Using modules, kpatch, or kdump to manage Linux kernel in RHEL

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Abstract

The Kernel Administration Guide documents tasks for maintaining the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 kernel. This release includes information on using kpatch, managing kernel modules, and manually updating the kernel.
# Table of Contents

**PREFACE** ................................................................. 5

**CHAPTER 1. WORKING WITH KERNEL MODULES** ............................................. 6
  1.1. WHAT IS A KERNEL MODULE? .................................................. 6
  1.2. KERNEL MODULE DEPENDENCIES ........................................... 6
  1.3. LISTING CURRENTLY-LOADED MODULES ..................................... 7
  1.4. DISPLAYING INFORMATION ABOUT A MODULE ............................... 8
  1.5. LOADING KERNEL MODULES AT SYSTEM RUNTIME ............................ 8
  1.6. UNLOADING KERNEL MODULES AT SYSTEM RUNTIME .......................... 9
  1.7. LOADING KERNEL MODULES AUTOMATICALLY AT SYSTEM BOOT TIME ...... 10
  1.8. PREVENTING KERNEL MODULES FROM BEING AUTOMATICALLY LOADED AT SYSTEM BOOT TIME 11
  1.9. SIGNING KERNEL MODULES FOR SECURE BOOT ............................. 13
    1.9.1. Prerequisites .................................................................. 14
    1.9.2. Kernel module authentication ........................................... 14
      1.9.2.1. Sources for public keys used to authenticate kernel modules 15
      1.9.2.2. Kernel module authentication requirements ....................... 16
    1.9.3. Generating a public and private X.509 key pair ....................... 17
    1.9.4. Enrolling public key on target system .................................... 18
      1.9.4.1. Factory firmware image including public key .................... 18
      1.9.4.2. System administrator manually adding public key to the MOK list 18
    1.9.5. Signing kernel module with the private key ............................ 19
    1.9.6. Loading signed kernel module ............................................ 19

**CHAPTER 2. WORKING WITH SYSCTL AND KERNEL TUNABLES** ..................... 21
  2.1. WHAT IS A KERNEL TUNABLE? ............................................... 21
  2.2. HOW TO WORK WITH KERNEL TUNABLES ................................... 21
    2.2.1. Using the sysctl command ............................................... 21
    2.2.2. Modifying files in /etc/sysctl.d ........................................ 21
  2.3. WHAT TUNABLES CAN BE CONTROLLED? ................................... 22
    2.3.1. Network interface tunables .............................................. 22
    2.3.2. Global kernel tunables .................................................... 22

**CHAPTER 3. LISTING OF KERNEL PARAMETERS AND VALUES** ....................... 36
  3.1. KERNEL COMMAND-LINE PARAMETERS ...................................... 36
    3.1.1. Setting kernel command-line parameters .............................. 36
    3.1.2. What kernel command-line parameters can be controlled .......... 37
      3.1.2.1. Hardware specific kernel command-line parameters .......... 37

**CHAPTER 4. KERNEL FEATURES** .................................................. 39
  4.1. CONTROL GROUPS .................................................................. 39
    4.1.1. What is a control group? .................................................. 39
    4.1.2. What is a namespace? ..................................................... 39
    4.1.3. Supported namespaces ..................................................... 39
  4.2. KERNEL SOURCE CHECKER ................................................... 40
    4.2.1. Usage ........................................................................... 40
  4.3. DIRECT ACCESS FOR FILES (DAX) ......................................... 40
  4.4. MEMORY PROTECTION KEYS FOR USERSPACE (ALSO KNOWN AS PKU, OR PKEYS) ....................... 41
  4.5. KERNEL ADRESS SPACE LAYOUT RANDOMIZATION ....................... 41
  4.6. ADVANCED ERROR REPORTING (AER) ....................................... 42
    4.6.1. What is AER ................................................................... 42
    4.6.2. Collecting and displaying AER messages .............................. 42
7.2.3.1. Configuring the memory usage
7.2.3.2. Configuring the kdump type
7.2.3.3. Configuring the core collector
7.2.3.4. Configuring the default action
7.2.3.5. Enabling the service
7.3. BLACKLISTING KERNEL DRIVERS FOR KDUMP
7.4. TESTING THE KDUMP CONFIGURATION
    7.4.1. Additional resources
        7.4.1.1. Installed documentation
        7.4.1.2. Online documentation
7.5. FIRMWARE ASSISTED DUMP MECHANISMS
    7.5.1. The case for firmware assisted dump
    7.5.2. Using fadump on IBM PowerPC hardware
    7.5.3. Firmware assisted dump methods on IBM Z
    7.5.4. Using sadump on Fujitsu PRIMEQUEST systems
7.6. ANALYZING A CORE DUMP
    7.6.1. Installing the crash utility
    7.6.2. Running the crash utility
    7.6.3. Displaying the message buffer
    7.6.4. Displaying a backtrace
    7.6.5. Displaying a process status
    7.6.6. Displaying virtual memory information
    7.6.7. Displaying open files
    7.6.8. Exiting the utility
7.7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
7.8. SUPPORTED KDUMP CONFIGURATIONS AND TARGETS
    7.8.1. Memory requirements for kdump
    7.8.2. Minimum threshold for automatic memory reservation
    7.8.3. Supported kdump targets
    7.8.4. Supported kdump filtering levels
    7.8.5. Supported default actions
    7.8.6. Estimating kdump size
    7.8.7. Support for architectures on kernel and kernel-alt packages
7.9. USING KEXEC TO REBOOT THE KERNEL
    7.9.1. Rebooting kernel with kexec
7.10. PORTAL LABS RELEVANT TO KDUMP
    7.10.1. Kdump helper
    7.10.2. Kernel oops analyzer

CHAPTER 8. ENHANCING SECURITY WITH THE KERNEL INTEGRITY SUBSYSTEM
8.1. THE KERNEL INTEGRITY SUBSYSTEM
8.2. INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE
8.3. EXTENDED VERIFICATION MODULE
8.4. TRUSTED AND ENCRYPTED KEYS
8.5. ENABLING INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE AND EXTENDED VERIFICATION MODULE
8.6. COLLECTING FILE HASHES WITH INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

CHAPTER 9. REVISION HISTORY
The *Kernel Administration Guide* describes working with the kernel and shows several practical tasks. Beginning with information on using kernel modules, the guide then covers interaction with the `sysfs` facility, manual upgrade of the kernel and using kpatch. The guide also introduces the crash dump mechanism, which steps through the process of setting up and testing `vmcore` collection in the event of a kernel failure.

The *Kernel Administration Guide* also covers selected use cases of managing the kernel and includes reference material about command line options, kernel tunables (also known as switches), and a brief discussion of kernel features.
CHAPTER 1. WORKING WITH KERNEL MODULES

This Chapter explains:

- What is a kernel module.
- How to use the kmod utilities to manage modules and their dependencies.
- How to configure module parameters to control behavior of the kernel modules.
- How to load modules at boot time.

NOTE

In order to use the kernel module utilities described in this chapter, first ensure the kmod package is installed on your system by running, as root:

# yum install kmod

1.1. WHAT IS A KERNEL MODULE?

The Linux kernel is monolithic by design. However, it is compiled with optional or additional modules as required by each use case. This means that you can extend the kernel’s capabilities through the use of dynamically-loaded kernel modules. A kernel module can provide:

- A device driver which adds support for new hardware.
- Support for a file system such as GFS2 or NFS.

Like the kernel itself, modules can take parameters that customize their behavior. Though the default parameters work well in most cases. In relation to kernel modules, user-space tools can do the following operations:

- Listing modules currently loaded into a running kernel.
- Querying all available modules for available parameters and module-specific information.
- Loading or unloading (removing) modules dynamically into or from a running kernel.

Many of these utilities, which are provided by the kmod package, take module dependencies into account when performing operations. As a result, manual dependency-tracking is rarely necessary.

On modern systems, kernel modules are automatically loaded by various mechanisms when needed. However, there are occasions when it is necessary to load or unload modules manually. For example, when one module is preferred over another although either is able to provide basic functionality, or when a module performs unexpectedly.

1.2. KERNEL MODULE DEPENDENCIES

Certain kernel modules sometimes depend on one or more other kernel modules. The /lib/modules/<KERNEL_VERSION>/modules.dep file contains a complete list of kernel module dependencies for the respective kernel version.
The dependency file is generated by the `depmod` program, which is a part of the `kmod` package. Many of the utilities provided by `kmod` take module dependencies into account when performing operations so that manual dependency-tracking is rarely necessary.

**WARNING**

The code of kernel modules is executed in kernel-space in the unrestricted mode. Because of this, you should be mindful of what modules you are loading.

Additional resources

- For more information about `/lib/modules/<KERNEL_VERSION>/modules.dep`, refer to the `modules.dep(5)` manual page.
- For further details including the synopsis and options of `depmod`, see the `depmod(8)` manual page.

### 1.3. LISTING CURRENTLY-LOADED MODULES

You can list all kernel modules that are currently loaded into the kernel by running the `lsmod` command, for example:

```bash
# lsmod
Module                  Size  Used by
tcp_lp                 12663  0
bnep                   19704  2
bluetooth             372662  7 bnep
rfkill                 26536  3 bluetooth
fuse                   87661  3
ebtable_broute         12731  0
bridge                110196  1 ebtable_broute
stp                    12976  1 bridge
llc                    14552  2 stp,bridge
ebtable_filter         12827  0
ebtables               30913  3 ebtable_broute,ebtable_nat,ebtable_filter
ip6table_nat           13015  1
nf_nat_ipv6            13279  1 ip6table_nat
iptable_nat            13011  1
nf_conntrack_ipv4      14862  4
nf_defrag_ipv4         12729  1 nf_conntrack_ipv4
nf_nat_ipv4            13263  1 ip6table_nat
nf_nat                 21798  4 nf_nat_ipv4,nf_nat_ipv6,ip6table_nat,iptable_nat
[output truncated]
```

The `lsmod` output specifies three columns:

- **Module**
  - The name of a kernel module currently loaded in memory.
- **Size**
- The amount of memory the kernel module uses in kilobytes.

- **Used by**
  - A decimal number representing how many dependencies there are on the **Module** field.
  - A comma separated string of dependent **Module** names. Using this list, you can first unload all the modules depending on the module you want to unload.

Finally, note that **lsmod** output is less verbose and considerably easier to read than the content of the **/proc/modules** pseudo-file.

### 1.4. DISPLAYING INFORMATION ABOUT A MODULE

You can display detailed information about a kernel module using the `modinfo <MODULE_NAME>` command.

**NOTE**

When entering the name of a kernel module as an argument to one of the **kmod** utilities, do not append a `.ko` extension to the end of the name. Kernel module names do not have extensions; their corresponding files do.

**Example 1.1. Listing information about a kernel module with lsmod**

To display information about the **e1000e** module, which is the Intel PRO/1000 network driver, enter the following command as **root**:

```
# modinfo e1000e
filename:       /lib/modules/3.10.0-121.el7.x86_64/kernel/drivers/net/ethernet/intel/e1000e/e1000e.ko
version:        2.3.2-k
license:        GPL
description:    Intel(R) PRO/1000 Network Driver
author:         Intel Corporation,
```

### 1.5. LOADING KERNEL MODULES AT SYSTEM RUNTIME

The optimal way to expand the functionality of the Linux kernel is by loading kernel modules. The following procedure describes how to use the **modprobe** command to find and load a kernel module into the currently running kernel.

**Prerequisites**

- Root permissions.
- The **kmod** package is installed.
- The respective kernel module is not loaded. To ensure this is the case, see **Listing Currently Loaded Modules**.

**Procedure**
1. Select a kernel module you want to load. The modules are located in the /lib/modules/$(uname -r)/kernel/<SUBSYSTEM>/ directory.

2. Load the relevant kernel module:

```bash
# modprobe <MODULE_NAME>
```

**NOTE**

When entering the name of a kernel module, do not append the .ko.xz extension to the end of the name. Kernel module names do not have extensions; their corresponding files do.

3. Optionally, verify the relevant module was loaded:

```bash
$ lsmod | grep <MODULE_NAME>
```

If the module was loaded correctly, this command displays the relevant kernel module. For example:

```bash
$ lsmod | grep serio_raw
serio_raw       16384  0
```

**IMPORTANT**

The changes described in this procedure will not persist after rebooting the system. For information on how to load kernel modules to persist across system reboots, see Loading kernel modules automatically at system boot time.

Additional resources

- For further details about modprobe, see the modprobe(8) manual page.

### 1.6. UNLOADING KERNEL MODULES AT SYSTEM RUNTIME

At times, you find that you need to unload certain kernel modules from the running kernel. The following procedure describes how to use the modprobe command to find and unload a kernel module at system runtime from the currently loaded kernel.

**Prerequisites**

- Root permissions.
- The kmod package is installed.

**Procedure**

1. Execute the lsmod command and select a kernel module you want to unload. If a kernel module has dependencies, unload those prior to unloading the kernel module. For details on identifying modules with dependencies, see Listing Currently Loaded Modules and Kernel module dependencies.
2. Unload the relevant kernel module:

```
# modprobe -r <MODULE_NAME>
```

When entering the name of a kernel module, do not append the `.ko.xz` extension to the end of the name. Kernel module names do not have extensions; their corresponding files do.

**WARNING**

Do not unload kernel modules when they are used by the running system. Doing so can lead to an unstable or non-operational system.

3. Optionally, verify the relevant module was unloaded:

```
$ lsmod | grep <MODULE_NAME>
```

If the module was unloaded successfully, this command does not display any output.

**IMPORTANT**

After finishing this procedure, the kernel modules that are defined to be automatically loaded on boot, will not stay unloaded after rebooting the system. For information on how to counter this outcome, see Preventing kernel modules from being automatically loaded at system boot time.

Additional resources

- For further details about `modprobe`, see the `modprobe(8)` manual page.

### 1.7. LOADING KERNEL MODULES AUTOMATICALLY AT SYSTEM BOOT TIME

The following procedure describes how to configure a kernel module so that it is loaded automatically during the boot process.

**Prerequisites**

- Root permissions.
- The `kmod` package is installed.

**Procedure**

1. Select a kernel module you want to load during the boot process. The modules are located in the `/lib/modules/$(uname -r)/kernel/<SUBSYSTEM>/` directory.

2. Create a configuration file for the module:
NOTE

When entering the name of a kernel module, do not append the .ko.xz extension to the end of the name. Kernel module names do not have extensions; their corresponding files do.

3. Optionally, after reboot, verify the relevant module was loaded:

```
$ lsmod | grep <MODULE_NAME>
```

The example command above should succeed and display the relevant kernel module.

IMPORTANT

The changes described in this procedure will persist after rebooting the system.

Additional resources

- For further details about loading kernel modules during the boot process, see the `modules-load.d(5)` manual page.

1.8. PREVENTING KERNEL MODULES FROM BEING AUTOMATICALLY LOADED AT SYSTEM BOOT TIME

The following procedure describes how to add a kernel module to a denylist so that it will not be automatically loaded during the boot process.

Prerequisites

- Root permissions.
- The kmod package is installed.
- Ensure that a kernel module in a denylist is not vital for your current system configuration.

