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HIP (Host Identity Protocol) Immediate Carriage and Conveyance of Upper-layer Protocol Signaling (HICCUPS)

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Abstract

This document defines a new HIP (Host Identity Protocol) packet type called DATA. HIP DATA packets are used to securely and reliably convey arbitrary protocol messages over the Internet and various overlay networks.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Two hosts can use HIP [RFC5201] to establish a Security Association (SA) between them in order to exchange arbitrary protocol messages over that security association. The establishment of such a security association involves a four-way handshake referred to as the HIP base exchange. When handling communications between the hosts, HIP supports mobility, multihoming, security, and NAT traversal. Some applications require these features for their communications but cannot accept the overhead involved in establishing a security association (i.e., the HIP base exchange) before those communications can start.

In this document, we define the HIP DATA packet, which can be used to convey (in a secure and reliable way) protocol messages to a remote host without running the HIP base exchange between them. We also discuss the trade offs involved in using this packet (i.e., less overhead but also less DoS protection) and the situations where it is appropriate to use this packet.

2. Background on HIP

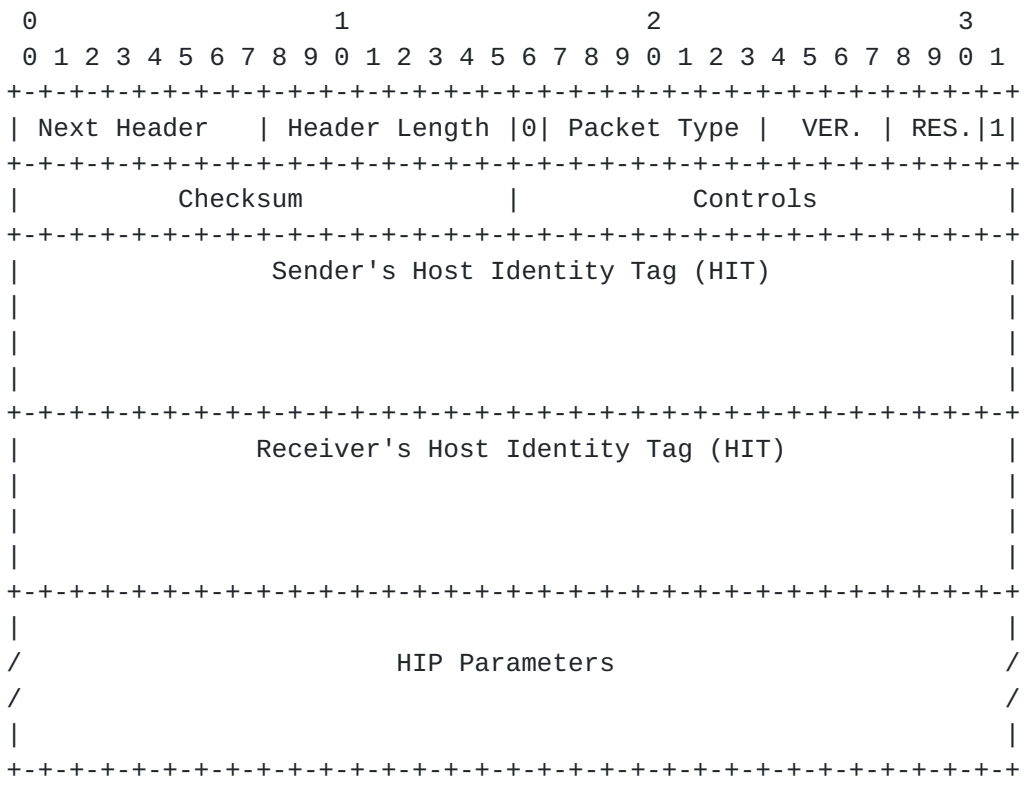
The HIP protocol specification [RFC5201] defines a number of messages and parameters. The parameters are encoded as TLVs, as shown in Section 2.1.2. Furthermore, the HIP header carries a Next Header field, allowing other arbitrary packets to be carried within HIP packets.

