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IPv6 over Controller Area Network  
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Abstract

Controller Area Network (CAN) is a fieldbus initially designed for automotive applications. It is a multi-master bus with 11-bit or 29-bit frame identifiers. The CAN standard (ISO 11898 series) defines the physical and data-link layer. This document describes how to transfer IPv6 packets over CAN using ISO-TP, a dedicated addressing scheme, and IP header compression (IPHC).

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## 1. Introduction

Controller Area Network (CAN) is mostly known for its use in the automotive domain. However, it is also used in industrial applications as CANopen, building automation and many more.

It is a two-wire wired-AND multi-master bus that uses CSMA/CR in its arbitration field. CAN uses 11-bit (standard ID) and 29-bit (extended ID) identifiers to identify frames. The maximum payload data size is 8 octets for classical CAN and 64 octets for CAN-FD.

The minimal MTU of IPv6 is 1280 octets, and therefore, a mechanism to support a larger payload is needed. This document uses a slightly modified version of the ISO-TP protocol to transfer data up to 4095 octets per packet. Mapping addresses to identifiers uses an addressing scheme with a 14-bit source address, a 14-bit destination address, and a multicast bit. This scheme uses extended identifiers only.

To make data transfer more efficient IPHC [RFC6282] is used.

Due to the limited address space of 14 bits, random address generation would generate duplicate addresses with an unacceptably high probability. For this reason, a link-layer duplicate address detection is introduced to resolve address conflicts.

An Ethernet border translator is designed to connect a 6LoCAN bus segment to other networks.

### 1.1. Terminology

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.

### 1.2. Controller Area Network Overview

This section provides a brief overview of Controller Area Network (CAN), as specified in [ISO 11898-1:2015]. CAN has two wires, CAN High and CAN Low, where CAN High is tied to 5V and CAN Low to 0V when transmitting a dominant (0) bit. Both wires are at the same level (approximately 2.5V) when transmitting a recessive (1) bit. Because of the wired-AND structure, a dominant bit overrides a recessive bit.

To resolve collisions in the arbitration field, a CAN controller checks for overridden recessive bits. The sender that was sending the recessive bit then stops the transmission. Therefore an identifier with all zeros has the highest priority.

CAN controllers are usually able to filter frames by identifiers and only pass frames where the filter matches. The identifiers can be masked in order to define which bits of the identifier must match and which ones are ignored.

### 1.3. ISO-TP Overview

A subset of ISO-TP (ISO 15765-2) is used to fragment and reassemble the packets. This subset of ISO-TP can send packets with a payload size of up to 4095 octets, enough for IPv6 minimum MTU size of 1280 octets. ISO-TP is designed for CAN and its small payload data size and therefore preferred over [RFC4944] fragmentation.

The 6LoWPAN fragmentation would use more than the half of the available payload for the fragmentation headers. This fact prevents 6LoWPAN fragmentation from being used for 6LoCAN.

## 2. Addressing

This section provides information about the 14-bit node address to CAN identifier mapping.

Because CAN uses identifiers to identify the frame's content, an addressing scheme is introduced to map node addresses to identifiers. Every node has a unique 14-bit address. This address is assigned either statically or randomly. The addressing scheme uses the 29-bit extended identifier only. It is a combination of a source address, a destination address, and a multicast bit.

The address 0x3DFE is reserved for link-layer duplicate address detection, and address 0x3DF0 is reserved for the Ethernet border translator. Addresses from 0x0100 to 0x3DEF are used as node addresses. Other addresses (0x0000 to 0x00FF and 0x3DF0 to 0x3FFF) are reserved or used for special purposes. Note that a lower address number has a higher priority on the bus.

6LoCAN does not use the 11-bit standard identifiers. They may be used for other purposes.