Procedure

1. Select a kernel module that you want to put in a denylist:

```
$ lsmod
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Used by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fuse</td>
<td>126976</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xt_CHECKSUM</td>
<td>16384</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ipt_MASQUERADE</td>
<td>16384</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uinput</td>
<td>20480</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xt_contrack</td>
<td>16384</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The `lsmod` command displays a list of modules loaded to the currently running kernel.
Alternatively, identify an unloaded kernel module you want to prevent from potentially loading. All kernel modules are located in the `/lib/modules/<KERNEL_VERSION>/kernel/<SUBSYSTEM>/` directory.

2. Create a configuration file for a denylist:

```bash
# vim /etc/modprobe.d/blacklist.conf

# Blacklists <KERNEL_MODULE_1>
blacklist <MODULE_NAME_1>
install <MODULE_NAME_1> /bin/false

# Blacklists <KERNEL_MODULE_2>
blacklist <MODULE_NAME_2>
install <MODULE_NAME_2> /bin/false

# Blacklists <KERNEL_MODULE_n>
blacklist <MODULE_NAME_n>
install <MODULE_NAME_n> /bin/false
...
```

The example shows the contents of the `blacklist.conf` file, edited by the `vim` editor. The `blacklist` line ensures that the relevant kernel module will not be automatically loaded during the boot process. The `blacklist` command, however, does not prevent the module from being loaded as a dependency for another kernel module that is not in a denylist. Therefore the `install` line causes the `/bin/false` to run instead of installing a module.

The lines starting with a hash sign are comments to make the file more readable.

**NOTE**

When entering the name of a kernel module, do not append the `.ko.xz` extension to the end of the name. Kernel module names do not have extensions; their corresponding files do.

3. Create a backup copy of the current initial ramdisk image before rebuilding:

```bash
# cp /boot/initramfs-$(uname -r).img /boot/initramfs-$(uname -r).bak.$(date +%m-%d-%H%M%S).img
```

The command above creates a backup `initramfs` image in case the new version has an unexpected problem.

- Alternatively, create a backup copy of other initial ramdisk image which corresponds to the kernel version for which you want to put kernel modules in a denylist:

```bash
# cp /boot/initramfs-<SOME_VERSION>.img /boot/initramfs-<SOME_VERSION>.img.bak.$(date +%m-%d-%H%M%S)
```

4. Generate a new initial ramdisk image to reflect the changes:

```bash
# dracut -f -v
```
If you are building an initial ramdisk image for a different kernel version than you are currently booted into, specify both target `initramfs` and kernel version:

```
# dracut -f -v /boot/initramfs-<TARGET_VERSION>.img
CORRESPONDING_TARGET_KERNEL_VERSION
```

5. Reboot the system:

```
$ reboot
```

**IMPORTANT**

The changes described in this procedure will take effect and persist after rebooting the system. If you improperly put a key kernel module in a denylist, you can face an unstable or non-operational system.

Additional resources

- For further details concerning the `dracut` utility, refer to the `dracut(8)` manual page.
- For more information on preventing automatic loading of kernel modules at system boot time on Red Hat Enterprise Linux 8 and earlier versions, see How do I prevent a kernel module from loading automatically?

1.9. SIGNING KERNEL MODULES FOR SECURE BOOT

Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 includes support for the UEFI Secure Boot feature, which means that Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 can be installed and run on systems where UEFI Secure Boot is enabled. Note that Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 does not require the use of Secure Boot on UEFI systems.

If Secure Boot is enabled, the UEFI operating system boot loaders, the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel, and all kernel modules must be signed with a private key and authenticated with the corresponding public key. If they are not signed and authenticated, the system will not be allowed to finish the booting process.

The Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 distribution includes:

- Signed boot loaders
- Signed kernels
- Signed kernel modules

In addition, the signed first-stage boot loader and the signed kernel include embedded Red Hat public keys. These signed executable binaries and embedded keys enable Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 to install, boot, and run with the Microsoft UEFI Secure Boot Certification Authority keys that are provided by the UEFI firmware on systems that support UEFI Secure Boot.

**NOTE**

Not all UEFI-based systems include support for Secure Boot.

The information provided in the following sections describes the steps to self-sign privately built kernel modules for use with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 on UEFI-based build systems where Secure Boot is
enabled. These sections also provide an overview of available options for importing your public key into a target system where you want to deploy your kernel modules.

To sign and load kernel modules, you need to:

1. Have the relevant utilities installed on your system.
2. Authenticate a kernel module.
3. Generate a public and private key pair.
4. Import the public key on the target system.
5. Sign the kernel module with the private key.
6. Load the signed kernel module.

1.9.1. Prerequisites

To be able to sign externally built kernel modules, install the utilities listed in the following table on the build system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility</th>
<th>Provided by package</th>
<th>Used on</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>openssl</td>
<td>openssl</td>
<td>Build system</td>
<td>Generates public and private X.509 key pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sign-file</td>
<td>kernel-devel</td>
<td>Build system</td>
<td>Perl script used to sign kernel modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perl</td>
<td>perl</td>
<td>Build system</td>
<td>Perl interpreter used to run the signing script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokutil</td>
<td>mokutil</td>
<td>Target system</td>
<td>Optional utility used to manually enroll the public key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keyctl</td>
<td>keyutils</td>
<td>Target system</td>
<td>Optional utility used to display public keys in the system key ring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE**

The build system, where you build and sign your kernel module, does not need to have UEFI Secure Boot enabled and does not even need to be a UEFI-based system.

1.9.2. Kernel module authentication

In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, when a kernel module is loaded, the module’s signature is checked using the public X.509 keys on the kernel’s system key ring, excluding keys on the kernel’s system black-list key ring. The following sections provide an overview of sources of keys/keyrings, examples of loaded
keys from different sources in the system. Also, the user can see what it takes to authenticate a kernel module.

1.9.2.1. Sources for public keys used to authenticate kernel modules

During boot, the kernel loads X.509 keys into the system key ring or the system black-list key ring from a set of persistent key stores as shown in the table below.

Table 1.2. Sources for system key rings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of X.509 keys</th>
<th>User ability to add keys</th>
<th>UEFI Secure Boot state</th>
<th>Keys loaded during boot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embedded in kernel</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.system_keyring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEFI Secure Boot &quot;db&quot;</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>.system_keyring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEFI Secure Boot &quot;dbx&quot;</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>.system_keyring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded in shim.efi boot loader</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>.system_keyring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Owner Key (MOK) list</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>.system_keyring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the system is not UEFI-based or if UEFI Secure Boot is not enabled, then only the keys that are embedded in the kernel are loaded onto the system key ring. In that case you have no ability to augment that set of keys without rebuilding the kernel.

The system black list key ring is a list of X.509 keys which have been revoked. If your module is signed by a key on the black list then it will fail authentication even if your public key is in the system key ring.

You can display information about the keys on the system key rings using the `keyctl` utility. The following is a shortened example output from a Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 system where UEFI Secure Boot is not enabled.

```
# keyctl list %:.system_keyring
3 keys in keyring:
...asymmetric: Red Hat Enterprise Linux Driver Update Program (key 3): bf57f3e87...
...asymmetric: Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel signing key: 4249689eefc77e95880b...
...asymmetric: Red Hat Enterprise Linux kpatch signing key: 4d38fd864ebe18c5f0b7...
```

The following is a shortened example output from a Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 system where UEFI Secure Boot is enabled.
The above output shows the addition of two keys from the UEFI Secure Boot "db" keys as well as the Red Hat Secure Boot (CA key 1), which is embedded in the `shim.efi` boot loader. You can also look for the kernel console messages that identify the keys with an UEFI Secure Boot related source. These include UEFI Secure Boot db, embedded shim, and MOK list.

```
# dmesg | grep 'EFI: Loaded cert'
[5.160660] EFI: Loaded cert 'Microsoft Windows Production PCA 2011: a9290239...
[5.160674] EFI: Loaded cert 'Microsoft Corporation UEFI CA 2011: 13adbf4309b...
[5.165794] EFI: Loaded cert 'Red Hat Secure Boot (CA key 1): 4016841644ce3a8...
```

### 1.9.2.2. Kernel module authentication requirements

This section explains what conditions have to be met for loading kernel modules on systems with enabled UEFI Secure Boot functionality.

If UEFI Secure Boot is enabled or if the `module.sig_enforce` kernel parameter has been specified, you can only load signed kernel modules that are authenticated using a key on the system key ring. In addition, the public key must not be on the system black list key ring.

If UEFI Secure Boot is disabled and if the `module.sig_enforce` kernel parameter has not been specified, you can load unsigned kernel modules and signed kernel modules without a public key. This is summarized in the table below.

**Table 1.3. Kernel module authentication requirements for loading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module signed</th>
<th>Public key found and signature valid</th>
<th>UEFI Secure Boot state</th>
<th>sig_enforce</th>
<th>Module load</th>
<th>Kernel tainted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsigned</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Succeeds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>Fails</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Fails</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Succeeds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>Fails</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enabled</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Fails</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Not enabled</td>
<td>Succeeds</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.9.3. Generating a public and private X.509 key pair

You need to generate a public and private X.509 key pair to succeed in your efforts of using kernel modules on a Secure Boot-enabled system. You will later use the private key to sign the kernel module. You will also have to add the corresponding public key to the Machine Owner Key (MOK) for Secure Boot to validate the signed module. For instructions to do so, see Section 1.9.4.2, “System administrator manually adding public key to the MOK list”.

Some of the parameters for this key pair generation are best specified with a configuration file.

1. Create a configuration file with parameters for the key pair generation:

```bash
# cat << EOF > configuration_file.config
[ req ]
default_bits = 4096
distinguished_name = req_distinguished_name
prompt = no
string_mask = utf8only
x509_extensions = myexts

[ req_distinguished_name ]
O = Organization
CN = Organization signing key
emailAddress = E-mail address

[ myexts ]
basicConstraints=critical,CA:FALSE
keyUsage=digitalSignature
subjectKeyIdentifier=hash
authorityKeyIdentifier=keyid

EOF
```

2. Create an X.509 public and private key pair as shown in the following example:

```bash
# openssl req -x509 -new -nodes -utf8 -sha256 -days 36500 \
-batch -config configuration_file.config -outform DER \
-out my_signing_key_pub.der \
-keyout my_signing_key.priv
```

The public key will be written to the `my_signing_key_pub.der` file and the private key will be written to the `my_signing_key.priv` file.

3. Enroll your public key on all systems where you want to authenticate and load your kernel module.
   For details, see Section 1.9.4, “Enrolling public key on target system”.
1.9.4. Enrolling public key on target system

When Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 boots on a UEFI-based system with Secure Boot enabled, the kernel loads onto the system key ring all public keys that are in the Secure Boot db key database, but not in the dbx database of revoked keys. The sections below describe different ways of importing a public key on a target system so that the system key ring is able to use the public key to authenticate a kernel module.

1.9.4.1. Factory firmware image including public key

To facilitate authentication of your kernel module on your systems, consider requesting your system vendor to incorporate your public key into the UEFI Secure Boot key database in their factory firmware image.

1.9.4.2. System administrator manually adding public key to the MOK list

The Machine Owner Key (MOK) facility feature can be used to expand the UEFI Secure Boot key database. When Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 boots on a UEFI-enabled system with Secure Boot enabled, the keys on the MOK list are also added to the system key ring in addition to the keys from the key database. The MOK list keys are also stored persistently and securely in the same fashion as the Secure Boot database keys, but these are two separate facilities. The MOK facility is supported by `shim.efi`, `MokManager.efi`, `grubx64.efi`, and the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 `mokutil` utility.

Enrolling a MOK key requires manual interaction by a user at the UEFI system console on each target system. Nevertheless, the MOK facility provides a convenient method for testing newly generated key pairs and testing kernel modules signed with them.

To add your public key to the MOK list:

1. Request the addition of your public key to the MOK list:

   ```
   # mokutil --import my_signing_key_pub.der
   ```

   You will be asked to enter and confirm a password for this MOK enrollment request.

2. Reboot the machine.
   The pending MOK key enrollment request will be noticed by `shim.efi` and it will launch `MokManager.efi` to allow you to complete the enrollment from the UEFI console.

3. Enter the password you previously associated with this request and confirm the enrollment.
   Your public key is added to the MOK list, which is persistent.

Once a key is on the MOK list, it will be automatically propagated to the system key ring on this and subsequent boots when UEFI Secure Boot is enabled.
1.9.5. Signing kernel module with the private key

Assuming you have your kernel module ready:

- Use a Perl script to sign your kernel module with your private key:

  ```
  # perl /usr/src/kernels/$(uname -r)/scripts/sign-file \n  sha256 \n  my_signing_key.priv \n  my_signing_key_pub.der \n  my_module.ko
  ```

**NOTE**

The Perl script requires that you provide both the files that contain your private and the public key as well as the kernel module file that you want to sign.

Your kernel module is in ELF image format and the Perl script computes and appends the signature directly to the ELF image in your kernel module file. The `modinfo` utility can be used to display information about the kernel module’s signature, if it is present. For information on using `modinfo`, see Section 1.4, “Displaying information about a module”.

The appended signature is not contained in an ELF image section and is not a formal part of the ELF image. Therefore, utilities such as `readelf` will not be able to display the signature on your kernel module.

Your kernel module is now ready for loading. Note that your signed kernel module is also loadable on systems where UEFI Secure Boot is disabled or on a non-UEFI system. That means you do not need to provide both a signed and unsigned version of your kernel module.

1.9.6. Loading signed kernel module

Once your public key is enrolled and is in the system key ring, use `mokutil` to add your public key to the MOK list. Then manually load your kernel module with the `modprobe` command.

1. Optionally, verify that your kernel module will not load before you have enrolled your public key. For details on how to list currently loaded kernel modules, see Section 1.3, “Listing currently-loaded modules”.

2. Verify what keys have been added to the system key ring on the current boot:

   ```
   # keyctl list %:.system_keyring
   ```

   Since your public key has not been enrolled yet, it should not be displayed in the output of the command.

3. Request enrollment of your public key:

   ```
   # mokutil --import my_signing_key_pub.der
   ```

4. Reboot, and complete the enrollment at the UEFI console:

   ```
   # reboot
   ```
5. Verify the keys on the system key ring again:
   
   ```bash
   # keyctl list %:.system_keyring
   ```

6. Copy the module into the `/extra/` directory of the kernel you want:
   
   ```bash
   # cp my_module.ko /lib/modules/$(uname -r)/extra/
   ```

7. Update the modular dependency list:
   
   ```bash
   # depmod -a
   ```

8. Load the kernel module and verify that it was successfully loaded:
   
   ```bash
   # modprobe -v my_module
   # lsmod | grep my_module
   ```

   a. Optionally, to load the module on boot, add it to the `/etc/modules-loaded.d/my_module.conf` file:
      
      ```bash
      # echo "my_module" > /etc/modules-load.d/my_module.conf
      ```
CHAPTER 2. WORKING WITH SYSCTL AND KERNEL TUNABLES

2.1. WHAT IS A KERNEL TUNABLE?

Kernel tunables are used to customize the behavior of Red Hat Enterprise Linux at boot, or on demand while the system is running. Some hardware parameters are specified at boot time only and cannot be altered once the system is running, most however, can be altered as required and set permanent for the next boot.

2.2. HOW TO WORK WITH KERNEL TUNABLES

There are three ways to modify kernel tunables.

1. Using the `sysctl` command
2. By manually modifying configuration files in the `/etc/sysctl.d/` directory
3. Through a shell, interacting with the virtual file system mounted at `/proc/sys`

**NOTE**

Not all boot time parameters are under control of the sysfs subsystem, some hardware specific option must be set on the kernel command line, the Kernel Parameters section of this guide addresses those options.

2.2.1. Using the `sysctl` command

The `sysctl` command is used to list, read, and set kernel tunables. It can filter tunables when listing or reading and set tunables temporarily or permanently.

1. Listing variables
   
   ```
   # sysctl -a
   ```

2. Reading variables
   
   ```
   # sysctl kernel.version
   kernel.version = #1 SMP Fri Jan 19 13:19:54 UTC 2018
   ```

3. Writing variables temporarily
   
   ```
   # sysctl <tunable class>.<tunable>=<value>
   ```

4. Writing variables permanently
   
   ```
   # sysctl -w <tunable class>.<tunable>=<value> >> /etc/sysctl.conf
   ```

2.2.2. Modifying files in `/etc/sysctl.d`

To override a default at boot, you can also manually populate files in `/etc/sysctl.d`. 
1. Create a new file in `/etc/sysctl.d`

   ```bash
   # vim /etc/sysctl.d/99-custom.conf
   ```

2. Include the variables you wish to set, one per line, in the following form

   ```
   <tunable class>.<tunable> = <value> +
   <tunable class>.<tunable> = <value>
   ```

3. Save the file

4. Either reboot the machine to make the changes take effect

   or

   Execute `sysctl -p /etc/sysctl.d/99-custom.conf` to apply the changes without rebooting

### 2.3. WHAT TUNABLES CAN BE CONTROLLED?

Tunables are divided into groups by kernel subsystem. A Red Hat Enterprise Linux system has the following classes of tunables:

**Table 2.1. Table of sysctl interfaces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subsystem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abi</td>
<td>Execution domains and personalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crypto</td>
<td>Cryptographic interfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debug</td>
<td>Kernel debugging interfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dev</td>
<td>Device specific information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fs</td>
<td>Global and specific filesystem tunables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kernel</td>
<td>Global kernel tunables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>net</td>
<td>Network tunables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunrpc</td>
<td>Sun Remote Procedure Call (NFS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>user</td>
<td>User Namespace limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vm</td>
<td>Tuning and management of memory, buffer, and cache</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.3.1. Network interface tunables

System administrators are able to adjust the network configuration on a running system through the networking tunables.
Networking tunables are included in the `/proc/sys/net` directory, which contains multiple subdirectories for various networking topics. To adjust the network configuration, system administrators need to modify the files within such subdirectories.

The most frequently used directories are:

1. `/proc/sys/net/core/`
2. `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/`

The `/proc/sys/net/core/` directory contains a variety of settings that control the interaction between the kernel and networking layers. By adjusting some of those tunables, you can improve performance of a system, for example by increasing the size of a receive queue, increasing the maximum connections or the memory dedicated to network interfaces. Note that the performance of a system depends on different aspects according to the individual issues.

The `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/` directory contains additional networking settings, which are useful when preventing attacks on the system or when using the system to act as a router. The directory contains both IP and TCP variables. For detailed explanation of those variables, see `/usr/share/doc/kernel-doc-<version>/Documentation/networking/ip-sysctl.txt`.

Other directories within the `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/` directory cover different aspects of the network stack:

1. `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/conf/` - allows you to configure each system interface in different ways, including the use of default settings for unconfigured devices and settings that override all special configurations
2. `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/neigh/` - contains settings for communicating with a host directly connected to the system and also contains different settings for systems more than one step away
3. `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/route/` - contains specifications that apply to routing with any interfaces on the system

This list of network tunables is relevant to IPv4 interfaces and are accessible from the `/proc/sys/net/ipv4/{all,<interface_name>}/` directory.

Description of the following parameters have been adopted from the kernel documentation sites.[1]

**log_martians**

Log packets with impossible addresses to kernel log.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enabled if one or more of `conf/{all,interface}/log_martians` is set to TRUE

**Further Resources**

- What is the kernel parameter net.ipv4.conf.all.log_martians for?
- Why do I see "martian source" logs in the messages file?

**accept_redirects**
Accept ICMP redirect messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

`accept_redirects` for the interface is enabled under the following conditions:

- Both `conf/{all,interface}/accept_redirects` are TRUE (when forwarding for the interface is enabled)
- At least one of `conf/{all,interface}/accept_redirects` is TRUE (forwarding for the interface is disabled)

For more information refer to How to enable or disable ICMP redirects

**forwarding**

Enable IP forwarding on an interface.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Further Resources**

- Turning on Packet Forwarding and Nonlocal Binding

**mc_forwarding**

Do multicast routing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Read only value
- A multicast routing daemon is required.
- `conf/all/mc_forwarding` must also be set to TRUE to enable multicast routing for the interface

**Further Resources**

- For an explanation of the read only behavior, see Why system reports "permission denied on key" while setting the kernel parameter "net.ipv4.conf.all.mc_forwarding"?

**medium_id**

Arbitrary value used to differentiate the devices by the medium they are attached to.
**Notes**

- Two devices on the same medium can have different id values when the broadcast packets are received only on one of them.
- The default value 0 means that the device is the only interface to its medium.
- Value of -1 means that medium is not known.
- Currently, it is used to change the proxy_arp behavior:
- The proxy_arp feature is enabled for packets forwarded between two devices attached to different media.

**Further Resources** - For examples, see Using the "medium_id" feature in Linux 2.2 and 2.4

---

**proxy_arp**

Do proxy arp.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**proxy_arp** for the interface is enabled if at least one of `conf/{all,interface}/proxy_arp` is set to TRUE, otherwise it is disabled.

---

**proxy_arp_pvlan**

Private VLAN proxy arp.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allow proxy arp replies back to the same interface, to support features like RFC 3069.

---

**shared_media**

Send(router) or accept(host) RFC1620 shared media redirects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
• Overrides secure_redirects.

• shared_media for the interface is enabled if at least one of conf/{all,interface}/shared_media is set to TRUE

**secure_redirects**
Accept ICMP redirect messages only to gateways listed in the interface’s current gateway list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
- Even if disabled, RFC1122 redirect rules still apply.
- Overridden by shared_media.
- secure_redirects for the interface is enabled if at least one of conf/{all,interface}/secure_redirects is set to TRUE

**send_redirects**
Send redirects, if router.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
send_redirects for the interface is enabled if at least one of conf/{all,interface}/send_redirects is set to TRUE

**bootp_relay**
Accept packets with source address 0.b.c.d destined not to this host as local ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
- A BOOTP daemon must be enabled to manage these packets
- conf/all/bootp_relay must also be set to TRUE to enable BOOTP relay for the interface
- Not implemented, see DHCP Relay Agent in the Red Hat Enterprise Linux Networking Guide

**accept_source_route**
Accept packets with SRR option.
### Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes

- **conf/all/accept_source_route** must also be set to TRUE to accept packets with SRR option on the interface

### accept_local

Accept packets with local source addresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes

- In combination with suitable routing, this can be used to direct packets between two local interfaces over the wire and have them accepted properly.
- **rp_filter** must be set to a non-zero value in order for accept_local to have an effect.

### route_localnet

Do not consider loopback addresses as martian source or destination while routing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes

- This enables the use of 127/8 for local routing purposes.

### rp_filter

Enable source Validation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No source validation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strict mode as defined in RFC3704 Strict Reverse Path</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Loose mode as defined in RFC3704 Loose Reverse Path Value Effect
2 Loose mode as defined in RFC3704 Loose Reverse Path

Notes

- Current recommended practice in RFC3704 is to enable strict mode to prevent IP spoofing from DDos attacks.
- If using asymmetric routing or other complicated routing, then loose mode is recommended.
- The highest value from conf/{all,interface}/rp_filter is used when doing source validation on the {interface}

arp_filter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>(default) The kernel can respond to arp requests with addresses from other interfaces. It usually makes sense, because it increases the chance of successful communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allows you to have multiple network interfaces on the same subnet, and have the ARPs for each interface be answered based on whether or not the kernel would route a packet from the ARP’d IP out that interface (therefore you must use source based routing for this to work). In other words it allows control of cards (usually 1) that respond to an arp request.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note

- IP addresses are owned by the complete host on Linux, not by particular interfaces. Only for more complex setups like load-balancing, does this behavior cause problems.
- arp_filter for the interface is enabled if at least one of conf/{all,interface}/arp_filter is set to TRUE

arp_announce

Define different restriction levels for announcing the local source IP address from IP packets in ARP requests sent on interface

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>(default) Use any local address, configured on any interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Try to avoid local addresses that are not in the target’s subnet for this interface. This mode is useful when target hosts reachable via this interface require the source IP address in ARP requests to be part of their logical network configured on the receiving interface. When we generate the request we check all our subnets that include the target IP and preserve the source address if it is from such subnet. If there is no such subnet we select source address according to the rules for level 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Always use the best local address for this target. In this mode we ignore the source address in the IP packet and try to select local address that we prefer for talks with the target host. Such local address is selected by looking for primary IP addresses on all our subnets on the outgoing interface that include the target IP address. If no suitable local address is found we select the first local address we have on the outgoing interface or on all other interfaces, with the hope we receive reply for our request and even sometimes no matter the source IP address we announce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

- The highest value from `conf/{all,interface}/arp_announce` is used.
- Increasing the restriction level gives more chance for receiving answer from the resolved target while decreasing the level announces more valid sender’s information.

### arp_ignore

Define different modes for sending replies in response to received ARP requests that resolve local target IP addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>(default): reply for any local target IP address, configured on any interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>reply only if the target IP address is local address configured on the incoming interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>reply only if the target IP address is local address configured on the incoming interface and both with the sender’s IP address are part from same subnet on this interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>do not reply for local addresses configured with scope host, only resolutions for global and link addresses are replied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>reserved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
do not reply for all local addresses. The max value from conf/{all,interface}/arp_ignore is used when ARP request is received on the {interface}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>do not reply for all local addresses. The max value from conf/{all,interface}/arp_ignore is used when ARP request is received on the {interface}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

**arp_notify**

Define mode for notification of address and device changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>do nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generate gratuitous arp requests when device is brought up or hardware address changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

**arp_accept**

Define behavior for gratuitous ARP frames who’s IP is not already present in the ARP table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>do not create new entries in the ARP table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>create new entries in the ARP table.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

Both replies and requests type gratuitous arp trigger the ARP table to be updated, if this setting is on. If the ARP table already contains the IP address of the gratuitous arp frame, the arp table is updated regardless if this setting is on or off.

**app_solicit**

The maximum number of probes to send to the user space ARP daemon via netlink before dropping back to multicast probes (see mcast_solicit).
### disable_policy

Disable IPSEC policy (SPD) for this interface

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### disable_xfrm

Disable IPSEC encryption on this interface, whatever the policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolean</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### igmpv2_unsolicited_report_interval

The interval in milliseconds in which the next unsolicited IGMPv1 or IGMPv2 report retransmit takes place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

Milliseconds

### igmpv3_unsolicited_report_interval

The interval in milliseconds in which the next unsolicited IGMPv3 report retransmit takes place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

Milliseconds
**tag**

Allows you to write a number, which can be used as required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**xfrm4_gc_thresh**

The threshold at which we start garbage collecting for IPv4 destination cache entries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

At twice this value the system refuses new allocations.

---

### 2.3.2. Global kernel tunables

System administrators are able to configure and monitor general settings on a running system through the global kernel tunables.

Global kernel tunables are included in the `/proc/sys/kernel/` directory either directly as named control files or grouped in further subdirectories for various configuration topics. To adjust the global kernel tunables, system administrators need to modify the control files.

Descriptions of the following parameters have been adopted from the kernel documentation sites.[2]

**dmesg_restrict**

Indicates whether unprivileged users are prevented from using the `dmesg` command to view messages from the kernel’s log buffer.

For further information, see [Kernel sysctl documentation](#).

**core_pattern**

Specifies a core dumpfile pattern name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Max length</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>128 characters</td>
<td>&quot;core&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information, see [Kernel sysctl documentation](#).

**hardlockup_panic**

Controls the kernel panic when a hard lockup is detected.
### Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>kernel does not panic on hard lockup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>kernel panics on hard lockup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to panic, the system needs to detect a hard lockup first. The detection is controlled by the `nmi_watchdog` parameter.

**Further Resources**

- Kernel `sysctl` documentation
- Softlockup detector and hardlockup detector

---

### Softlockup Panic

Controls the kernel panic when a soft lockup is detected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>kernel does not panic on soft lockup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>kernel panics on soft lockup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By default, on RHEL7 this value is 0.

For more information about `softlockup_panic`, see kernel parameters.

---

**kptr_restrict**

Indicates whether restrictions are placed on exposing kernel addresses via `/proc` and other interfaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>hashes the kernel address before printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>replaces printed kernel pointers with 0’s under certain conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>replaces printed kernel pointers with 0’s unconditionally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To learn more, see Kernel sysctl documentation.

**nmi_watchdog**

Controls the hard lockup detector on x86 systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Default</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>disables the lockup detector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>enables the lockup detector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hard lockup detector monitors each CPU for its ability to respond to interrupts.

For more details, see Kernel sysctl documentation.

**watchdog_thresh**

Controls frequency of watchdog hrtimer, NMI events, and soft/hard lockup thresholds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Default threshold</th>
<th>Soft lockup threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 seconds</td>
<td>$2 \times \text{watchdog_thresh}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Setting this tunable to zero disables lockup detection altogether.

For more info, consult Kernel sysctl documentation.

**panic, panic_on_oops, panic_on_stackoverflow, panic_on_unrecovered_nmi, panic_on_warn, panic_on_rcu_stall, hung_task_panic**

These tunables specify under what circumstances the kernel should panic.

To see more details about a group of panic parameters, see Kernel sysctl documentation.

**printk, printk\_delay, printk\_ratelimit, printk\_ratelimit\_burst, printk\_devkmsg**

These tunables control logging or printing of kernel error messages.

For more details about a group of printk parameters, see Kernel sysctl documentation.

**shmall, shmmax, shm\_rmid\_forced**

These tunables control limits for shared memory.

For more information about a group of shm parameters, see Kernel sysctl documentation.

**threads-max**

Controls the maximum number of threads created by the fork() system call.
The **threads-max** value is checked against the available RAM pages. If the thread structures occupy too much of the available RAM pages, **threads-max** is reduced accordingly.

For more details, see [Kernel sysctl documentation](https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/).

**pid_max**

PID allocation wrap value.

To see more information, refer to [Kernel sysctl documentation](https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/).

**numa_balancing**

This parameter enables or disables automatic NUMA memory balancing. On NUMA machines, there is a performance penalty if remote memory is accessed by a CPU.

For more details, see [Kernel sysctl documentation](https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/).

**numa_balancing_scan_period_min_ms, numa_balancing_scan_delay_ms, numa_balancing_scan_period_max_ms, numa_balancing_scan_size_mb**

These tunables detect if pages are properly placed or if the data should be migrated to a memory node local to where the task is running.

For more details about a group of **numa_balancing_scan** parameters, see [Kernel sysctl documentation](https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/).

---


CHAPTER 3. LISTING OF KERNEL PARAMETERS AND VALUES

3.1. KERNEL COMMAND-LINE PARAMETERS

Kernel command-line parameters, also known as kernel arguments, are used to customize the behavior of Red Hat Enterprise Linux at boot time only.

3.1.1. Setting kernel command-line parameters

This section explains how to change a kernel command-line parameter on AMD64 and Intel 64 systems and IBM Power Systems servers using the GRUB2 boot loader, and on IBM Z using zipl.

Kernel command-line parameters are saved in the boot/grub/grub.cfg configuration file, which is generated by the GRUB2 boot loader. Do not edit this configuration file. Changes to this file are only made by configuration scripts.

Changing kernel command-line parameters in GRUB2 for AMD64 and Intel 64 systems and IBM Power Systems Hardware.

1. Open the /etc/default/grub configuration file as root using a plain text editor such as vim or Gedit.

2. In this file, locate the line beginning with GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX similar to the following:

   GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX="rd.lvm.lv=rhel/swap crashkernel=auto rd.lvm.lv=rhel/root rhgb quiet"

3. Change the value of the required kernel command-line parameter. Then, save the file and exit the editor.

4. Regenerate the GRUB2 configuration using the edited default file. If your system uses BIOS firmware, execute the following command:

   # grub2-mkconfig -o /boot/grub2/grub.cfg

   On a system with UEFI firmware, execute the following instead:

   # grub2-mkconfig -o /boot/efi/EFI/redhat/grub.cfg

After finishing the procedure above, the boot loader is reconfigured, and the kernel command-line parameter that you have specified in its configuration file is applied after the next reboot.

Changing kernel command-line parameters in zipl for IBM Z Hardware

1. Open the /etc/zipl.conf configuration file as root using a plain text editor such as vim or Gedit.

2. In this file, locate the parameters= section, and edit the required parameter, or add it if not present. Then, save the file and exit the editor.

3. Regenerate the zipl configuration:

   # zipl
NOTE

Executing only the `zipl` command with no additional options uses default values. See the `zipl(8)` man page for information about available options.

After finishing the procedure above, the boot loader is reconfigured, and the kernel command-line parameter that you have specified in its configuration file is applied after the next reboot.

### 3.1.2. What kernel command-line parameters can be controlled


#### 3.1.2.1. Hardware specific kernel command-line parameters

`pci=option[,option...]`

Specify behavior of the PCI hardware subsystem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>earlydump</td>
<td>[X86] Dump the PCI configuration space before the kernel changes anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off</td>
<td>[X86] Do not probe for the PCI bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noaer</td>
<td>[PCIE] If the PCIEAER kernel parameter is enabled, this kernel boot option can be used to disable the use of PCIE advanced error reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noacpi</td>
<td>[X86] Do not use the Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI) for Interrupt Request (IRQ) routing or for PCI scanning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bfsort</td>
<td>Sort PCI devices into breadth-first order. This sorting is done to get a device order compatible with older (&lt; 2.4) kernels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobfsort</td>
<td>Do not sort PCI devices into breadth-first order.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional PCI options are documented in the on disk documentation found in the `kernel-doc-<version>.noarch` package. Where `<version>` needs to be replaced with the corresponding kernel version.

`acpi=option`

Specify behavior of the Advanced Configuration and Power Interface

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acpi=off</td>
<td>Disable ACPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi=ht</td>
<td>Use ACPI boot table parsing, but do not enable ACPI interpreter. This disables any ACPI functionality that is not required for Hyper Threading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi=force</td>
<td>Require the ACPI subsystem to be enabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi=strict</td>
<td>Make the ACPI layer be less tolerant of platforms that are not fully compliant with the ACPI specification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi_sci=&lt;value&gt;</td>
<td>Set up ACPI SCI interrupt, where &lt;value&gt; is one of edge,level,high,low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi=noirq</td>
<td>Do not use ACPI for IRQ routing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acpi=nocmcff</td>
<td>Disable firmware first (FF) mode for corrected errors. This disables parsing the HEST CMC error source to check if firmware has set the FF flag. This can result in duplicate corrected error reports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4. KERNEL FEATURES

This chapter explains the purpose and use of kernel features that enable many user space tools and includes resources for further investigation of those tools.

4.1. CONTROL GROUPS

4.1.1. What is a control group?

**NOTE**
Control Group Namespaces are a Technology Preview in Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7.5

Linux Control Groups (cgroups) enable limits on the use of system hardware, ensuring that an individual process running inside a cgroup only utilizes as much as has been allowed in the cgroups configuration.

Control Groups restrict the volume of usage on a resource that has been enabled by a namespace. For example, the network namespace allows a process to access a particular network card, the cgroup ensures that the process does not exceed 50% usage of that card, ensuring bandwidth is available for other processes.

Control Group Namespaces provide a virtualized view of individual cgroups through the /proc/self/ns/cgroup interface.

The purpose is to prevent leakage of privileged data from the global namespaces to the cgroup and to enable other features, such as container migration.

Because it is now much easier to associate a container with a single cgroup, containers have a much more coherent cgroup view, it also enables tasks inside the container to have a virtualized view of the cgroup it belongs to.

4.1.2. What is a namespace?

Namespaces are a kernel feature that allow a virtual view of isolated system resources. By isolating a process from system resources, you can specify and control what a process is able to interact with. Namespaces are an essential part of Control Groups.

4.1.3. Supported namespaces

The following namespaces are supported from Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7.5 and later

- **Mount**
  - The mount namespace isolates file system mount points, enabling each process to have a distinct filesystem space within which to operate.

- **UTS**
  - Hostname and NIS domain name

- **IPC**
  - System V IPC, POSIX message queues
- PID
  - Process IDs
- Network
  - Network devices, stacks, ports, etc.
- User
  - User and group IDs
- Control Groups
  - Isolates cgroups

**NOTE**

Usage of Control Groups is documented in the [Resource Management Guide](https://www.redhat.com/)

### 4.2. KERNEL SOURCE CHECKER

The Linux Kernel Module Source Checker (ksc) is a tool to check for non whitelist symbols in a given kernel module. Red Hat Partners can also use the tool to request review of a symbol for whitelist inclusion, by filing a bug in Red Hat bugzilla database.

#### 4.2.1. Usage

The tool accepts the path to a module with the "-k" option