2.1. Message formats

2.1.1. HIP fixed header

The HIP packet format consists of a fixed header followed by a variable number of parameters. The parameter format is described in Section 2.1.2.

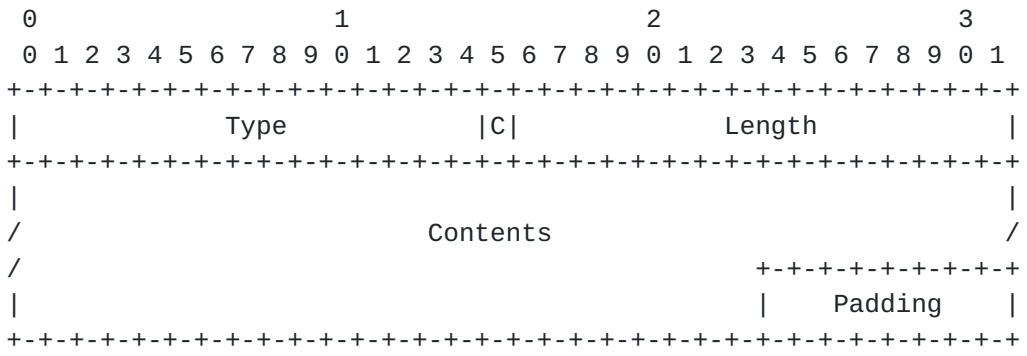
The fixed header is defined in Section 5.1 of [RFC5201] and copied below.



The HIP header is logically an IPv6 extension header. However, this document describes processing for Next Header values as they are carried on the HIP DATA packet.

2.1.2. HIP parameter format

The HIP parameter format is defined in Section 5.2.1 of [RFC5201], and copied below.



Type	Type code for the parameter
C	Critical bit, part of the Type.
Length	Length of the parameter, in bytes.
Contents	Parameter specific, defined by Type.
Padding	Padding, 0-7 bytes, added if needed.

2.2. HIP Base Exchange, Updates, and State Removal

The HIP base exchange is a four-message half-stateless authentication and key exchange protocol that creates shared, mutually authenticated keying material at the communicating parties. These keying materials, together with associated public keys and IP addresses, form a HIP Security Association (SA). The details of the protocol are defined in the HIP base exchange specification [RFC5201].

In addition to creating the HIP SA, the base exchange messages may carry additional parameters that are used to create additional state. For example, the HIP ESP specification [RFC5202] defines how HIP can be used to create end-to-end, host-to-host IPsec ESP Security Associations, used to carry data packets. However, it is important to understand that the HIP base exchange is by no means bound to IPsec; using IPsec ESP to carry data traffic forms just a baseline and ensures interoperability between initial HIP implementations.

Once there is a HIP SA between two HIP-enabled hosts, they can exchange further HIP control messages. Typically, UPDATE messages are used. For example, the HIP mobility and multi-homing specification [RFC5206] defines how to use UPDATE messages to change the set of IP addresses associated with a HIP SA.

In addition to the base exchange and updates, the HIP base protocol specification also defines how one can remove a HIP SA once it is no longer needed.

3. Definition of the HIP DATA Packet

The HIP DATA packet can be used to convey protocol messages to a remote host without running the HIP base exchange between them. HIP DATA packets are transmitted reliably, as discussed in Section 4. The payload of a HIP DATA packet is placed after the HIP header and protected by a PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter, which is defined in Section 3.3. The following is the definition of the HIP DATA packet:

```
      Header:
        Packet Type = [ TBD by IANA: 32 ]
        SRC HIT = Sender's HIT
        DST HIT = Receiver's HIT

    IP ( HIP ( [SEQ, ACK, ] [HOST_ID, ] PAYLOAD_HMAC,
               HIP_SIGNATURE) PAYLOAD )
```

The SEQ_DATA and ACK_DATA parameters are defined in Section 3.1 and

Section 3.2 respectively. They are used to provide a reliable delivery of HIP DATA packets, as discussed in Section 4.

The HOST_ID parameter is defined in Section 5.2.8 of [RFC5201]. This parameter is the sender's Host Identifier that is used to compute the HIP DATA packet's signature and to verify it against the received signature.

The PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter is defined in Section 3.3. This parameter contains the HMAC of the payload carried by the HIP DATA packet.

The HIP_SIGNATURE parameter is defined in Section 5.2.11. of [RFC5201]. It contains a signature over the contents of the HIP DATA packet. The calculation and verification of the signature is defined Section 6.4.2. of [RFC5201]

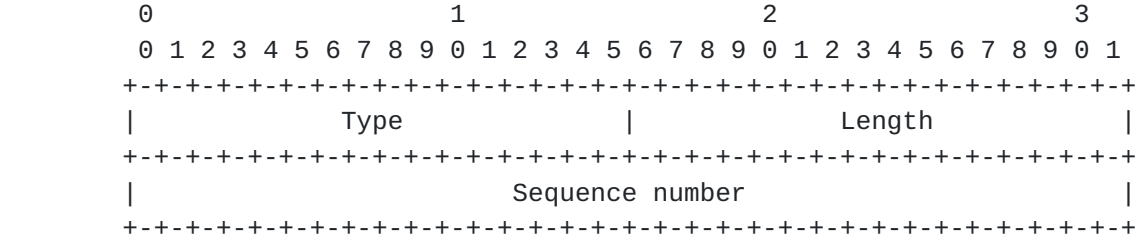
Section 5.3 of [RFC5201] states the following:

> In the future, an OPTIONAL upper-layer payload MAY follow the HIP header. The Next Header field in the header indicates if there is additional data following the HIP header.

We have chosen to place the payload after the HIP extension header and only to place an HMAC of the payload in to the HIP extension header in a PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter because that way the data is protected by a public key signature with help of HMAC. The payload that is protected by the PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter has been linked to the appropriate upper-layer protocol by storing the upper-layer protocol number, 8 bytes of payload data, and by calculating an HMAC over the data.

3.1. Definition of the SEQ_DATA Parameter

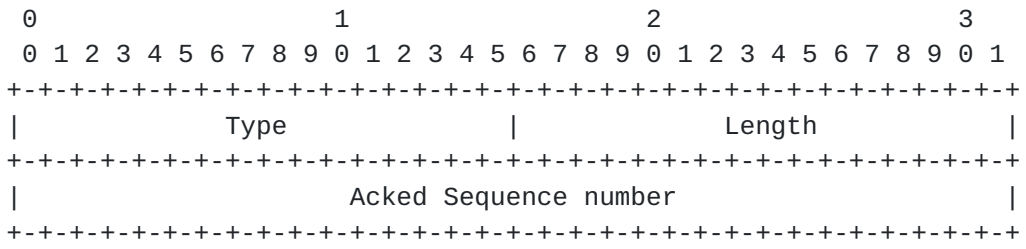
The following is the definition of the SEQ_DATA parameter:



Type	[TBD by IANA: 4481 = (2^12 + 2^8 + 2^7 + 1)]
Length	4
Sequence number	32-bit sequence number

3.2. Definition of the ACK_DATA Parameter

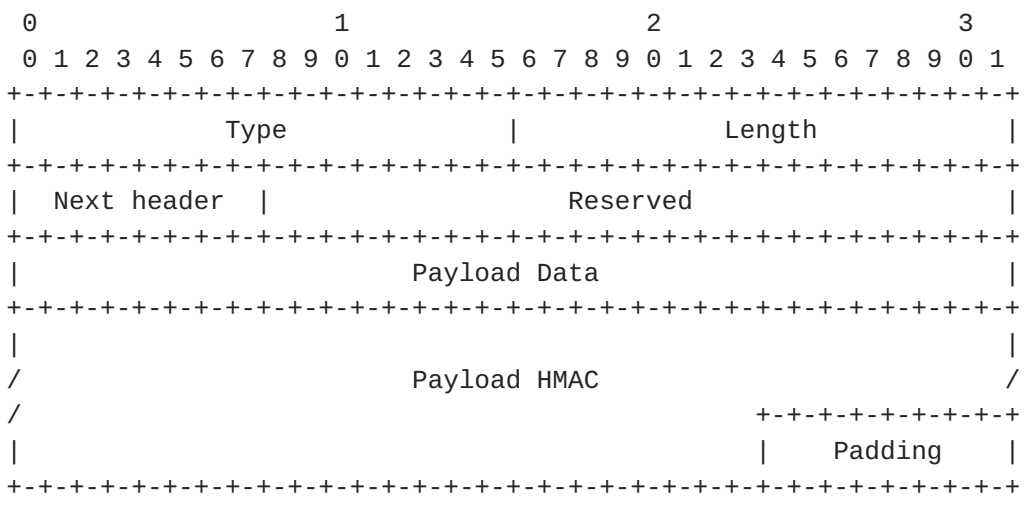
The following is the definition of the ACK_DATA parameter:



Type	[TBD by IANA: 4545 = (2^12 + 2^8 + 2^7 + 2^6 + 1)]
Length	4
Acked Sequence number	32-bit sequence number corresponding to the sequence number being acknowledged

3.3. Definition of the PAYLOAD_HMAC Parameter

The following is the definition of the PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter:



Type	[TBD by IANA: 4577 = (2^12 + 2^8 + 2^7 + 2^6 + 2^5 + 1)]
Length	length in octets, excluding Type, Length, and Padding
Next Header	identifies the data that protected by this HMAC. The values for are defined by IANA "Assigned Numbers".
Payload Data	8 last bytes of the payload data over which the HMAC is calculated. This field is used to uniquely identify the extension header, in case there are multiple copies of same type.
Payload HMAC	HMAC computed over the data to which the Next Header and Payload Data points to. The size of the HMAC is the natural size of the hash computation output depending on the used hash function.

4. Generation and Reception of HIP DATA Packets

HIP DATA packets are transmitted reliably. Reliable delivery is achieved through the use of retransmissions and of the SEQ_DATA and ACK_DATA parameters.

4.1. Handling of SEQ_DATA and ACK_DATA

A HIP DATA packet contains zero or one SEQ_DATA parameter. The presence of a SEQ_DATA parameter indicates that the receiver MUST ACK the HIP DATA packet. A HIP DATA packet that does not contain a SEQ_DATA parameter is simply an ACK of a previous HIP DATA packet and MUST NOT be ACKed.

A HIP DATA packet contains zero or one ACK_DATA parameters. The ACK

parameter echoes the SEQ_DATA sequence number of the HIP DATA packet packet being ACKed.

A HIP DATA packet may contain both a SEQ_DATA and an ACK_DATA parameter. In this case, the ACK is being piggybacked on an outgoing HIP DATA packet. In general, HIP DATA packets carrying SEQ_DATA SHOULD be ACKed upon completion of the processing of the HIP DATA packet. A host MAY choose to hold the HIP DATA packet carrying ACK for a short period of time to allow for the possibility of piggybacking the ACK parameter, in a manner similar to TCP delayed acknowledgments.

4.2. Generation of a HIP DATA packet

When a host has upper-layer protocol data to send, it either runs the HIP base exchange and sends the data over a SA, or sends the data directly using a HIP DATA packet. Section 5 discusses when it is appropriate to use each method. This section discusses the case when the host chooses to use a HIP DATA packet to send the upper-layer protocol data.

1. The host creates a HIP DATA packet that contains a SEQ_DATA parameter. The host is free to choose any value for the SEQ_DATA parameter in the first HIP DATA packet it sends to a destination. After that first packet, the host MUST choose the value of the SEQ_DATA parameter in subsequent HIP DATA packets to the same destination so that no SEQ_DATA value is reused before the receiver has closed the processing window for the previous packet using the same SEQ_DATA value. Practically, giving the values of the retransmission timers used with HIP DATA packets, this means that hosts must wait the maximum likely lifetime of the packet before reusing a given SEQ_DATA value towards a given destination. However, it is not required for node to know the maximum packet lifetime. Rather, it is assumed that the requirement can be met by maintaining the value as a simple, 32-bit, "wrap-around" counter, incremented each time a packet is sent. It is an implementation choice whether to maintain a single counter for the node or multiple counters (one for each source HIT, destination HIT combination).
2. The host creates PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter. The HMAC is calculated over the whole PAYLOAD which the Next Header field of PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter indicates. The receiver MUST validate this HMAC. For calculating the HMAC the host MUST use the same hash algorithm as the one that has been used for generating the host's HIT as defined in Section 3.2. of [RFC5201].
3. The host creates HIP_SIGNATURE parameter. The signature is calculated over the whole HIP envelope, excluding any parameters after the HIP_SIGNATURE, as defined in Section 5.2.11. of