Address	Description
0x3DFE - 0x3FFF	Reserved
0x3DFE	LLDAD
0x3DF1 - 0x3DFD	Reserved
0x3DF0	Ethernet Translator
0x0100 - 0x3DEF	Node addresses
0x0000 - 0x00FF	Reserved

Table 1: Address ranges

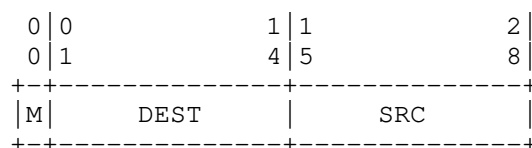


Figure 1: Addressing Scheme

M : Multicast.

DEST : Destination Address (14 bits).

SRC : Source Address (14 bits).

For example, a destination of 0x3055 and source address of 0x3AAF result in the following identifier:

0	1	2
0	4	8
0	1	1
1	5	8

0	11000001010101	11101010101111
---	----------------	----------------

Figure 2: Unicast identifier example

A multicast group of 1 and a source address of 0x3AAF result in the following identifier:

0	1	2
0	4	8
0	1	1
1	5	8

1	0000000000000001	11101010101111
---	------------------	----------------

Figure 3: Multicast identifier example

## 2.1. Unicast

For unicast packets, the multicast bit is set to zero, and the 14-bit source address is the address of the sender. The 14-bit destination address of the receiver is discovered by IPv6 NDP defined in [RFC4861]. Every node MUST be able to receive all frames targeting its address as the destination address.

## 2.2. Multicast

For multicast packets, the multicast bit is set to one, and the 14-bit source address is the address of the sender. The 14-bit destination address is the last 14 bits of the multicast group. Every node MUST be able to receive all frames matching the last 14 bits of all joined multicast groups as the destination address.

### 2.3. Address Generation

Every node has a 14-bit address. This address **MUST** be unique within the CAN bus segment. The address can either be statically defined or assigned randomly. For the random address assignment, the node tries randomly chosen addresses until the link-layer duplicate address detection succeeds. The link-layer duplicate address detection prevents nodes from assigning an address already in use.

### 3. Link-Layer Duplicate Address Detection

This section provides information about how to perform link-layer duplicate address detection (LLDAD).

LLDAD is introduced to prevent collisions of CAN identifiers and makes it possible to use random address assignment with only 14 bits of address space. To perform an LLDAD, a LLDAD-request is sent. If there is no DAD-response sent back, the DAD is considered successful. The node **MUST** wait for a response for at least 100ms.

LLDAD-requests are remote transmission request (RTR) frames with the desired address as the destination and 14 bits entropy as the source address. The entropy prevents identifier collisions when nodes are trying to get the same address at the same time.

DAD-responses are data-frames sent to the LLDAD address (0x3DFE) with the responder's address as the source address. Both LLDAD-request and DAD-response have a data length of zero.

The node **MUST** be configured to receive RTR frames with the desired address as the destination address before the LLDAD-request is sent and frames with the LLDAD address as long as the LLDAD is in progress. This prevents from assigning the same address to more than one node when sending the LLDAD-request at the same time. The ability to receive RTR frames with the desired address as the destination address **MUST** be kept as long as the node uses the address. The response to LLDAD-requests that matches the node address **MUST** be sent before the requesting node stops waiting for the response, which is 100ms.

Figure 4 shows a DAD Fail example where node A performs a LLDAD-request on address 0x3055 where this address is already in use by node B.

