>.
- [RFC8461] Margolis, D., Risher, M., Ramakrishnan, B., Brotman, A., and J. Jones, "SMTP MTA Strict Transport Security (MTA-STS)", [RFC 8461](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC8461, September 2018, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8461>>.
- [SMTPStatusCodes]  
Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), "Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) Enhanced Status Codes Registry", 2008, <<http://www.iana.org/assignments/smtp-enhanced-status-codes>>.

## **[11.2](#). Informative References**

- [RFC1939] Myers, J. and M. Rose, "Post Office Protocol - Version 3", STD 53, [RFC 1939](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC1939, May 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc1939>>.
- [RFC2033] Myers, J., "Local Mail Transfer Protocol", [RFC 2033](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC2033, October 1996, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2033>>.
- [RFC3501] Crispin, M., "INTERNET MESSAGE ACCESS PROTOCOL - VERSION 4rev1", [RFC 3501](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3501, March 2003, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3501>>.
- [RFC4880] Callas, J., Donnerhacke, L., Finney, H., Shaw, D., and R. Thayer, "OpenPGP Message Format", [RFC 4880](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4880, November 2007, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4880>>.
- [RFC5228] Guenther, P., Ed. and T. Showalter, Ed., "Sieve: An Email Filtering Language", [RFC 5228](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5228, January 2008, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5228>>.
- [RFC5598] Crocker, D., "Internet Mail Architecture", [RFC 5598](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5598, July 2009, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5598>>.

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 18]

- [RFC6409] Gellens, R. and J. Klensin, "Message Submission for Mail", STD 72, [RFC 6409](https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6409), DOI 10.17487/RFC6409, November 2011, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6409>>.
- [RFC8551] Schaad, J., Ramsdell, B., and S. Turner, "Secure/Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (S/MIME) Version 4.0 Message Specification", [RFC 8551](https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8551), DOI 10.17487/RFC8551, April 2019, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8551>>.

## [Appendix A](#). Examples

This section is informative.

### [A.1](#). REQUIRETLS SMTP Option

The TLS-Required SMTP option is used to express the intent of the sender that the associated message be relayed using TLS. In the following example, lines beginning with C: are transmitted from the SMTP client to the server, and lines beginning with S: are transmitted in the opposite direction.



```
S: 220 mail.example.net ESMTP
C: EHLO mail.example.org
S: 250-mail.example.net Hello example.org [192.0.2.1]
S: 250-SIZE 52428800
S: 250-8BITMIME
S: 250-PIPELINING
S: 250-STARTTLS
S: 250 HELP
C: STARTTLS
S: TLS go ahead
```

(at this point TLS negotiation takes place. The remainder of this session occurs within TLS.)

```
S: 220 mail.example.net ESMTP
C: EHLO mail.example.org
S: 250-mail.example.net Hello example.org [192.0.2.1]
S: 250-SIZE 52428800
S: 250-8BITMIME
S: 250-PIPELINING
S: 250-REQUIRETLS
S: 250 HELP
C: MAIL FROM:<roger@example.org> REQUIRETLS
S: 250 OK
C: RCPT TO:<editor@example.net>
S: 250 Accepted
C: DATA
S: 354 Enter message, ending with "." on a line by itself
```

(message follows)

```
C: .
S: 250 OK
C: QUIT
```

## **A.2. TLS-Required Header Field**

The TLS-Required header field is used when the sender requests that the mail system not heed a default policy of the recipient domain requiring TLS. It might be used, for example, to allow problems with the recipient domain's TLS certificate to be reported:

Fenton

Expires February 3, 2020

[Page 20]

From: Roger Reporter <roger@example.org>  
To: Andy Admin <admin@example.com>  
Subject: Certificate problem?  
TLS-Required: No  
Date: Fri, 18 Jan 2019 10:26:55 -0800  
Message-ID: <5c421a6f79c0e\_d153ff8286d45c468473@mail.example.org>

Andy, there seems to be a problem with the TLS certificate  
on your mail server. Are you aware of this?

Roger

Author's Address

Jim Fenton  
Altmode Networks  
Los Altos, California 94024  
USA  
  
Email: fenton@bluepopcorn.net