[RFC5201]. The receiver MUST validate this signature. It MAY use either the HI in the packet or the HI acquired by some other means.

4. The hosts sends the created HIP DATA packet and starts a DATA timer. The default value for the timer is 2 * RTT estimate. If multiple HIP DATA packets are outstanding, multiple timers are in effect.
5. If the DATA timer expires, the HIP DATA packet is resent. The HIP DATA packet can be resent DATA_RETRY_MAX times. The DATA timer SHOULD be exponentially backed off for subsequent retransmissions. If no acknowledgment is received from the peer after DATA_RETRY_MAX times, the delivery of the HIP DATA packet is considered unsuccessful and the application is notified about the error. The DATA timer is canceled upon receiving an ACK from the peer that acknowledges receipt of the HIP DATA packet.

4.3. Reception of a HIP DATA packet

A host receiving a HIP DATA packet to decide whether to process it or not. If the host, following its local policy, suspects that this packet could be part of a DoS attack. The host MAY responds with an R1 packet to the HIP DATA packet, if the packet contained SEQ_DATA and PAYLOAD_HMAC parameter, in order to run the HIP base exchange with the originator of the HIP DATA packet. If the host chooses to respond to the HIP DATA with an R1 packet, it creates a new R1 or selects a precomputed R1 according to the format described in [RFC5201] Section 5.3.2.

If the host, following its local policy, decides to process the incoming HIP DATA packet, it processes it according to the following rules:

If the HIP DATA packet contains a SEQ_DATA parameter and no ACK_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed and replied to as described in Section 4.3.1.
If the HIP DATA packet contains an ACK_DATA parameter and no SEQ_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed and replied to as described in Section 4.3.2.
If the HIP DATA packet contains both a SEQ_DATA parameter and an ACK_DATA parameter, the HIP DATA packet is processed first as described in Section 4.3.2 and then the rest of the HIP DATA packet is processed and replied to as described in Section 4.3.1.

4.3.1. Handling of SEQ_DATA in a Received HIP DATA packet

The following steps define the conceptual processing rules for handling a SEQ_DATA parameter in a received HIP DATA packet.

If the value in the received SEQ_DATA corresponds to a HIP DATA packet that has recently been processed, the packet is treated as a retransmission. The SIGNATURE verification (next step) MUST NOT be skipped. (A byte-by-byte comparison of the received and a stored packet would be OK, though.) It is recommended that a host cache HIP DATA packets sent with ACKs to avoid the cost of generating a new ACK packet to respond to a replayed HIP DATA packet. The host MUST acknowledge, again, such (apparent) HIP DATA packet retransmissions but SHOULD also consider rate-limiting such retransmission responses to guard against replay attacks.

The system MUST verify the SIGNATURE in the HIP DATA packet. If the verification fails, the packet SHOULD be dropped and an error message logged.

The system MUST verify the PAYLOAD_HMAC by calculating the HMAC over the PAYLOAD which the Next Header field indicates. For calculating the HMAC the host will use the same hash algorithm that has been used to generate the sender's HIT as defined in Section 3.2. of [RFC5201]. If the verification fails, the packet SHOULD be dropped and an error message logged.

If a new SEQ parameter is being processed, the parameters in the HIP DATA packet are then processed.