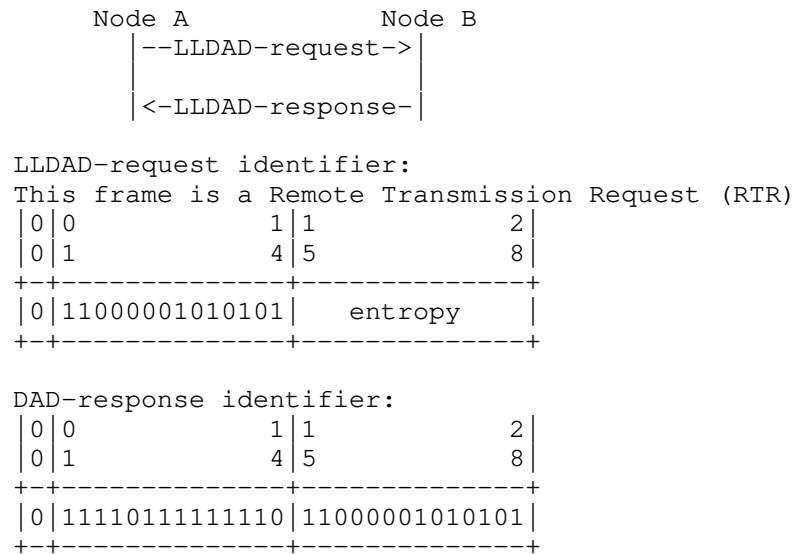


Figure 4: DAD Fail example

#### 4. Stateless Address Autoconfiguration

This section defines how to obtain an IPv6 Interface Identifier.

It is RECOMMENDED to form an IID derived from the node's address. IIDs generated from the node address result in most efficient IPHC header compression. However, IIDs MAY also be generated from other sources. The general procedure for creating an IID is described in Appendix A of [RFC4291], "Creating Modified EUI-64 Format Interface Identifiers", as updated by [RFC7136].

The Interface Identifier for link-local addresses SHOULD be formed by concatenating the node's 14-bit address to the six octets 0x00, 0x00, 0x00, 0xFF, 0xFE, 0x00 and two bits 0b00. For example, an address of hexadecimal value 0x3AAF results in the following IID:

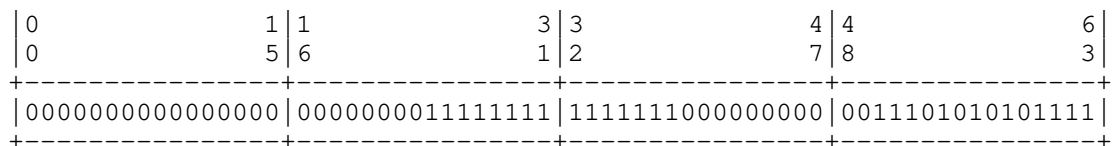


Figure 5: IID from Address 0x3AAF

## 5. IPv6 Link-Local Address

The IPv6 link-local address [RFC4291] for a 6LoCAN interface is formed by appending the Interface Identifier, as defined above, to the prefix FE80::/64.



Figure 6: Link-Local address from IID

## 6. ISO-TP

This section provides information about the use of ISO-TP (ISO 15765-2) in this document. Parts of ISO-TP are used to provide a reliable way for sending up to 4095 octets as a packet. It includes a flow-control mechanism for unicast-packets and timeouts.

Multicast packets do not use any flow-control mechanism and are therefore not covered by the ISO-TP standard. However, the fragmentation and reassembly mechanism is still used for multicast packets.

ISO-TP defines four different types of frames: Single-Frames (SF), First-Frames (FF), Consecutive-Frames (CF), and Flow Control Frames (FC). Single-Frames are used when the payload data size is small enough to fit into a single CAN frame. For larger payload data sizes, a First-Frame indicates the start of the message, Consecutive-Frames carry the payload data and Flow Control Frames steer the transmission. Network address extension and packet size larger than 4095 octets defined by ISO 15765-2 MUST NOT be used for 6LoCAN. Single-Frame packets are only useful for CAN-FD because the eight octets of classical CAN are too small for any IPv6 header.

### 6.1. Multicast

Multicast packets MUST be transferred in a Single-Frame when the packet fits in a single frame. Multicast packets that are too big for Single-Frames start with a First-Frame (FF). The FF contains information about the entire payload data size and payload data bytes to fill the rest of the remaining frame. The First-Frame is followed by a break of 1 millisecond to allow the receivers to prepare for the data reception. Consecutive-Frames carry the rest of the payload data and a 4-bit sequence number to detect missing or out of order frames. The number of Consecutive-Frames depends on the CAN frame data size and the payload data size. Consecutive-Frames SHALL have



the maximum possible CAN data size. The last Consecutive-Frame may have to include padding at the end.