```bash
# ksc -k e1000e.ko
Checking against architecture x86_64
Total symbol usage: 165 Total Non white list symbol usage: 74
# ksc -k /path/to/module
```

Output is saved in `$HOME/ksc-result.txt`. If review of the symbols for whitelist addition is requested, then the usage description for each non-whitelisted symbol must be added to the `ksc-result.txt` file. The request bug can then be filed by running `ksc` with the "-p" option.

**NOTE**

KSC currently does not support `xz` compression The `ksc` tool is unable to process the `xz` compression method and reports the following error:

```
Invalid architecture, (Only kernel object files are supported)
```

Until this limitation is resolved, system administrators need to manually uncompress any third party modules using `xz` compression, before running the `ksc` tool.

### 4.3. DIRECT ACCESS FOR FILES (DAX)

Direct Access for files, known as ‘file system dax’, or ‘fs dax’, enables applications to read and write data on a dax-capable storage device without using the page cache to buffer access to the device.
This functionality is available when using the ‘ext4’ or ‘xfs’ file system, and is enabled either by mounting the file system with `-o dax` or by adding `dax` to the options section for the mount entry in `/etc/fstab`.

Further information, including code examples can be found in the `kernel-doc` package and is stored at `/usr/share/doc/kernel-doc-<version>/Documentation/filesystems/dax.txt` where `<version>` is the corresponding kernel version number.

### 4.4. MEMORY PROTECTION KEYS FOR USERSPACE (ALSO KNOWN AS PKU, OR PKEYS)

Memory Protection Keys provide a mechanism for enforcing page-based protections, but without requiring modification of the page tables when an application changes protection domains. It works by dedicating 4 previously ignored bits in each page table entry to a “protection key”, giving 16 possible keys.

Memory Protection Keys are hardware feature of some Intel CPU chipsets. To determine if your processor supports this feature, check for the presence of `pku` in `/proc/cpuinfo`:

```bash
$ grep pku /proc/cpuinfo
```

To support this feature, the CPUs provide a new user-accessible register (PKRU) with two separate bits (Access Disable and Write Disable) for each key. Two new instructions (RDPKRU and WRPKRU) exist for reading and writing to the new register.

Further documentation, including programming examples can be found in `/usr/share/doc/kernel-doc-*/Documentation/x86/protection-keys.txt` which is provided by the `kernel-doc` package.

### 4.5. KERNEL ADRESS SPACE LAYOUT RANDOMIZATION

Kernel Adress Space Layout Randomization (KASLR) consists of two parts which work together to enhance the security of the Linux kernel:

- kernel text KASLR
- memory management KASLR

The physical address and virtual address of kernel text itself are randomized to a different position separately. The physical address of the kernel can be anywhere under 64TB, while the virtual address of the kernel is restricted between `[0xffffffff80000000, 0xffffffffc0000000]`, the 1GB space.

Memory management KASLR has three sections whose starting address is randomized in a specific area. KASLR can thus prevent inserting and redirecting the execution of the kernel to a malicious code if this code relies on knowing where symbols of interest are located in the kernel address space.

Memory management KASLR sections are:

- direct mapping section
- vmalloc section
- vmemmap section

KASLR code is now compiled into the Linux kernel, and it is enabled by default. To disable it explicitly, add the `nokaslr` kernel option to the kernel command line.
4.6. ADVANCED ERROR REPORTING (AER)

4.6.1. What is AER

**Advanced Error Reporting (AER)** is a kernel feature that provides enhanced error reporting for **Peripheral Component Interconnect Express (PCIe)** devices. The **AER** kernel driver attaches root ports which support **PCIe AER** capability in order to:

- Gather the comprehensive error information if errors occurred
- Report error to the users
- Perform error recovery actions

**Example 4.1. Example AER output**

```plaintext
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: AER: Corrected error received: id=ae00
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: AER: Multiple Corrected error received: id=ae00
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: PCIe Bus Error: severity=Corrected, type=Data Link Layer, id=0000(Receiver ID)
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: device [8086:2030] error status/mask=000000c0/00002000
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0:   device [8086:2030] error [ 6] Bad TLP
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0:   device [8086:2030] error [ 7] Bad DLLP
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: AER: Multiple Corrected error received: id=ae00
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: PCIe Bus Error: severity=Corrected, type=Data Link Layer, id=0000(Receiver ID)
Feb  5 15:41:33 hostname kernel: pcieport 10003:00:00.0: device [8086:2030] error status/mask=00000040/00002000
```

When **AER** captures an error, it sends an error message to the console. If the error is repairable, the console output is a warning.

4.6.2. Collecting and displaying AER messages

In order to collect and display AER messages, use the **rasdaemon** program.

**Procedure**

1. Install the **rasdaemon** package.
   ```
   ~]# yum install rasdaemon
   ```

2. Enable and start the **rasdaemon** service.
   ```
   ~]# systemctl enable --now rasdaemon
   ```

3. Run the **ras-mc-ctl** command that displays a summary of the logged errors (the **--summary** option) or displays the errors stored at the error database (the **--errors** option).
Additional resources

- For more information on the rasdaemon service, see the rasdaemon(8) manual page.
- For more information on the ras-mc-ctl service, see the ras-mc-ctl(8) manual page.
CHAPTER 5. MANUALLY UPGRADING THE KERNEL

The Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel is custom-built by the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel team to ensure its integrity and compatibility with supported hardware. Before Red Hat releases a kernel, it must first pass a rigorous set of quality assurance tests.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernels are packaged in the RPM format so that they are easy to upgrade and verify using the Yum or PackageKit package managers. PackageKit automatically queries the Red Hat Content Delivery Network servers and informs you of packages with available updates, including kernel packages.

This chapter is therefore only useful for users who need to manually update a kernel package using the rpm command instead of yum.

WARNING
Whenever possible, use either the Yum or PackageKit package manager to install a new kernel because they always install a new kernel instead of replacing the current one, which could potentially leave your system unable to boot.

WARNING
Custom kernels are not supported by Red Hat. However, guidance can be obtained from the solution article.

For more information on installing kernel packages with yum, see the relevant section in the System Administrator’s Guide.

For information on Red Hat Content Delivery Network, see the relevant section in the System Administrator’s Guide.

5.1. OVERVIEW OF KERNEL PACKAGES

Red Hat Enterprise Linux contains the following kernel packages:

- **kernel** – Contains the kernel for single-core, multi-core, and multi-processor systems.
- **kernel-debug** – Contains a kernel with numerous debugging options enabled for kernel diagnosis, at the expense of reduced performance.
- **kernel-devel** – Contains the kernel headers and makefiles sufficient to build modules against the kernel package.
- **kernel-debug-devel** – Contains the development version of the kernel with numerous debugging options enabled for kernel diagnosis, at the expense of reduced performance.
• **kernel-doc** – Documentation files from the kernel source. Various portions of the Linux kernel and the device drivers shipped with it are documented in these files. Installation of this package provides a reference to the options that can be passed to Linux kernel modules at load time. By default, these files are placed in the `/usr/share/doc/kernel-doc-kernel_version/` directory.

• **kernel-headers** – Includes the C header files that specify the interface between the Linux kernel and user-space libraries and programs. The header files define structures and constants that are needed for building most standard programs.

• **linux-firmware** – Contains all of the firmware files that are required by various devices to operate.

• **perf** – This package contains the `perf` tool, which enables performance monitoring of the Linux kernel.

• **kernel-abi-whitelists** – Contains information pertaining to the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel ABI, including a lists of kernel symbols that are needed by external Linux kernel modules and a `yum` plug-in to aid enforcement.

• **kernel-tools** – Contains tools for manipulating the Linux kernel and supporting documentation.

### 5.2. PREPARING TO UPGRADE

Before upgrading the kernel, it is recommended that you take some precautionary steps.

First, ensure that working boot media exists for the system in case a problem occurs. If the boot loader is not configured properly to boot the new kernel, you can use this media to boot into Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

USB media often comes in the form of flash devices sometimes called *pen drives*, *thumb disks*, or *keys*, or as an externally-connected hard disk device. Almost all media of this type is formatted as a *VFAT* file system. You can create bootable USB media on media formatted as *ext2*, *ext3*, *ext4*, or *VFAT*.

You can transfer a distribution image file or a minimal boot media image file to USB media. Make sure that sufficient free space is available on the device. Around 4 GB is required for a distribution DVD image, around 700 MB for a distribution CD image, or around 10 MB for a minimal boot media image.

You must have a copy of the `boot.iso` file from a Red Hat Enterprise Linux installation DVD, or installation CD-ROM #1, and you need a USB storage device formatted with the *VFAT* file system and around 16 MB of free space.

For more information on using USB storage devices, review [How to format a USB key](#) and [How to manually mount a USB flash drive in a non-graphical environment](#) solution articles.

The following procedure does not affect existing files on the USB storage device unless they have the same path names as the files that you copy onto it. To create USB boot media, perform the following commands as the `root` user:

1. Install the `syslinux` package if it is not installed on your system. To do so, as root, run the `yum install syslinux` command.

2. Install the `SYSLINUX` bootloader on the USB storage device:

   ```
   # syslinux /dev/sdX1
   ```

   ...where `sdX` is the device name.
3. Create mount points for `boot.iso` and the USB storage device:
   ```
   # mkdir /mnt/isoboot /mnt/diskboot
   ```

4. Mount `boot.iso`:
   ```
   # mount -o loop boot.iso /mnt/isoboot
   ```

5. Mount the USB storage device:
   ```
   # mount /dev/sdX1 /mnt/diskboot
   ```

6. Copy the `ISOLINUX` files from the `boot.iso` to the USB storage device:
   ```
   # cp /mnt/isoboot/isolinux/* /mnt/diskboot
   ```

7. Use the `isolinux.cfg` file from `boot.iso` as the `syslinux.cfg` file for the USB device:
   ```
   # grep -v local /mnt/isoboot/isolinux/isolinux.cfg > /mnt/diskboot/syslinux.cfg
   ```

8. Unmount `boot.iso` and the USB storage device:
   ```
   # umount /mnt/isoboot /mnt/diskboot
   ```

9. Reboot the machine with the boot media and verify that you are able to boot with it before continuing.

Alternatively, on systems with a floppy drive, you can create a boot diskette by installing the `mkbootdisk` package and running the `mkbootdisk` command as `root`. See `man mkbootdisk` man page after installing the package for usage information.

To determine which kernel packages are installed, execute the command `yum list installed "kernel-**"` at a shell prompt. The output comprises some or all of the following packages, depending on the system’s architecture, and the version numbers might differ:

```
# yum list installed "kernel-**"
kernel.x86_64 3.10.0-54.0.1.el7  @rhel7/7.0
kernel-devel.x86_64 3.10.0-54.0.1.el7  @rhel7
kernel-headers.x86_64 3.10.0-54.0.1.el7  @rhel7/7.0
```

From the output, determine which packages need to be downloaded for the kernel upgrade. For a single processor system, the only required package is the `kernel` package. See Section 5.1, “Overview of kernel packages” for descriptions of the different packages.

### 5.3. DOWNLOADING THE UPGRADED KERNEL

There are several ways to determine if an updated kernel is available for the system.

- Security Errata – See Customer Portal for information on security errata, including kernel upgrades that fix security issues.

- The Red Hat Content Delivery Network – For a system subscribed to the Red Hat Content Delivery Network, the `yum` package manager can download the latest kernel and upgrade the
kernel on the system. The Dracut utility creates an initial RAM file system image if needed, and configure the boot loader to boot the new kernel. For more information on installing packages from the Red Hat Content Delivery Network, see the relevant section of the System Administrator’s Guide. For more information on subscribing a system to the Red Hat Content Delivery Network, see the relevant section of the System Administrator’s Guide.

If yum was used to download and install the updated kernel from the Red Hat Network, follow the instructions in Section 5.5, “Verifying the initial RAM file system image” and Section 5.6, “Verifying the boot loader” only, do not change the kernel to boot by default. Red Hat Network automatically changes the default kernel to the latest version. To install the kernel manually, continue to Section 5.4, “Performing the upgrade”.

5.4. PERFORMING THE UPGRADE

After retrieving all of the necessary packages, it is time to upgrade the existing kernel.

IMPORTANT

It is strongly recommended that you keep the old kernel in case there are problems with the new kernel.

At a shell prompt, change to the directory that contains the kernel RPM packages. Use -i argument with the rpm command to keep the old kernel. Do not use the -U option, since it overwrites the currently installed kernel, which creates boot loader problems. For example:

```
# rpm -ivh kernel-kernel_version.arch.rpm
```

The next step is to verify that the initial RAM file system image has been created. See Section 5.5, “Verifying the initial RAM file system image” for details.

5.5. VERIFYING THE INITIAL RAM FILE SYSTEM IMAGE

The job of the initial RAM file system image is to preload the block device modules, such as for IDE, SCSI or RAID, so that the root file system, on which those modules normally reside, can then be accessed and mounted. On Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 systems, whenever a new kernel is installed using either the Yum, PackageKit, or RPM package manager, the Dracut utility is always called by the installation scripts to create an initramfs (initial RAM file system image).

If you make changes to the kernel attributes by modifying the /etc/sysctl.conf file or another sysctl configuration file, and if the changed settings are used early in the boot process, then rebuilding the Initial RAM File System Image by running the dracut -f command might be necessary. An example is if you have made changes related to networking and are booting from network-attached storage.

On all architectures other than IBM eServer System i (see the section called “Verifying the initial RAM file system image and kernel on IBM eServer System i”), you can create an initramfs by running the dracut command. However, you usually do not need to create an initramfs manually: this step is automatically performed if the kernel and its associated packages are installed or upgraded from RPM packages distributed by Red Hat.

You can verify that an initramfs corresponding to your current kernel version exists and is specified correctly in the grub.cfg configuration file by following this procedure:

Verifying the initial RAM file system image
1. As root, list the contents in the /boot directory and find the kernel (vmlinuz-kernel_version) and initramfs-kernel_version with the latest (most recent) version number:

Example 5.1. Ensuring that the kernel and initramfs versions match

```
# ls /boot
config-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64
config-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64
efi
grub
grub2
initramfs-0-rescue-07f43f20a54c4ce8ada8b70d33fd001c.img
initramfs-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64.img
initramfs-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64_kdump.img
initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64.img
initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64_kdump.img
initrd-plymouth.img
symvers-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64.gz
symvers-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64.gz
System.map-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64
System.map-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64
vmlinuz-0-rescue-07f43f20a54c4ce8ada8b70d33fd001c
vmlinuz-3.10.0-67.el7.x86_64
vmlinuz-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64
```

Example 5.1, “Ensuring that the kernel and initramfs versions match” shows that:

- we have three kernels installed (or, more correctly, three kernel files are present in the /boot directory),
- the latest kernel is vmlinuz-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64, and
- an initramfs file matching our kernel version, initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64_kdump.img, also exists.

IMPORTANT

In the /boot directory you might find several initramfs-kernel_version_kdump.img files. These are special files created by the Kdump mechanism for kernel debugging purposes, are not used to boot the system, and can safely be ignored. For more information on kdump, see the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 Kernel Crash Dump Guide.

2. If your initramfs-kernel_version file does not match the version of the latest kernel in the /boot directory, or, in certain other situations, you might need to generate an initramfs file with the Dracut utility. Simply invoking dracut as root without options causes it to generate an initramfs file in /boot for the latest kernel present in that directory:

```
# dracut
```

You must use the -f, --force option if you want dracut to overwrite an existing initramfs (for example, if your initramfs has become corrupt). Otherwise dracut refuses to overwrite the existing initramfs file:
# dracut

Does not override existing initramfs (/boot/initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64.img) without -force

You can create an initramfs in the current directory by calling `dracut initramfs_name kernel_version`:

```
# dracut "initramfs-$(uname -r).img" $(uname -r)
```

If you need to specify specific kernel modules to be preloaded, add the names of those modules (minus any file name suffixes such as .ko) inside the parentheses of the `add_dracutmodules+="module more_modules"` directive of the `/etc/dracut.conf` configuration file. You can list the file contents of an initramfs image file created by dracut by using the `lsinitrd initramfs_file` command:

```
# lsinitrd /boot/initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64.img
Image: /boot/initramfs-3.10.0-78.el7.x86_64.img: 11M
```

See `man dracut` and `man dracut.conf` for more information on options and usage.

3. Examine the `/boot/grub2/grub.cfg` configuration file to ensure that an `initramfs-kernel_version.img` file exists for the kernel version you are booting. For example:

```
# grep initramfs /boot/grub2/grub.cfg
initrd16 /initramfs-3.10.0-123.el7.x86_64.img
initrd16 /initramfs-0-rescue-6d547dbfd01c46f6a4c1baa8c4743f57.img
```

See Section 5.6, “Verifying the boot loader” for more information.

### Verifying the initial RAM file system image and kernel on IBM eServer System i

On IBM eServer System i machines, the initial RAM file system and kernel files are combined into a single file, which is created with the `addRamDisk` command. This step is performed automatically if the kernel and its associated packages are installed or upgraded from the RPM packages distributed by Red Hat thus, it does not need to be executed manually. To verify that it was created, run the following command as root to make sure the `/boot/vmlinitrd-kernel_version` file already exists:

```
# ls -l /boot/
```

The kernel_version needs to match the version of the kernel just installed.

### Reversing the changes made to the initial RAM file system image
In some cases, for example, if you misconfigure the system and it no longer boots, you need to reverse the changes made to the Initial RAM File System Image by following this procedure:

**Reversing Changes Made to the Initial RAM File System Image**

1. Reboot the system choosing the rescue kernel in the GRUB menu.
2. Change the incorrect setting that caused the *initramfs* to malfunction.
3. Recreate the *initramfs* with the correct settings by running the following command as root:

   ```bash
   # dracut --kver kernel_version --force
   ```

   The above procedure might be useful if, for example, you incorrectly set the *vm.nr_hugepages* in the *sysctl.conf* file. Because the *sysctl.conf* file is included in *initramfs*, the new *vm.nr_hugepages* setting gets applied in *initramfs* and causes rebuilding of the *initramfs*. However, because the setting is incorrect, the new *initramfs* is broken and the newly built kernel does not boot, which necessitates correcting the setting using the above procedure.

**Listing the contents of the initial RAM file system image**

To list the files that are included in the *initramfs*, run the following command as root:

```bash
# lsinitrd
```

To only list files in the */etc* directory, use the following command:

```bash
# lsinitrd | grep etc/
```

To output the contents of a specific file stored in the *initramfs* for the current kernel, use the `-f` option:

```bash
# lsinitrd -f filename
```

For example, to output the contents of *sysctl.conf*, use the following command:

```bash
# lsinitrd -f /etc/sysctl.conf
```

To specify a kernel version, use the `--kver` option:

```bash
# lsinitrd --kver kernel_version -f /etc/sysctl.conf
```

For example, to list the information about kernel version 3.10.0-327.10.1.el7.x86_64, use the following command:

```bash
# lsinitrd --kver 3.10.0-327.10.1.el7.x86_64 -f /etc/sysctl.conf
```

### 5.6. VERIFYING THE BOOT LOADER

You can install a kernel either with the *yum* command or with the *rpm* command.

When you install a kernel using *rpm*, the kernel package creates an entry in the boot loader configuration file for that new kernel.
Note that both commands configure the new kernel to boot as the default kernel only when you include the following setting in the `/etc/sysconfig/kernel` configuration file:

```
DEFAULTKERNEL=kernel
UPDATEDEFAULT=yes
```

The `DEFAULTKERNEL` option specifies the default kernel package type. The `UPDATEDEFAULT` option specifies whether the new kernel package makes the new kernels the default.
CHAPTER 6. APPLYING PATCHES WITH KERNEL LIVE PATCHING

You can use the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel live patching solution to patch a running kernel without rebooting or restarting any processes.

With this solution, system administrators:

- Can immediately apply critical security patches to the kernel.
- Do not have to wait for long-running tasks to complete, for users to log off, or for scheduled downtime.
- Control the system's uptime more and do not sacrifice security or stability.

Note that not every critical or important CVE will be resolved using the kernel live patching solution. Our goal is to reduce the required reboots for security-related patches, not to eliminate them entirely. For more details about the scope of live patching, see the Customer Portal Solutions article.

WARNING

Some incompatibilities exist between kernel live patching and other kernel subcomponents. Read the Section 6.1, “Limitations of kpatch” section carefully before using kernel live patching.

6.1. LIMITATIONS OF KPATCH

- The kpatch feature is not a general-purpose kernel upgrade mechanism. It is used for applying simple security and bug fix updates when rebooting the system is not immediately possible.
- Do not use the SystemTap or kprobe tools during or after loading a patch. The patch could fail to take effect until after such probes have been removed.

6.2. SUPPORT FOR THIRD-PARTY LIVE PATCHING

The kpatch utility is the only kernel live patching utility supported by Red Hat with the RPM modules provided by Red Hat repositories. Red Hat will not support any live patches which were not provided by Red Hat itself.

For support of a third-party live patch, contact the vendor that provided the patch.

For any system running with third-party live patches, Red Hat reserves the right to ask for reproduction with Red Hat shipped and supported software. In the event that this is not possible, we require a similar system and workload be deployed on your test environment without live patches applied, to confirm if the same behavior is observed.

For more information about third-party software support policies, see How does Red Hat Global Support Services handle third-party software, drivers, and/or uncertified hardware/hypervisors or guest operating systems?
6.3. ACCESS TO KERNEL LIVE PATCHES

Kernel live patching capability is implemented as a kernel module (.ko file) that is delivered as an RPM package.

All customers have access to kernel live patches, which are delivered through the usual channels. However, customers who do not subscribe to an extended support offering will lose access to new patches for the current minor release once the next minor release becomes available. For example, customers with standard subscriptions will only be able to live patch RHEL 8.2 kernels until RHEL 8.3 is released.

6.4. COMPONENTS OF KERNEL LIVE PATCHING

The components of kernel live patching are as follows:

**Kernel patch module**
- The delivery mechanism for kernel live patches.
- A kernel module which is built specifically for the kernel being patched.
- The patch module contains the code of the desired fixes for the kernel.
- The patch modules register with the `livepatch` kernel subsystem and provide information about original functions to be replaced, with corresponding pointers to the replacement functions. Kernel patch modules are delivered as RPMs.
- The naming convention is `kpatch_<kernel version>_<kpatch version>_<kpatch release>`. The "kernel version" part of the name has *dots* and *dashes* replaced with *underscores*.

**The kpatch utility**
- A command-line utility for managing patch modules.

**The kpatch service**
- A *systemd* service required by *multiuser.target*. This target loads the kernel patch module at boot time.

6.5. HOW KERNEL LIVE PATCHING WORKS

The *kpatch* kernel patching solution uses the *livepatch* kernel subsystem to redirect old functions to new ones. When a live kernel patch is applied to a system, the following things happen:

1. The kernel patch module is copied to the `/var/lib/kpatch/` directory and registered for re-application to the kernel by *systemd* on next boot.
2. The kpatch module is loaded into the running kernel and the patched functions are registered to the *ftrace* mechanism with a pointer to the location in memory of the new code.
3. When the kernel accesses the patched function, it is redirected by the *ftrace* mechanism which bypasses the original functions and redirects the kernel to patched version of the function.
6.6. ENABLING KERNEL LIVE PATCHING

A kernel patch module is delivered in an RPM package, specific to the version of the kernel being patched. Each RPM package will be cumulatively updated over time.

The following subsections describe how to ensure you receive all future cumulative live patching updates for a given kernel.

**WARNING**

Red Hat does not support any third party live patches applied to a Red Hat supported system.

6.6.1. Subscribing to the live patching stream

This procedure describes installing a particular live patching package. By doing so, you subscribe to the live patching stream for a given kernel and ensure that you receive all future cumulative live patching updates for that kernel.

**WARNING**

Because live patches are cumulative, you cannot select which individual patches are deployed for a given kernel.
Prerequisites

- Root permissions

Procedure

1. Optionally, check your kernel version:

```
# uname -r
3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64
```

2. Search for a live patching package that corresponds to the version of your kernel:

```
# yum search $(uname -r)
```

3. Install the live patching package:

```
# yum install "kpatch-patch = $(uname -r)"
```

   The command above installs and applies the latest cumulative live patches for that specific kernel only.

   The live patching package contains a patch module, if the package’s version is 1-1 or higher. In that case the kernel will be automatically patched during the installation of the live patching package.

   The kernel patch module is also installed into the `/var/lib/kpatch/` directory to be loaded by the `systemd` system and service manager during the future reboots.

   **NOTE**

   If there are not yet any live patches available for the given kernel, an empty live patching package will be installed. An empty live patching package will have a `kpatch_version-kpatch_release` of 0-0, for example `kpatch-patch-3_10_0-1062-0-0.el7.x86_64.rpm`. The installation of the empty RPM subscribes the system to all future live patches for the given kernel.

4. Optionally, verify that the kernel is patched:

```
# kpatch list
Loaded patch modules:
  kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 [enabled]

Installed patch modules:
  kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 (3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64)
  ...
```

   The output shows that the kernel patch module has been loaded into the kernel, which is now patched with the latest fixes from the `kpatch-patch-3_10_0-1062-1-1.el7.x86_64.rpm` package.

Additional resources

- For more information about the `kpatch` command-line utility, see the `kpatch(1)` manual page.
6.7. UPDATING KERNEL PATCH MODULES

Since kernel patch modules are delivered and applied through RPM packages, updating a cumulative kernel patch module is like updating any other RPM package.

Prerequisites

- Root permissions
- The system is subscribed to the live patching stream, as described in Section 6.6.1, “Subscribing to the live patching stream”.

Procedure

- Update to a new cumulative version for the current kernel:

  ```
  # yum update "kpatch-patch = $(uname -r)"
  ```

  The command above automatically installs and applies any updates that are available for the currently running kernel. Including any future released cumulative live patches.

- Alternatively, update all installed kernel patch modules:

  ```
  # yum update "kpatch-patch*"
  ```

  **NOTE**

  When the system reboots into the same kernel, the kernel is automatically live patched again by the `kpatch.service` service.

Additional resources

- For further information about updating software packages, see the relevant sections of System Administrator’s Guide.

6.8. DISABLING KERNEL LIVE PATCHING

In case system administrators encountered some unanticipated negative effects connected with the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel live patching solution they have a choice to disable the mechanism. The following sections describe the ways how to disable the live patching solution.

**IMPORTANT**

Currently, Red Hat does not support reverting live patches without rebooting your system. In case of any issues, contact our support team.

6.8.1. Removing the live patching package

The following procedure describes how to disable the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel live patching solution by removing the live patching package.
Prerequisites

- Root permissions
- The live patching package is installed.

Procedure

1. Select the live patching package:

   ```
   # yum list installed | grep kpatch-patch
   kpatch-patch-3_10_0-1062.x86_64        1-1.el7        @@commandline
   ...
   ```

   The example output above lists live patching packages that you installed.

2. Remove the live patching package:

   ```
   # yum remove kpatch-patch-3_10_0-1062.x86_64
   ```

   When a live patching package is removed, the kernel remains patched until the next reboot, but
   the kernel patch module is removed from disk. After the next reboot, the corresponding kernel
   will no longer be patched.

3. Reboot your system.

4. Verify that the live patching package has been removed:

   ```
   # yum list installed | grep kpatch-patch
   ```

   The command displays no output if the package has been successfully removed.

5. Optionally, verify that the kernel live patching solution is disabled:

   ```
   # kpatch list
   Loaded patch modules:
   ```

   The example output shows that the kernel is not patched and the live patching solution is not
   active because there are no patch modules that are currently loaded.

Additional resources

- For more information about the `kpatch` command-line utility, see the `kpatch(1)` manual page.
- For further information about working with software packages, see the relevant sections of
  `System Administrator’s Guide`.

6.8.2. Uninstalling the kernel patch module

The following procedure describes how to prevent the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel live patching
solution from applying a kernel patch module on subsequent boots.

Prerequisites

- Root permissions
- A live patching package is installed.
- A kernel patch module is installed and loaded.

**Procedure**

1. Select a kernel patch module:

   ```
   # kpatch list
   Loaded patch modules:
   kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 [enabled]
   
   Installed patch modules:
   kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 (3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64)
   ...
   ```

2. Uninstall the selected kernel patch module:

   ```
   # kpatch uninstall kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1
   uninstalling kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 (3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64)
   ```

   - Note that the uninstalled kernel patch module is still loaded:

   ```
   # kpatch list
   Loaded patch modules:
   kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 [enabled]
   
   Installed patch modules:
   <NO_RESULT>
   ```

   When the selected module is uninstalled, the kernel remains patched until the next reboot, but the kernel patch module is removed from disk.

3. Reboot your system.

4. Optionally, verify that the kernel patch module has been uninstalled:

   ```
   # kpatch list
   Loaded patch modules:
   
   The example output above shows no loaded or installed kernel patch modules, therefore the kernel is not patched and the kernel live patching solution is not active.