A HIP DATA packet with an ACK_DATA parameter is prepared and sent to the peer. This ACK_DATA parameter may be included in a separate HIP DATA packet or piggybacked in a HIP DATA packet with a SEQ_DATA parameter. The ACK_DATA parameter MAY acknowledge more than one of the peer's HIP DATA packets.

4.3.2. Handling of ACK_DATA in a Received HIP DATA packet

The following steps define the conceptual processing rules for handling an ACK_DATA parameter in a received HIP DATA packet.

The sequence number reported in the ACK_DATA must match with an earlier sent HIP DATA packet that has not already been acknowledged. If no match is found or if the ACK_DATA does not acknowledge a new HIP DATA packet, the packet MUST either be dropped if no SEQ_DATA parameter is present, or the processing steps in Section 4.3.1 are followed.

The system MUST verify the SIGNATURE in the HIP DATA packet. If the verification fails, the packet SHOULD be dropped and an error message logged.

The corresponding DATA timer is stopped so that the now acknowledged

HIP DATA packet is no longer retransmitted. If multiple HIP DATA packets are newly acknowledged, multiple timers are stopped.

5. Use of the HIP DATA Packet

HIP currently requires always that the four-message base exchange is executed at the first encounter of hosts that have not communicated before. This may add additional RTTs (Round Trip Time) to protocols based on a single message exchange. However, the four-message exchange is essential to preserve the half-stateless DoS protection nature of the base exchange. The use of the HIP DATA packet defined in this document reduces the initial overhead in the communications between two hosts at the expense of decreasing DoS protection. Therefore, applications SHOULD NOT use HIP DATA packets in environments where DoS attacks are believed to be an issue. For example, a HIP-based overlay may have policies in place to control which nodes can join the overlay. Any particular node in the overlay may want to accept HIP DATA packets from other nodes in the overlay given that those other were authorized to join the overlay. However, the same node may not want to accept HIP DATA packets from random nodes that are not part of the overlay.

The type of data to be sent is also relevant to whether the use of a HIP DATA packet is appropriate. HIP itself does not support fragmentation but relies on underlying IP-layer fragmentation. This may lead to reliability problems in the case where a message cannot be easily split over multiple HIP messages. Therefore, applications in environments where fragmentation could be an issue SHOULD NOT generate too large HIP DATA packets that may lead to fragmentation. Note that there are environments where fragmentation is not an issue. For example, in some HIP-based overlays, nodes can exchange HIP DATA packets on top of TCP connections that provide transport-level fragmentation and, thus, avoid IP-level fragmentation.

HIP currently requires that all messages excluding I1s but including HIP DATA packets are digitally signed. This adds to the packet size and the processing capacity needed to send packets. However, in applications where security is not paramount, it is possible to use very short keys, thereby reducing resource consumption.

6. Security considerations

HIP is designed to provide secure authentication of hosts. HIP also attempts to limit the exposure of the host to various denial-of-service and man-in-the-middle (MitM) attacks. However, HIP DATA packet, which can be sent without running the HIP base exchange

between hosts has a trade off that it does not provide the denial-of-service protection that HIP generally provides. Thus, the host should consider always situations where it is appropriate to use HIP DATA packet.

7. IANA considerations

This document updates the IANA Registry for HIP Packet types by intrducing new packet type for the new HIP_DATA (Section 3) packet. This document updates the IANA Registry for HIP Parameter Types by introducing new parameter values for the SEQ_DATA (Section 3.1), ACK_DATA (Section 3.2), and PAYLOAD_HMAC (Section 3.3) parameters.

8. Acknowledgments

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9. Informative references

[RFC5201] Moskowitz, R., Nikander, P., Jokela, P., and T. Henderson, "Host Identity Protocol", RFC 5201, April 2008.

[RFC5202] Jokela, P., Moskowitz, R., and P. Nikander, "Using the Encapsulating Security Payload (ESP) Transport Format with the Host Identity Protocol (HIP)", RFC 5202, April 2008.

[RFC5206] Nikander, P., Henderson, T., Vogt, C., and J. Arkko, "End-Host Mobility and Multihoming with the Host Identity Protocol", RFC 5206, April 2008.

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