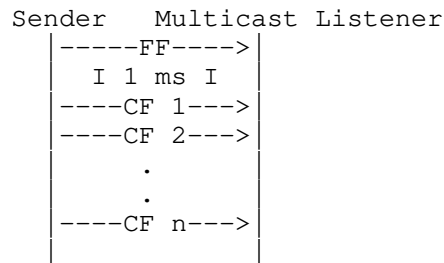


Figure 7: Multicast packet sequence

## 6.2. Unicast

Unicast transfers use the same format for First-Frames and Consecutive-Frames as the multicast transfer does. In contrast to multicast, unicast transfers use Flow-Control-Frames to steer the sender's behavior and signalize readiness.

The receiver can choose a block size and a minimum separation time (ST min).

The block size (BS) defines how many frames are transmitted before the sender MUST wait for another FC Frame. A zero BS is allowed and denotes that the sender MUST NOT wait for another FC Frame. ST min defines the minimal pause between the end of the previous frame and the start of the next frame. The receiver MAY change BS and ST min for following FC Frames.

The receiver MUST answer a FF within 1 second. After this timeout the sender SHOULD abort and stop waiting for an FC frame. CF frames MUST have a separation time less than or equal to one second. After this timeout, a receiver SHOULD abort and stop waiting for CF. Receivers and sender SHOULD handle more than one packet reception from different peers at the same time.

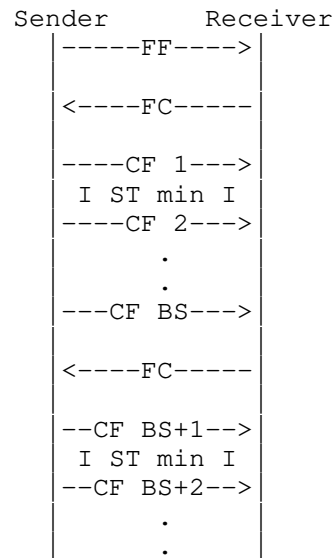


Figure 8: Unicast packet sequence.

### 6.3. Frame Format

The frame format of ISO-TP is described in this section.

The first 4 bits denote the Protocol Control Information (PCI). This information is used to distinguish the different frame types.

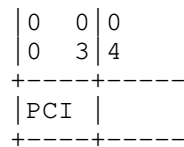


Figure 9: ISO-TP Frame format

Number	Description
0	Single-Frame
1	First-Frame
2	Consecutive-Frame
3	Flow-Control-Frame
4-15	Reserved

Table 2: PCI Numbers

#### 6.4. Single-Frame

The Single-Frame PCI is 0, and the rest of the octet is padded with 0. This format is compatible with ISO-TP with data size greater than 16 octets.

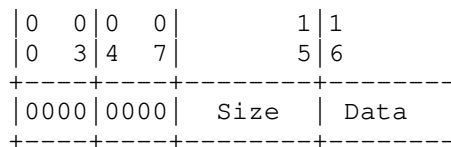


Figure 10: Single-Frame Format

Size : Number of payload data octets.

#### 6.5. First-Frame

The First-Frame PCI is 1, and the remaining 4-bit nibble of the first byte carries the upper 4-bit nibble of the payload data length. The second byte contains the lower byte of the payload data length. The rest of the frame is filled with payload data. The First-Frame MUST have a data length of the maximum CAN data length. For example, classic CAN has a maximum data length of 8 octets, and therefore six payload bytes are included in the FF.