**Additional resources**

- For more information about the `kpatch` command-line utility, refer to the `kpatch(1)` manual page.

### 6.8.3. Disabling kpatch.service

The following procedure describes how to prevent the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel live patching solution from applying all kernel patch modules globally on subsequent boots.

**Prerequisites**

- Root permissions
A live patching package is installed.

A kernel patch module is installed and loaded.

Procedure

1. Verify `kpatch.service` is enabled:

   ```
   # systemctl is-enabled kpatch.service
   enabled
   ```

2. Disable `kpatch.service`:

   ```
   # systemctl disable kpatch.service
   Removed /etc/systemd/system/multi-user.target.wants/kpatch.service.
   ```

   * Note that the applied kernel patch module is still loaded:

     ```
     # kpatch list
     Loaded patch modules:
     kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 [enabled]

     Installed patch modules:
     kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 (3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64)
     ```

3. Reboot your system.

4. Optionally, verify the status of `kpatch.service`:

   ```
   # systemctl status kpatch.service
   “[kpatch.service] – “Apply kpatch kernel patches”
   Loaded: loaded (/usr/lib/systemd/system/kpatch.service; disabled; vendor preset: disabled)
   Active: inactive (dead)
   ```

   The example output testifies that `kpatch.service` has been disabled and is not running. Thereby, the kernel live patching solution is not active.

5. Verify that the kernel patch module has been unloaded:

   ```
   # kpatch list
   Loaded patch modules:

   Installed patch modules:
   kpatch_3_10_0_1062_1_1 (3.10.0-1062.el7.x86_64)
   ```

   The example output above shows that the kernel patch module is still installed but the kernel is not patched.

Additional resources

- For more information about the `kpatch` command-line utility, see the `kpatch(1)` manual page.
- For more information about the `systemd` system and service manager, unit configuration files, their locations, as well as a complete list of `systemd` unit types, see the relevant sections in *System Administrator’s Guide*. 
CHAPTER 7. KERNEL CRASH DUMP GUIDE

7.1. INTRODUCTION TO KDUMP

7.1.1. About kdump and kexec

kdump is a service which provides a crash dumping mechanism. The service enables you to save the contents of the system memory for analysis.

kdump uses the kexec system call to boot into the second kernel (a capture kernel) without rebooting; and then captures the contents of the crashed kernel’s memory (a crash dump or a vmcore) and saves it into a file. The second kernel resides in a reserved part of the system memory.

IMPORTANT

A kernel crash dump can be the only information available in the event of a failure, the importance of having this data in a business critical environment cannot be underestimated. Red Hat advises that System Administrators regularly update and test kexec-tools in your normal kernel update cycle. This is especially important when new kernel features are implemented.

NOTE

HP Watchdog timer (hwpdt) driver is pre-loaded in HP systems running as a RHEV hypervisor, so these systems can consume the NMI watchdog. Updated kexec-tools packages starting with kexec-tools-2.0.15-33.el7.x86_64 have preloaded the hwpdt driver.

If drivers bnx2x and bmix2fc are not blacklisted in the kdump kernel then the second kernel leads to panic and the dumps will not be captured.

7.1.2. Memory requirements

In order for kdump to be able to capture a kernel crash dump and save it for further analysis, a part of the system memory has to be permanently reserved for the capture kernel. When reserved, this part of the system memory is not available to main kernel.

The memory requirements vary based on certain system parameters. One of the major factors is the system’s hardware architecture. To find out the exact name of the machine architecture (such as x86_64) and print it to standard output, type the following command at a shell prompt:

```
uname -m
```

Another factor which influences the amount of memory to be reserved is the total amount of installed system memory. For example, on the x86_64 architecture, the amount of reserved memory is 160 MB + 2 bits for every 4 KB of RAM. On a system with 1 TB of total physical memory installed, this means 224 MB (160 MB + 64 MB). For a complete list of memory requirements for kdump based on the system architecture and the amount of physical memory, see Section 7.8.1, “Memory requirements for kdump”.

On many systems, kdump can estimate the amount of required memory and reserve it automatically. This behavior is enabled by default, but only works on systems that have more than a certain amount of total available memory, which varies based on the system architecture. See Section 7.8.2, “Minimum
threshold for automatic memory reservation” for a list of minimum requirements for automatic memory reservation based on the system architecture.

If the system has less than the minimum amount of memory required for the automatic allocation to work or if your use case requires a different value, you can configure the amount of reserved memory manually. For information on how to do so on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.1, “Configuring the memory usage”. For information on how to configure the amount of reserved memory in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.1, “Configuring the memory usage”.

**IMPORTANT**

It is highly recommended to test the configuration after setting up the kdump service, even when using the automatic memory reservation. For instructions on how to test your configuration, see Section 7.4, “Testing the kdump configuration”.

### 7.2. INSTALLING AND CONFIGURING KDUMP

#### 7.2.1. Installing kdump

In many cases, the **kdump** service is installed and activated by default on new Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 installations. The **Anaconda** installer provides a screen for kdump configuration when performing an interactive installation using the graphical or text interface. The installer screen is titled **Kdump** and is available from the main **Installation Summary** screen, and only allows limited configuration - you can only select whether kdump is enabled and how much memory is reserved. Information about memory requirements for kdump is available in Section 7.8.1, “Memory requirements for kdump”. The **Kdump** configuration screen in the installer is documented in the **Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 Installation Guide**.

**NOTE**

In previous releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, kdump configuration was available in the **Firstboot** utility which was automatically executed after the installation finished and the system rebooted for the first time. Starting with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7.1, kdump configuration has been moved into the installer.

Some installation options, such as custom Kickstart installations, do not have to install or enable kdump by default. If this is the case on your system, and you want to install kdump additionally, execute the following command as **root** at a shell prompt:

```
# yum install kexec-tools
```

The command above secures installation of kdump and all other necessary packages, assuming your system has an active subscription or a custom repository containing the **kexec-tools** package for your system’s architecture.

**NOTE**

If you do not know whether kdump is installed on your system, you can check using **rpm**:

```
$ rpm -q kexec-tools
```
Additionally, a graphical configuration tool is available, but not installed by default if you use the command described above. To install this utility, which is described in Section 7.2.3, “Configuring kdump in the graphical user interface”, use the following command as root:

```bash
# yum install system-config-kdump
```

For more information on how to install new packages in Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 using the Yum package manager, see the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide.

**IMPORTANT**

Starting with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7.4 the Intel IOMMU driver is supported with kdump. When running kernels from version 7.3 or earlier, it is advised that Intel IOMMU support is disabled.

### 7.2.2. Configuring kdump on the command line

#### 7.2.2.1. Configuring the memory usage

Memory reserved for the kdump kernel is always reserved during system boot, which means that the amount of memory is specified in the system’s boot loader configuration.

To specify the memory reserved for kdump kernel, set the `crashkernel=` option to the required value. For example, to reserve 128 MB of memory, use the following:

```bash
crashkernel=128M
```

For information about how to change the `crashkernel=` option on AMD64 and Intel 64 systems and IBM Power Systems servers using the GRUB2 boot loader, and on IBM Z using zipl, see Section 3.1.1, “Setting kernel command-line parameters”.

The `crashkernel=` option can be defined in multiple ways. The `auto` value enables automatic configuration of reserved memory based on the total amount of memory in the system, following the guidelines described in Section 7.8.1, “Memory requirements for kdump”. Larger memory systems, up to the established limits of the operating system are calculated according to architecture with the `crashkernel=auto` option.

Replace the `auto` value with a specific amount of memory to change this behavior.

The `crashkernel=` option can be particularly useful with smaller memory systems. For example, to reserve 128 MB of memory, use the following:

```bash
crashkernel=128M
```

You can also set the amount of reserved memory to be variable, depending on the total amount of installed memory. The syntax for variable memory reservation is `crashkernel=range1:<size1>,range2:<size2>`. For example:

```bash
crashkernel=512M-2G:64M,2G-:128M
```

The above example reserves 64 MB of memory if the total amount of system memory is 512 MB or higher and lower than 2 GB. If the total amount of memory is more than 2 GB, 128 MB is reserved for kdump instead.
Some systems require to reserve memory with a certain fixed offset. If the offset is set, the reserved memory begins there. To offset the reserved memory, use the following syntax:

```
crashkernel=128M@16M
```

The example above means that kdump reserves 128 MB of memory starting at 16 MB (physical address 0x01000000). If the offset parameter is set to 0 or omitted entirely, kdump offsets the reserved memory automatically. This syntax can also be used when setting a variable memory reservation as described above; in this case, the offset is always specified last (for example, `crashkernel=512M-2G:64M,2G-:128M@16M`).

### 7.2.2.2. Configuring the kdump type

When a kernel crash is captured, the core dump can be either stored as a file in a local file system, written directly to a device, or sent over a network using the **NFS** (Network File System) or **SSH** (Secure Shell) protocol. Only one of these options can be set at the moment. The default option is to store the `vmcore` file in the `/var/crash` directory of the local file system.

To store the `vmcore` file in `/var/crash` directory of the local file system:

- Edit the `/etc/kdump.conf` file and specify the path:

  ```
  path /var/crash
  ```

  The option `path /var/crash` represents the file system path in which the `kdump` saves the `vmcore` file. When you specify a dump target in the `/etc/kdump.conf` file, then the `path` is relative to the specified dump target.

  If you do not specify a dump target in the `/etc/kdump.conf` file, then the `path` represents the absolute path from the root directory. Depending on what is mounted in the current system, the dump target and the adjusted dump path are taken automatically.

**WARNING**

The `kdump` saves the `vmcore` file in `/var/crash` directory, when the dump target is mounted at `/var/crash` and the option `path` is also set as `/var/crash` in the `/etc/kdump.conf` file. For example, in the below instance, the `ext4` file system is already mounted at `/var/crash` and the `path` is also set as `/var/crash`:

```
grep -v ^# etc/kdump.conf | grep -v ^$ 
ext4 /dev/mapper/vg00-varcrashvol
path /var/crash
core_collector makedumpfile -c --message-level 1 -d 31
```

This results in the `/var/crash/var/crash` path. To solve this problem, use the option `path /` instead of `path /var/crash`.

To change the dump location, as `root`, open the `/etc/kdump.conf` configuration file in a text editor and edit the options as described below.
To change the local directory in which the core dump is to be saved, remove the hash sign ("#") from the beginning of the `#path /var/crash` line, and replace the value with a desired directory path.

```bash
path /usr/local/cores
```

**IMPORTANT**

In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the directory defined as the kdump target using the `path` directive must exist when the `kdump` systemd service is started - otherwise the service fails. This behavior is different from earlier releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, where the directory was being created automatically if it did not exist when starting the service.

Optionally, if you wish to write the file to a different partition, follow the same procedure with the one of the lines beginning with `#ext4`. Here, you can use either a device name (the `#ext4 /dev/vg/lv_kdump` line), a file system label (the `#ext4 LABEL=/boot` line) or a UUID (the `#ext4 UUID=03138356-5e61-4ab3-b58e-27507ac41937` line). Change the file system type as well as the device name, label or UUID to the desired values. For example:

```bash
ext4 UUID=03138356-5e61-4ab3-b58e-27507ac41937
```

**IMPORTANT**

Specifying storage devices using a `LABEL=` or `UUID=` is recommended. Disk device names such as `/dev/sda3` are not guaranteed to be consistent across reboot. See the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 Storage Administration Guide* for information about persistent disk device naming.

**IMPORTANT**

When dumping to DASD on s390x hardware, it is essential that the dump devices are correctly specified in `/etc/dasd.conf` before proceeding.

To write the dump directly to a device, remove the hash sign ("#") from the beginning of the `#raw /dev/vg/lv_kdump` line, and replace the value with a desired device name. For example:

```bash
raw /dev/sdb1
```

To store the dump to a remote machine using the `NFS` protocol, remove the hash sign ("#") from the beginning of the `#nfs my.server.com:/export/tmp` line, and replace the value with a valid hostname and directory path. For example:

```bash
nfs penguin.example.com:/export/cores
```

To store the dump to a remote machine using the `SSH` protocol, remove the hash sign ("#") from the beginning of the `#ssh user@my.server.com` line, and replace the value with a valid username and hostname. To include your SSH key in the configuration as well, remove the hash sign from the beginning of the `#sshkey /root/.ssh/kdump_id_rsa` line and change the value to the location of a key valid on the server you are trying to dump to. For example:

```bash
ssh john@penguin.example.com
sshkey /root/.ssh/mykey
```
For information on how to configure an SSH server and set up a key-based authentication, see the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide.

For a complete list of currently supported and unsupported targets sorted by type, see Table 7.3, “Supported kdump Targets”.

7.2.2.3. Configuring the core collector

To reduce the size of the vmcore dump file, kdump allows you to specify an external application (a core collector) to compress the data, and optionally leave out all irrelevant information. Currently, the only fully supported core collector is makedumpfile.

To enable the core collector, as root, open the /etc/kdump.conf configuration file in a text editor, remove the hash sign (“#”) from the beginning of the #core_collector makedumpfile -l --message-level 1 -d 31 line, and edit the command line options as described below.

To enable the dump file compression, add the -l parameter. For example:

```
core_collector makedumpfile -l
```

To remove certain pages from the dump, add the -d value parameter, where value is a sum of values of pages you want to omit as described in Table 7.4, “Supported Filtering Levels”. For example, to remove both zero and free pages, use the following:

```
core_collector makedumpfile -d 17 -c
```

See the makedumpfile(8) man page for a complete list of available options.

7.2.2.4. Configuring the default action

By default, kdump uses the kexec system call to boot into the second kernel (a capture kernel) without rebooting; and then captures the contents of the crashed kernel’s memory (a crash dump or a vmcore) and saves it into a file.

However, when kdump fails to create a core dump at the target location specified in Section 7.2.2.2, “Configuring the kdump type”, kdump reboots the system without saving the vmcore. To change this behavior, as root, open the /etc/kdump.conf configuration file in a text editor, remove the hash sign (“#”) from the beginning of the #default shell line, and replace the value with a desired action as described in Table 7.5, “Supported Default Actions”.

