

Network Working Group

Internet-Draft

Updates: [3261](#), [3515](#), [5002](#), [5318](#), [5360](#),
[5502](#) (if approved)

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Clarifications for when to use the name-addr production in SIP messages
[draft-sparks-sipcore-name-addr-guidance-00](#)

Abstract

[RFC3261](#) constrained several SIP header fields whose grammar contains the "name-addr / addr-spec" alternative to use name-addr when certain characters appear. Unfortunately it expressed the constraints with prose copied into each header field definition, and at least one header field was missed. Further, the constraint has not been copied into documents defining extension headers whose grammar contains the alternative.

This document updates [RFC3261](#) to state the constraint generically, and clarifies that the constraint applies to all SIP header fields where there is a choice between using name-addr or addr-spec. It also updates those extension SIP header fields that use the alternative to clarify that the constraint applies (RFCs 3261, 3515, 5002, 5318, 5360, and 5502).

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Updates to RFC3261	3
3.	Updates to RFCs defining SIP Extension header fields	4
4.	IANA Considerations	4
5.	Security Considerations	4
6.	Acknowledgments	4
7.	Instructions to the RFC Editor	4
8.	Normative References	5
	Author's Address	5

[1.](#) Introduction

[RFC3261] defines several header fields that contain URIs to allow both a form that contains the bare URI (addr-spec) and one that provides a name and the URI (name-addr). This subset, taken from the ABNF [[RFC5234](#)] specified in [[RFC3261](#)] shows the relevant part of the definition of the syntax of the "From" header field:

```

From      = ( "From" / "f" ) HCOLON from-spec
from-spec = ( name-addr / addr-spec )
           *( SEMI from-param )
name-addr = [ display-name ] LAQUOT addr-spec RAQUOT
addr-spec = SIP-URI / SIPS-URI / absoluteURI

```

The prose in [section 20.20 of \[RFC3261\]](#), which discusses the "From" header field, constrains how the production may be used by saying:

Even if the "display-name" is empty, the "name-addr" form MUST be used if the "addr-spec" contains a comma, question mark, or semicolon.

Sparks

Expires December 9, 2016

[Page 2]

[Section 20.39](#), which discusses the "To" header field contains no such constraining text.

This constraint is specified slightly differently, but with the same intent, in the introduction to [section 20](#):

The Contact, From, and To header fields contain a URI. If the URI contains a comma, question mark or semicolon, the URI MUST be enclosed in angle brackets (< and >).

Unfortunately, this can be read to only apply to the Contact, From, and To header fields, making it necessary to provide the constraint explicitly in the prose discussing any other header field using the name-addr or addr-spec alternative.

As extension header fields were standardized, the specifications sometimes failed to include the constraint. Many errata have been entered to correct this omission. When the constraint was called out, the form has not been consistent.

This memo updates the specifications of SIP and its extensions to clarify that the constraint to use the name-addr form applies anywhere there is a choice between the name-addr and addr-spec production rules in the grammar for SIP header fields.

It is important to note that a message formed without honoring the constraint will still be syntactically valid, but would be interpreted differently. The characters after the comma, question mark, or semicolon would be interpreted as header field parameters or additional header field values as discussed in [section 7.3.1 of \[RFC3261\]](#).

2. Updates to [RFC3261](#)

This text from the introduction to [section 20 of \[RFC3261\]](#):

The Contact, From, and To header fields contain a URI. If the URI contains a comma, question mark or semicolon, the URI MUST be enclosed in angle brackets (< and >).

is replaced with:

When constructing the value of any SIP header field whose grammar allows choosing between name-addr and addr-spec, such as those that use the form '(name-addr / addr-spec)', the "addr-spec" form MUST NOT be used if its value would contain a comma, semicolon, or question mark.

The header fields defined in this specification that allow this choice are "To", "From", "Contact", and "Reply-To".

3. Updates to RFCs defining SIP Extension header fields

[[RFC3515](#)], [[RFC5002](#)], [[RFC5318](#)], [[RFC5360](#)], and [[RFC5502](#)] are updated to include:

This RFC contains the definition of one or more SIP header fields that allow choosing between addr-spec and name-addr when constructing header field values. As specified in RFCxxxx, the "addr-spec" form MUST NOT be used if its value would contain a comma, semicolon, or question mark.

4. IANA Considerations

This memo has no considerations for IANA.

5. Security Considerations

The updates specified in this memo clarify a constraint on the grammar for producing SIP messages. It introduces no new security considerations. One pre-existing consideration is worth reiterating: messages produced without honoring the constraint will be misinterpreted by the receiving element.

6. Acknowledgments

Brett Tate identified this issue in several extension documents, submitted several corresponding errata, and drove the discussion that led to this memo. Substantive comments leading to this text were provided by Paul Kyzivat, Gonzalo Camarillo, and Dale Worley.

7. Instructions to the RFC Editor

Please remove this section in its entirety before publication as an RFC.

Please replace any instances of RFCxxxx with the RFC number assigned to this memo.

Sparks

Expires December 9, 2016

[Page 4]

This memo, if it is approved, obviates Errata 3744, 3894, and 4648-4652 inclusive.

8. Normative References

- [RFC3261] Rosenberg, J., Schulzrinne, H., Camarillo, G., Johnston, A., Peterson, J., Sparks, R., Handley, M., and E. Schooler, "SIP: Session Initiation Protocol", [RFC 3261](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3261, June 2002, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3261>>.
- [RFC5234] Crocker, D., Ed. and P. Overell, "Augmented BNF for Syntax Specifications: ABNF", STD 68, [RFC 5234](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5234, January 2008, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5234>>.
- [RFC3515] Sparks, R., "The Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) Refer Method", [RFC 3515](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC3515, April 2003, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc3515>>.
- [RFC5002] Camarillo, G. and G. Blanco, "The Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) P-Profile-Key Private Header (P-Header)", [RFC 5002](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5002, August 2007, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5002>>.
- [RFC5318] Hautakorpi, J. and G. Camarillo, "The Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) P-Refused-URI-List Private-Header (P-Header)", [RFC 5318](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5318, December 2008, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5318>>.
- [RFC5360] Rosenberg, J., Camarillo, G., Ed., and D. Willis, "A Framework for Consent-Based Communications in the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)", [RFC 5360](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5360, October 2008, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5360>>.
- [RFC5502] van Elburg, J., "The SIP P-Served-User Private-Header (P-Header) for the 3GPP IP Multimedia (IM) Core Network (CN) Subsystem", [RFC 5502](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC5502, April 2009, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc5502>>.

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Sparks

Expires December 9, 2016

[Page 5]