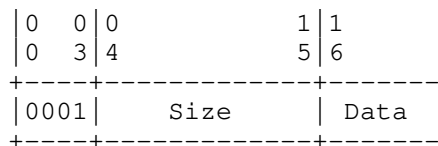


Figure 11: First-Frame Format

Size : Number of payload data octets

#### 6.6. Consecutive-Frame

The Consecutive-Frame PCI is two, and the remaining 4-bit nibble of the first byte carries an index. This index starts with one for the first CF and wraps around at 16. Then it starts at 0 again. The index is used to check for lost or out of order frames. When the index is not sequential, the reception MUST be aborted. The last Consecutive-Frame may have to include padding at the end to obtain a valid data length for CAN-FD frames. The RECOMMENDED padding value is 0xCC.

```

| 0 0 | 0 0 | 0
| 0 3 | 4 7 | 8
+-----+-----+-----+
| 0010 | Idx | Data
+-----+-----+-----+
```

Figure 12: Consecutive-Frame Format

#### 6.7. Flow-Control-Frame

The Flow-Control-Frame PCI is three, and the remaining 4-bit nibble of the first byte carries a Flow-State (FS). The second byte is the block size, and the third byte is the ST min. The Flow-States are:

Number	Description
0	CTS (Continue To Send)
1	WAIT
2	OVFLW (Overflow)

Table 3: Flow-State

CTS advises the sender to continue sending CF frames.

WAIT resets the timeout for receiving an FC frame on the sender side. The sender SHOULD only accept a limited number of wait states and silently abort when reaching the limit.

OVFLW is sent when the receiver is running out of resources and can't handle the packet. The sender MUST abort when receiving an OVFLW Flow-State.

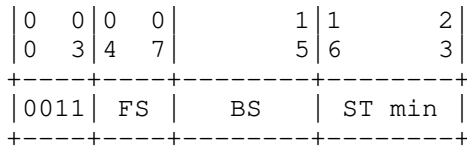


Figure 13: Flow-Control-Frame Format

FS : Frame State

BS : Block Size

ST min : Minimal Separation Time

## 7. Frame Format

This section provides information about data arrangement in the frame data field.

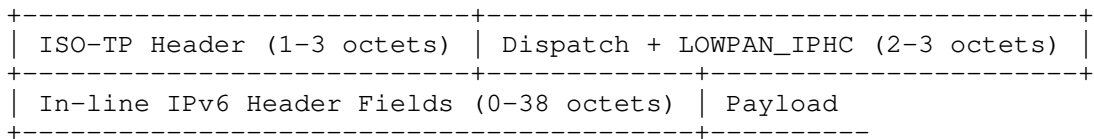


Figure 14: 6LoCAN Frame Format

Packets with a destination or source address of the 0x3DF0 (Translator address) carry the Ethernet MAC address inline directly after the ISO-TP Header. For packets destined for the translator, it is the destination MAC address, and for packets originated by the translator, it is the source MAC address.

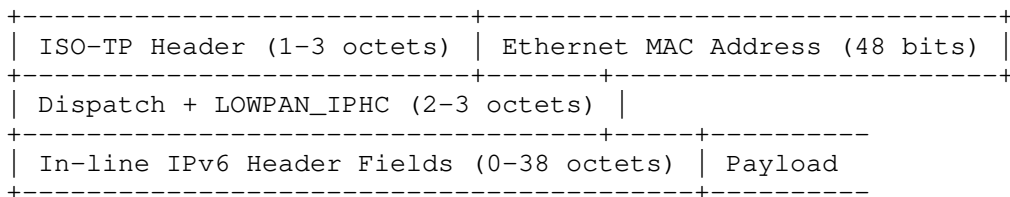


Figure 15: 6LoCAN Translator Frame Format

## 8. Ethernet Border Translator

This section provides information about translating 6LoCAN packets to Ethernet frames.

The Ethernet Border Translator connects 6LoCAN bus-segments either to other 6LoCAN bus-segments or other technologies. Ethernet is a widely used technology that provides enough bandwidth to connect several 6LoCAN segments. A mechanism like the 6LBR is not necessary because there is no routing on 6LoCAN segments. To provide routing or switching capabilities, the Ethernet Border Translator connects a 6LoCAN network to such devices via Ethernet.