For example:

```
default reboot
```

7.2.2.5. Enabling the service

To start the kdump daemon at boot time, type the following at a shell prompt as root:

```
systemctl enable kdump.service
```

This enables the service for multi-user.target. Similarly, typing systemctl disable kdump disables kdump. To start the service in the current session, use the following command as root:

```
systemctl start kdump.service
```
systemctl start kdump.service

**IMPORTANT**

In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the directory defined as the kdump target must exist when the *kdump* systemd service is started - otherwise the service fails. This behavior is different from earlier releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, where the directory was being created automatically if it did not exist when starting the service.

For more information on systemd and configuring services in general, see the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide*.

### 7.2.3. Configuring kdump in the graphical user interface

To start the *Kernel Dump Configuration* utility, select **Activities → Other → Kernel crash dumps** from the panel, or type `system-config-kdump` at a shell prompt. As a result a window appears as shown in Figure 7.1, “Basic Settings”.

The utility allows you to configure kdump as well as to enable or disable starting the service at boot time. When you are done, click **Apply** to save the changes. Unless you are already authenticated, enter the superuser password. The utility presents you with a reminder that you must reboot the system in order to apply any changes you have made to the configuration.

**IMPORTANT**

On IBM Z or PowerPC systems with SELinux running in Enforcing mode, the `kdumpgui_run_bootloader` Boolean must be enabled before launching the Kernel Dump Configuration utility. This Boolean allows *system-config-kdump* to run the boot loader in the bootloader_t SELinux domain. To permanently enable the Boolean, run the following command as root;

```
# setsebool -P kdumpgui_run_bootloader 1
```

**IMPORTANT**

When dumping to DASD on s390x hardware, it is essential that the dump devices are correctly specified in `/etc/dasd.conf` before proceeding.

### 7.2.3.1. Configuring the memory usage

The **Basic Settings** tab enables you to configure the amount of memory that is reserved for the kdump kernel. To do so, select the **Manual settings** radio button, and click the up and down arrow buttons next to the **New kdump Memory** field to increase or decrease the amount of memory to be reserved. Notice that the **Usable Memory** field changes accordingly showing you the remaining memory that is available to the system. See Section 7.1.2, “Memory requirements” for more information on kdump’s memory requirements.
7.2.3.2. Configuring the kdump type

The **Target Settings** tab allows you to specify the target location for the **vmcore** dump. The dump can be either stored as a file in a local file system, written directly to a device, or sent over a network using the **NFS** (Network File System) or **SSH** (Secure Shell) protocol.
Figure 7.2. Target Settings

To save the dump to the local file system, select the Local filesystem radio button. Optionally, you can customize the settings by choosing a different partition from the Partition drop-down list and a target directory using the Path field.

**IMPORTANT**

In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the directory defined as the kdump target must exist when the kdump systemd service is started - otherwise the service fails. This behavior is different from earlier releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, where the directory was being created automatically if it did not exist when starting the service.

To write the dump directly to a device, select the Raw device radio button, and choose the desired target device from the drop-down list next to it.

To send the dump to a remote machine over a network connection, select the Network radio button. To use the NFS protocol, select the NFS radio button, and fill the Server name and Path to directory fields. To use the SSH protocol, select the SSH radio button, and fill the Server name, Path to directory, and User name fields with the remote server address, target directory, and a valid user name respectively.

For information on how to configure an SSH server and set up a key-based authentication, see the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide. For a complete list of currently supported targets, see Table 7.3, “Supported kdump Targets”.

7.2.3.3. Configuring the core collector
The **Filtering Settings** tab enables you to select the filtering level for the **vmcore** dump.

**Figure 7.3. Filtering Settings**

To exclude the **zero page**, **cache page**, **cache private**, **user data**, or **free page** from the dump, select the checkbox next to the appropriate label.

### 7.2.3.4. Configuring the default action

To choose which action should be performed when **kdump** fails to create a core dump, select an appropriate option from the **Action if dumping fails** drop-down list. Available options are:

- **Dump to rootfs and reboot** attempts to save the core locally and then reboots the system
- **Reboot** the default action which reboots the system
- **Start a Shell** to present a user with an interactive shell prompt
- **Halt** to halt the system
- **Poweroff** to power the system off
To customize the options that are passed to the `makedumpfile` core collector, edit the **Core collector** text field; see Section 7.2.2.3, “Configuring the core collector” for more information.

### 7.2.3.5. Enabling the service

To start the `kdump` service at boot time, click the **Enable** button on the toolbar and then click the **Apply** button. This enables and activates the service for **multi-user.target**. Click the **Disable** button and confirm by clicking the **Apply** button to disable the service immediately.

**IMPORTANT**

In Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7, the directory defined as the kdump target must exist when the `kdump` systemd service is started – otherwise the service fails. This behavior is different from earlier releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux, where the directory was being created automatically if it did not exist when starting the service.

For more information on systemd targets and configuring services in general, see the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide*. 
7.3. BLACKLISTING KERNEL DRIVERS FOR KDUMP

Blacklisting the kernel drivers is a mechanism to prevent them from being loaded and used. Adding the drivers in `/etc/sysconfig/kdump` file, prevents the kdump `initramfs` from loading the blacklisted modules.

Blacklisting kernel drivers prevents the `oom` killer or other crash kernel failures. To blacklist the kernel drivers, you can update the `KDUMP_COMMANDLINE_APPEND=` variable in the `/etc/sysconfig/kdump` file and specify one of the following blacklisting option:

- `rd.driver.blacklist=<modules>`
- `modprobe.blacklist=<modules>`

**Procedure**

1. Select the kernel module that you intend to blacklist:

```bash
$ lsmod
Module                  Size  Used by
fuse                  126976  3
xt_CHECKSUM            16384  1
ipt_MASQUERADE         16384  1
uinput                 20480  1
xt_conntrack           16384  1
```

The `lsmod` command displays the list of modules that are loaded to the currently running kernel.

2. Update the `KDUMP_COMMANDLINE_APPEND=` line in the `/etc/sysconfig/kdump` file as:

```bash
KDUMP_COMMANDLINE_APPEND="rd.driver.blacklist=hv_vmbus,hv_storvsc,hv_utils,hv_netvsc,hid-hyperv"
```

3. You can also update the `KDUMP_COMMANDLINE_APPEND=` line in the `/etc/sysconfig/kdump` file as:

```bash
KDUMP_COMMANDLINE_APPEND="modprobe.blacklist=emcp modprobe.blacklist=bnx2fc modprobe.blacklist=libfcoe modprobe.blacklist=fcoe"
```

4. Restart the kdump service:

```bash
$ systemctl restart kdump
```

7.4. TESTING THE KDUMP CONFIGURATION

**WARNING**

The commands below cause the kernel to crash. Use caution when following these steps, and by no means use them on a production system.
To test the configuration, reboot the system with kdump enabled, and make sure that the service is running:

```
~]# systemctl is-active kdump
active
```

Then type the following commands at a shell prompt:

```
echo 1 > /proc/sys/kernel/sysrq
echo c > /proc/sysrq-trigger
```

This forces the Linux kernel to crash, and the `address-YYYY-MM-DD-HH:MM:SS/vmcore` file is copied to the location you have selected in the configuration (that is, to `/var/crash/` by default).

**NOTE**

In addition to confirming the validity of the configuration, this action can also be used to record how long it takes to a crash dump to complete if it is performed under a representative test load.

### 7.4.1. Additional resources

#### 7.4.1.1. Installed documentation

- `kdump.conf(5)` — a manual page for the `/etc/kdump.conf` configuration file containing the full documentation of available options.
- `zipl.conf(5)` — a manual page for the `/etc/zipl.conf` configuration file.
- `zipl(8)` — a manual page for the `zipl` boot loader utility for IBM Z.
- `makedumpfile(8)` — a manual page for the `makedumpfile` core collector.
- `kexec(8)` — a manual page for `kexec`.
- `crash(8)` — a manual page for the `crash` utility.

#### 7.4.1.2. Online documentation

- [https://access.redhat.com/site/solutions/6038](https://access.redhat.com/site/solutions/6038)
  The Red Hat Knowledgebase article about the kexec and kdump configuration.
- [https://access.redhat.com/site/solutions/223773](https://access.redhat.com/site/solutions/223773)
  The Red Hat Knowledgebase article about supported kdump targets.
- [https://github.com/crash-utility/crash](https://github.com/crash-utility/crash)
  The crash utility Git repository.
- [https://www.gnu.org/software/grub/](https://www.gnu.org/software/grub/)
  The GRUB2 boot loader homepage and documentation.
7.5. FIRMWARE ASSISTED DUMP MECHANISMS

7.5.1. The case for firmware assisted dump

The `kexec` and `kdump` mechanisms are a reliable and proven method of capturing a core dump on AMD64 and Intel 64 systems. However, some hardware with a longer history, particularly mini and mainframe systems, allows us to leverage the onboard firmware to isolate regions of memory and prevent any accidental overwriting of data that is important to the crash analysis.

This chapter covers some of the available firmware assisted dump methods and how they integrate with Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

7.5.2. Using fadump on IBM PowerPC hardware

Firmware-assisted dump (`fadump`) is a reliable alternative to `kexec-kdump` available on IBM PowerPC LPARS. It captures vmcore from a fully-reset system with PCI and I/O devices reinitialized. While this mechanism uses the firmware to preserve the memory in case of a crash, it reuses the `kdump` userspace scripts to save the vmcore.

To achieve this, fadump registers the regions of memory that must be preserved in the event of a crash with the system firmware. These regions consist of all the system memory contents, except the boot memory, system registers and hardware Page Table Entries (PTEs).

For further details about the fadump mechanism, including PowerPC-specific methods of resetting hardware, review `/usr/share/doc/kexec-tools-X.y.z/fadump-howto.txt` where “X.y.z” correspond to the version number of `kexec-tools` installed on your system.

NOTE

The area of memory not preserved and known as boot memory is the amount of RAM required to successfully boot the kernel after a crash event. By default, the boot memory size is 256MB or 5% of total system RAM, whichever is larger.

Unlike a `kexec`-initiated event, the fadump process uses the production kernel to recover a crash dump. When booting after a crash, PowerPC hardware makes the device node `/proc/device-tree/rtas/ibm,kernel-dump` available to procfs, which the fadump-aware `kdump` scripts check for to save the vmcore. After this has completed, the system is rebooted cleanly.

Enabling fadump

1. Install and configure `kdump` as described in Section 7.2, “Installing and configuring kdump”.

2. Add `fadump=on` to the `GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX` line in `/etc/default/grub`:

   ```
   GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX="rd.lvm.lv=rhel/swap crashkernel=auto rd.lvm.lv=rhel/root rhgb quiet fadump=on"
   ```

3. (optional) If you want to specify reserved boot memory instead of accepting the defaults, configure `crashkernel=xxM` to `GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX` in `/etc/default/grub`, where `xx` is the amount of the memory required in megabytes:

   ```
   GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX="rd.lvm.lv=rhel/swap crashkernel=xxM rd.lvm.lv=rhel/root rhgb quiet fadump=on"
   ```
IMPORTANT

As with all boot configuration options, it is strongly recommended that you test the configuration before it is needed. If you observe Out of Memory (OOM) errors when booting from the crash kernel, increase the value specified in crashkernel= until the crash kernel can boot cleanly. Some trial and error may be required in this case.

7.5.3. Firmware assisted dump methods on IBM Z

There are two firmware assisted dump mechanisms on IBM Z. They are Stand-alone Dump and VMDUMP.

The kdump infrastructure is supported and utilized on these systems and configuration from Red Hat Enterprise Linux is described in Section 7.2, “Installing and configuring kdump”. However, there are potentially some advantages to using either of the firmware assisted methods IBM Z hardware provides.

The Stand-alone Dump (SADMP) mechanism is initiated and controlled from the system console, and must be stored on an IPL bootable device.

Similar to SADMP is VMDUMP. This tool is also initiated from the system console, but has a mechanism to retrieve the resulting dump from hardware and copy it to a system for analysis.

One advantage of these methods (and similarly to other hardware based dump mechanisms), is the ability to capture the state of a machine in the Early Boot phase (before the kdump service is started)

Although VMDUMP contains a mechanism to receive the dump file into a Red Hat Enterprise Linux system, the configuration and control of both SADMP and VMDUMP are managed from the IBM Z Hardware console.

IBM discuss SADMP in detail, in stand-alone dump program article and VMDUMP at VMDUMP article.

IBM also have a documentation set for using the dump tools on Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 in Using the Dump Tools on Red Hat Enterprise Linux article.

7.5.4. Using sadump on Fujitsu PRIMEQUEST systems

The Fujitsu sadump mechanism is designed to provide a fallback dump capture in the event kdump is unable to complete successfully.

The sadump process is invoked manually from the system ManageMent Board (MMB) interface.

With this system, configure kdump as normal for an X86_64 server and then perform the following additional steps to enable sadump.

Add or edit the following lines in /etc/sysctl.conf to ensure that kdump starts as expected for sadump.

```
kernel.panic=0
kernel.unknown_nmi_panic=1
```

In addition to the above, you must also add some options to /etc/kdump.conf to ensure that kdump behaves correctly for sadump.

In particular, ensure that after kdump, the system does not reboot. If the system reboots after kdump has failed to save core, then you have no opportunity to invoke sadump.
Set the `default` action in `/etc/kdump.conf` to be either `halt` or `shell` to achieve this.

**IMPORTANT**

For details on configuring your hardware for `sadump`, see the FUJITSU Server PRIMEQUEST 2000 Series Installation Manual.

### 7.6. ANALYZING A CORE DUMP

To determine the cause of the system crash, you can use the `crash` utility, which provides an interactive prompt very similar to the GNU Debugger (GDB). This utility allows you to interactively analyze a running Linux system as well as a core dump created by `netdump`, `diskdump`, `xendump`, or `kdump`.

#### 7.6.1. Installing the crash utility

To install the `crash` analyzing tool, execute the following command from a shell prompt as `root`:

```
yum install crash
```

In addition to `crash`, it is also necessary to install the `kernel-debuginfo` package that corresponds to your running kernel, which provides the data necessary for dump analysis. To install `kernel-debuginfo` we use the `debuginfo-install` command as `root`:

```
dependinfo-install kernel
```

For more information on how to install new packages in Red Hat Enterprise Linux using the Yum package manager, see the *Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7 System Administrator’s Guide*.

#### 7.6.2. Running the crash utility

To start the utility, type the command in the following form at a shell prompt:

```
crash /usr/lib/debug/lib/modules/<kernel>/vmlinux `/var/crash/<timestamp>/vmcore
```

Use the same `<kernel>` version that was captured by `kdump`. To find out which kernel you are currently running, use the `uname -r` command.

**Example 7.1. Running the crash utility**

```
~]# crash /usr/lib/debug/lib/modules/2.6.32-69.el6.i686/vmlinux `/var/crash/127.0.0.1-2010-08-25-08:45:02/vmcore
```

```
crash 5.0.0-23.el6
Copyright (C) 2002-2010 Red Hat, Inc.
Copyright (C) 2004, 2005, 2006 IBM Corporation
Copyright (C) 1999-2006 Hewlett-Packard Co
Copyright (C) 2005, 2006 Fujitsu Limited
Copyright (C) 2006, 2007 VA Linux Systems Japan K.K.
Copyright (C) 2005 NEC Corporation
```
7.6.3. Displaying the message buffer

To display the kernel message buffer, type the `log` command at the interactive prompt.

Example 7.2. Displaying the kernel message buffer

```
crash> log
... several lines omitted ...
EIP: 0060:[<c068124f>] EFLAGS: 00010096 CPU: 2
EIP is at sysrq_handle_crash+0xf/0x20
EAX: 00000063 EBX: 00000063 ECX: c09e1c8c EDX: 00000000
ESI: c0a09ca0 EDI: 00000286 EBP: 00000000 ESP: ef4dbf24
DS: 007b ES: 007b FS: 00d8 GS: 00e0 SS: 0068
Process bash (pid: 5591, ti=ef4da000 task=f196d560 task.ti=ef4da000)
Stack:
c068146b c0960891 c0968653 00000003 00000000 00000002 efade5c0 c06814d0
<> fffffffb c068150f b7776000 f2600c40 c0569ec4 ef4dbf9c 00000002 b7776000
<> efade5c0 00000002 b7776000 c0569e60 c051de50 ef4dbf9c f196d560 ef4dbf4
Call Trace:
```
CHAPTER 7. KERNEL CRASH DUMP GUIDE

NOTE

The kernel message buffer includes the most essential information about the system crash and, as such, it is always dumped first into the `vmcore-dmesg.txt` file. This is useful when an attempt to get the full `vmcore` file failed, for example because of lack of space on the target location. By default, `vmcore-dmesg.txt` is located in the `/var/crash/` directory.