Bus segments **MUST NOT** have more than one translator. The translator has a fixed node address (0x3DF0) and a range of Ethernet MAC addresses. Every packet sent to this node address or any multicast address is forwarded to Ethernet. Every Ethernet frame matching the MAC address range and every multicast Ethernet frame is forwarded to the 6LoCAN bus-segment.

For translating a 6LoCAN packet to an Ethernet frame, the source address is extended with the first 34 bits of the translator MAC address and the IPHC compressed headers are decompressed. The destination MAC is carried in-line before the compressed IPv6 header (see Section 7, Figure 15). ICMPv6 messages **MUST** be checked for Link-Layer Address Options (LLAO), and if an LLAO is present, it **MUST** be changed to the extended link-layer address. For translating Ethernet frames to 6LoCAN packets, the source MAC address is carried in-line, the destination node address is the last 14 bits of the MAC address, and the IPv6 headers are compressed using IPHC.

For multicast Ethernet frames, the last 14 bits of the multicast group is the destination address, and the multicast bit is set. The destination address **MAY** also be reconstructed from the destination multicast address. The destination Ethernet MAC address is formed from the destination IP address as described in [RFC2464] section 7.

If the translator includes a network stack, the translator **MUST NOT** use a MAC address within the ranges used for translation, with the following exception: The translator **MAY** use the extended MAC address that corresponds to the translator node address.

Figure 18 shows an example setup of a 6LoCAN segment connected to an Ethernet network.

Figure 16 shows a translation from Ethernet MAC to CAN identifier. The source (src) MAC address is carried in-line in the CAN frame

data. The translator MAC address for this example is 02:00:5E:10:3D:F0.

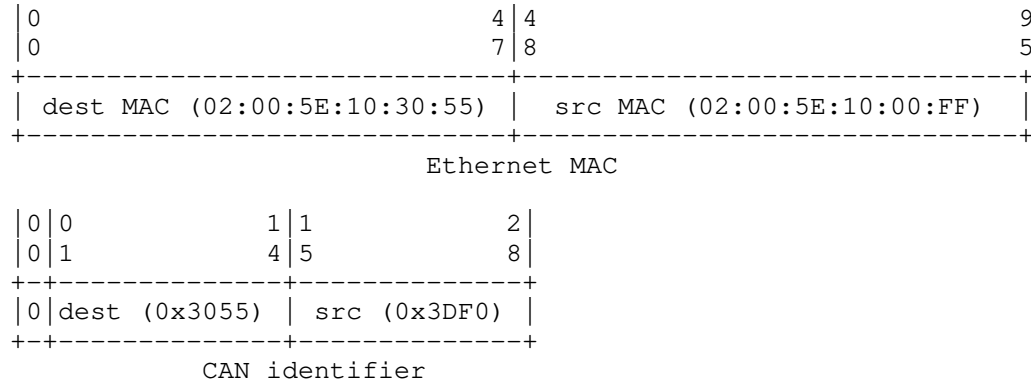


Figure 16: Example address translation from Ethernet MAC to CAN identifier.

Figure 17 shows a translation from a multicast Ethernet MAC to CAN identifier. The source MAC address is carried in-line in the CAN frame data.

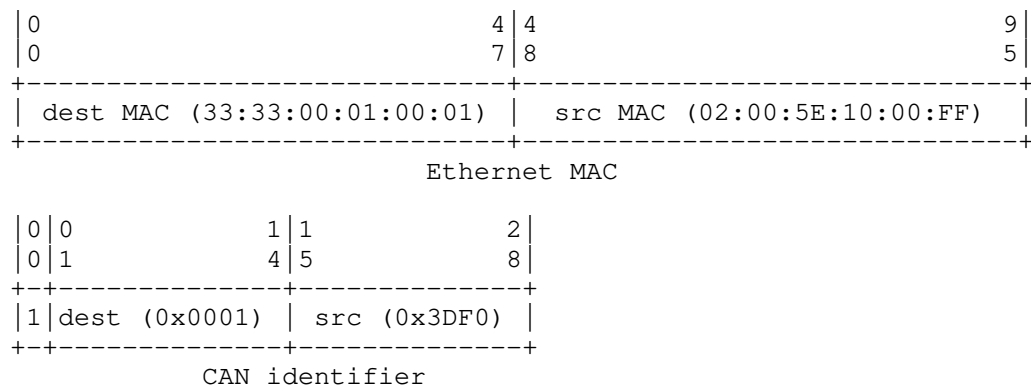


Figure 17: Example address translation from Ethernet to CAN for multicast Frames.

Section 8 shows a translation CAN identifier to Ethernet MAC. The destination (dest) MAC address is carried inline in the CAN frame data. The translator MAC address for this example is 02:00:5E:10:3D:F0.

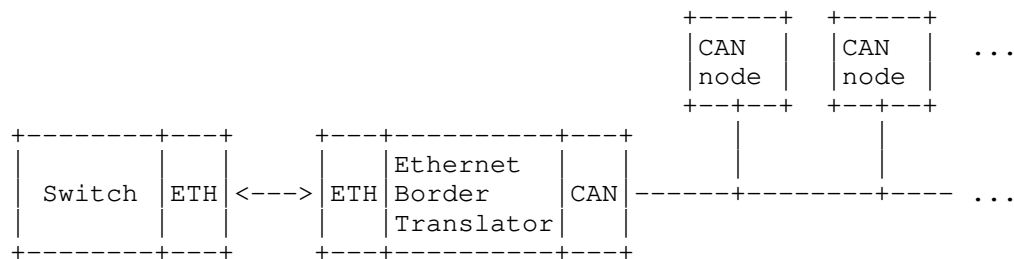
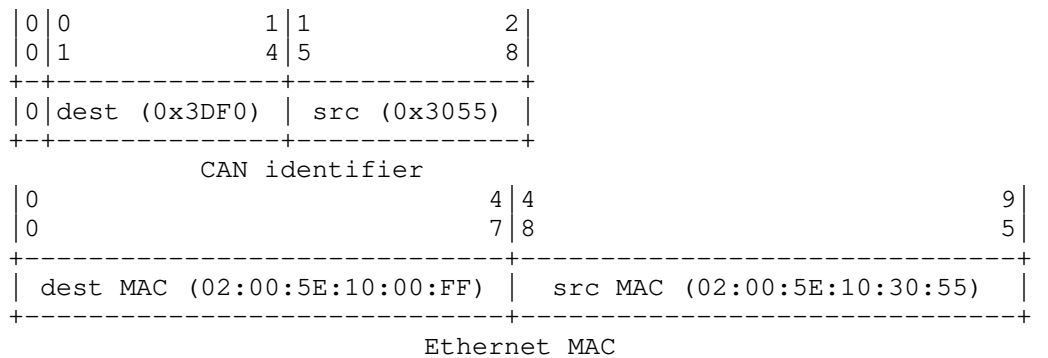


Figure 18: Example setup with Ethernet Border Translator

## 9. IANA Considerations

The MAC addresses generated by extending the node's address may be randomly generated and, therefore, MUST NOT set the UAA-bit.

## 10. Security Considerations

This document doesn't provide any security mechanisms. Traffic on the bus can be intersected, spoofed, or destroyed. For confidentiality and integrity, mechanisms like TLS or IPsec need to be applied.

The small 14-bit node address space makes it hard to track nodes globally and therefore has inherent privacy properties.

## 11. Reference Implementation

As a reference, this standard proposal is implemented in the Zephyr RTOS from version 2.0 ongoing. This implementation can be tested with the overlay-6locan.conf on echo\_server and echo\_client application.

## 12. Normative References



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