7.6.4. Displaying a backtrace

To display the kernel stack trace, type the `bt` command at the interactive prompt. You can use `bt <pid>` to display the backtrace of a single process.

Example 7.3. Displaying the kernel stack trace

```
crash> bt
PID: 5591 TASK: f196d560 CPU: 2 COMMAND: "bash"
  #0 [ef4dbdcc] crash_kexec at c0494922
  #1 [ef4de2e0] oops_end at c080e402
  #2 [ef4de34] no_context at c043089d
  #3 [ef4de58] bad_area at c0430b26
  #4 [ef4de6c] do_page_fault at c080fb9b
  #5 [ef4debe4] error_code (via page_fault) at c080d809
      EAX: 00000063 EBX: 00000063 ECX: c09e1c8c EDX: 00000000 EBP: 00000000
      DS:  007b      ESI: c0a09ca0 ES:  007b      EDI: 00000286 GS:  00e0
      CS:  0060      EIP: c068124f ERR: ffffffff EFLAGS: 00010096
  #6 [ef4dbf18] sysrq_handle_crash at c068124f
  #7 [ef4dbf24] __handle_sysrq at c0681469
  #8 [ef4dfb48] write_sysrq_trigger at c068150a
  #9 [ef4dfb54] proc_reg_write at c0569ec2
  #10 [ef4dfb74] vfs_write at c051e4e
  #11 [ef4dfb94] sys_write at c051e8cc
  #12 [ef4dfb0] system_call at c0409ad5
      EAX: fffffd6a EBX: 00000001 ECX: b7776000 EDX: 00000002
      DS:  007b      ESI: 00000002 ES:  007b      EDI: b7776000
      SS:  007b      ESP: bfcb2088 EBP: bfcb20b4 GS:  0033
      CS:  0073      EIP: 00edc3416 ERR: 00000004 EFLAGS: 00000246
```
To display status of processes in the system, type the `ps` command at the interactive prompt. You can use `ps <pid>` to display the status of a single process.

**Example 7.4. Displaying the status of processes in the system**

```
crash> ps
    PID  PPID  CPU   TASK    ST  %MEM     VSZ    RSS  COMM
   > 0      0   0  c09dc560  RU   0.0       0      0  [swapper]
   > 0      0   1  f7072030  RU   0.0       0      0  [swapper]
   > 0      0   2  f70a3a90  RU   0.0       0      0  [swapper]
   > 0      0   3  f70ac560  RU   0.0       0      0  [swapper]
    1      0   1  f705ba90  IN   0.0    2828   1424  init
     ... several lines omitted ...
    5566   1   1  f2592560  IN   0.0   12876    784  auditd
    5567   1   2  ef427560  IN   0.0   12876    784  auditd
    5587  5132   0  f196d030  IN   0.0   11064   3184  sshd
   > 5591  5587   2  f196d560  RU   0.0    5084   1648  bash
```

Type `help ps` for more information on the command usage.

**7.6.6. Displaying virtual memory information**

To display basic virtual memory information, type the `vm` command at the interactive prompt. You can use `vm <pid>` to display information on a single process.

**Example 7.5. Displaying virtual memory information of the current context**

```
crash> vm
    PID: 5591   TASK: f196d560   CPU: 2   COMMAND: "bash"
    MM   PGD     RSS    TOTAL_VM
    f19b5900  ef9c6000  1648k    5084k
    VMA     START      END    FLAGS  FILE
    f1bb0310    242000    260000 8000875  /lib/ld-2.12.so
    f26af0b8    260000    261000 8100871  /lib/ld-2.12.so
    efeb275c    261000    262000 8100873  /lib/ld-2.12.so
    efeb2a18    268000    3ed000 8000075  /lib/libc-2.12.so
    efeb23d8    3ed000    3ee000 8000070  /lib/libc-2.12.so
    efeb2888    3ee000    3f0000 8000071  /lib/libc-2.12.so
    efeb22d4    3f0000    3f1000 8100073  /lib/libc-2.12.so
    efeb243c    3f1000    3f4000 100073
    efeb28ec    3f6000    3f9000 8000075  /lib/libdl-2.12.so
    efeb2568    3f9000    3fa000 8100071  /lib/libdl-2.12.so
    efeb2f2c    3fa000    3fb000 8100073  /lib/libdl-2.12.so
    f26af888    7fc000    7f0000 8000075  /lib/libtinfo.so.5.7
    f26a8ff2c    7f0000    7f1000 8100073  /lib/libtinfo.so.5.7
    efeb2c21c    d83000    d8f000 8000075  /lib/libnss_files-2.12.so
    efeb2c504    d8f000    d90000 8100071  /lib/libnss_files-2.12.so
```
7.6.7. Displaying open files

To display information about open files, type the files command at the interactive prompt. You can use files <pid> to display files opened by only one selected process.

Example 7.6. Displaying information about open files of the current context

```
crash> files
PID: 5591   TASK: f196d560 CPU: 2   COMMAND: "bash"
ROOT: /    CWD: /root
FD   FILE     DENTRY    INODE    TYPE  PATH
 0  f734f640  eedc2c6c  eecd6048  CHR   /pts/0
 1  efade5c0  eee14090  f00431d4  REG   /proc/sysrq-trigger
 2  f734f640  eedc2c6c  eecd6048  CHR   /pts/0
 10 f734f640  eedc2c6c  eecd6048  CHR   /pts/0
255 f734f640  eedc2c6c  eecd6048  CHR   /pts/0
```

Type help files for more information on the command usage.

7.6.8. Exiting the utility

To exit the interactive prompt and terminate crash, type exit or q.

Example 7.7. Exiting the crash utility

```
crash> exit
~]#
```

7.7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What considerations need to be made for using Kdump in a clustered environment?

How do I configure kdump for use with the RHEL 6, 7 High Availability Add-On?  shows the options available to system administrators using the High Availability Add-On.

Kdump fails during early boot, How do I capture the boot log?

If there is a problem booting the second kernel, it is necessary to review the early boot logs, these can be obtained by enabling a serial console to the affected machine.
How do I setup serial console in RHEL7? shows the configuration needed to enable access to the early boot messages.

How do I increase the messaging from makedumpfile for debugging?

In the event that makedumpfile fails, then it is necessary to increase the log level to understand what is going wrong. This is different from setting the dump level and is achieved by editing /etc/kdump.conf and increasing the message_level option to makedumpfile on the core_collector line entry.

By default makedumpfile is set to level 1, which restricts the output prints to progress indicator. Enable all the debugging information by setting this message level to 31. Message level 31 will print details about progress indicator, common message, error message, debug message and report message.

**NOTE**

For more information about the message level options, see the makedumpfile (8) manual page.

Ensure that your core_collector config line looks similar to this when set:

```
core_collector makedumpfile -l --message-level 1 -d 31
```

How do I debug Dracut?

Sometimes dracut can fail to build an initramfs. If this happens, increase the log level in dracut to isolate the issue.

Edit /etc/kdump.conf and change the dracut_args line to include the option -L 5 in addition to any other dracut arguments you require.

If you have no other options configured in dracut_args, the result looks similar to this:

```
dracut_args -L 5
```

What methods of dumping are available for virtual machines?

In most cases, the kdump mechanism is sufficient for obtaining a memory dump from a machine after a crash or panic. This can be set up in the same manner as installations to bare metal.

However, in some cases, it is necessary to work directly with the hypervisor to obtain a crash dump. There are two mechanisms available with libvirt to achieve this; pvpanic and virsh dump. Both of these methods are described in the Virtualization Deployment and Administration Guide.

The pvpanic mechanism can be found at Virtualization Deployment and Administration Guide - Setting a Panic Device.

The virsh dump command is discussed in Virtualization Deployment and Administration Guide - Creating a Dump File of a Domain's Core.

How do I upload a large dump file to Red Hat Support Services?

In some cases, it might be necessary to send a kernel crash dump file to Red Hat Global Support Services for analysis. However, the dump file can be very large, even after being filtered. Since files larger than 250 MB cannot be uploaded directly through the Red Hat Customer Portal when opening a new support case, an FTP server is provided by Red Hat for uploading large files.
The FTP server’s address is dropbox.redhat.com and the files are to be uploaded in the /incoming/ directory. Your FTP client needs to be set into passive mode; if your firewall does not allow this mode, use the origin-dropbox.redhat.com server using active mode.

Make sure that the uploaded files are compressed using a program such as gzip and properly and descriptively named. Using your support case number in the file name is recommended. After successfully uploading all necessary files, provide the engineer in charge of your support case with the exact file name and its SHA1 or MD5 checksum.

For more specific instructions and additional information, see How to provide files to Red Hat Support.

How much time is needed for a crash dump to complete?

It is often necessary, for the purposes of disaster recovery planning, to know how long a dump takes to complete. However, the length of time it takes is highly dependent on the amount of memory being copied to disk and the speed of the interfaces between RAM and storage.

For any test of timings, the system must be operating under a representative load, otherwise the page exclusion choices can present a false view of kdump behavior with a fully loaded production system. This discrepancy is present especially when working with very large quantities of RAM.

Also consider storage interfaces in your planning when assessing time to dump. Because of network constraints, a connection dumping over ssh for example, can take longer to complete than a locally attached SATA disk.

How is Kdump configured during installation?

You can configure kdump during installation with a limited set of options in kickstart or the interactive GUI.

The kdump configuration using the anaconda installation GUI is documented in the KDUMP section of the Installation Guide.

The kickstart syntax is:

```
%addon com_redhat_kdump [--disable,enable] [--reserve-mb=[auto,value]]
%end
```

With this add-on to Kickstart, you can disable or enable kdump functionality, optionally defining the reserved memory size, either by explicitly invoking the default option of auto (which is also the case if the entire switch is omitted) or specifying a numeric value in megabytes.

To learn how Kickstart can be used to automate system deployments, read Kickstart Installations in the Installation Guide.

For further details about Kickstart add-on syntax, review the Kickstart Syntax Reference in the Installation Guide.

**7.8. SUPPORTED KDUMP CONFIGURATIONS AND TARGETS**

**7.8.1. Memory requirements for kdump**

In order for kdump to be able to capture a kernel crash dump and save it for further analysis, a part of the system memory has to be permanently reserved for the capture kernel.
For information on how to change memory settings on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.1, “Configuring the memory usage”. For instructions on how to set up the amount of reserved memory in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.1, “Configuring the memory usage”.

Table 7.1 lists memory reserved automatically by kdump on kernel and kernel-alt packages. kdump auto reserves memory based on the CPU architecture, and total available physical memory.

Table 7.1. Total crash memory reserved automatically by kdump

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPU architecture</th>
<th>Available memory</th>
<th>Crash memory automatically reserved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMD64 and Intel 64 (x86_64)</td>
<td>2 GB and more</td>
<td>161 MB + 64 MB per 1 TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-bit ARM architecture (arm64)</td>
<td>2 GB and more</td>
<td>512 MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM POWER ppc64/ppc64le</td>
<td>2 GB to 4 GB</td>
<td>384 MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 GB to 16 GB</td>
<td>512 MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 GB to 64 GB</td>
<td>1 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64 GB to 128 GB</td>
<td>2 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>128 GB and more</td>
<td>4 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM Z (s390x)</td>
<td>4 GB and more</td>
<td>161 MB + 64 MB per 1 TB [1] 160 MB on RHEL-ALT-7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about various Red Hat Enterprise Linux technology capabilities and limits, see https://access.redhat.com/articles/rhel-limits.

7.8.2. Minimum threshold for automatic memory reservation

On some systems, it is possible to allocate memory for kdump automatically, either by using the crashkernel-auto parameter in the bootloader’s configuration file, or by enabling this option in the graphical configuration utility. For this automatic reservation to work, however, a certain amount of total memory needs to be available in the system. This amount differs based on the system’s architecture.

The table below lists the thresholds for automatic memory allocation for kernel and kernel-alt packages. If the system has less memory than specified in the table, memory needs to be reserved manually.

For information on how to change these settings on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.1, “Configuring the memory usage”. For instructions on how to change the amount of reserved memory in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.1, “Configuring the memory usage”.

Table 7.2. Minimum amount of memory required for automatic memory reservation
### Architecture and Required Memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Required Memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMD64 and Intel 64 (x86_64)</td>
<td>2 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM POWER (ppc64)</td>
<td>2 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM Z (s390x)</td>
<td>4 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-bit ARM architecture (arm64)</td>
<td>2 GB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.8.3. Supported kdump targets

When a kernel crash is captured, the core dump can be either written directly to a device, stored as a file on a local file system, or sent over a network. The table below contains a complete list of dump targets that are currently supported or explicitly unsupported by kdump.

For information on how to configure the target type on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.2, “Configuring the kdump type”. For information on how to do so in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.2, “Configuring the kdump type”.

#### Table 7.3. Supported kdump Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Supported Targets</th>
<th>Unsupported Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw device</td>
<td>All locally attached raw disks and partitions.</td>
<td>Any local file system not explicitly listed as supported in this table, including the auto type (automatic file system detection).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local file system</td>
<td>ext2, ext3, ext4, and xfs file systems on directly attached disk drives, hardware RAID logical drives, LVM devices, and mdraid arrays.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote directories accessed using the FCoE (Fibre Channel over Ethernet) protocol.</td>
<td>qla2xxx, lpfc and bfa hardware FCoE targets, bnx2fc and ixgbe software FCoE targets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote directories accessed using the iSCSI protocol over both hardware and software initiators.</td>
<td>Remote directories accessed using the iSCSI protocol on be2iscsi hardware.</td>
<td>Multipath-based storages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remote directories accessed using the SMB or CIFS protocol.

Remote directories accessed using wireless network interfaces.

**NOTE**

When dumping to a software FCoE target, you can encounter Out of Memory (OOM) issue. In such cases, increase the default crashkernel=auto parameter value. For more information on how to set up this kernel boot parameter, see Section 7.2.2.1, “Configuring the memory usage”.

### 7.8.4. Supported kdump filtering levels

To reduce the size of the dump file, kdump uses the makedumpfile core collector to compress the data and optionally leave out irrelevant information. The table below contains a complete list of filtering levels that are currently supported by the makedumpfile utility.

For instructions on how to configure the core collector on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.3, “Configuring the core collector”. For information on how to do so in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.3, “Configuring the core collector”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zero pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cache pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cache private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>User pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Free pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE**

The makedumpfile command supports removal of transparent huge pages and hugetlbfs pages on Red Hat Enterprise Linux 7.3 and later. Consider both these types of hugepages User Pages and remove them using the -8 level.

### 7.8.5. Supported default actions

By default, when kdump fails to create a core dump, the operating system reboots. You can, however, configure kdump to perform a different operation in case it fails to save the core dump to the primary target. The table below lists all default actions that are currently supported by kdump.
For detailed information on how to set up the default action on the command line, see Section 7.2.2.4, “Configuring the default action”. For information on how to do so in the graphical user interface, see Section 7.2.3.4, “Configuring the default action”.

### Table 7.5. Supported Default Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dump_to_rootfs</td>
<td>Attempt to save the core dump to the root file system. This option is especially useful in combination with a network target: if the network target is unreachable, this option configures kdump to save the core dump locally. The system is rebooted afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reboot</td>
<td>Reboot the system, losing the core dump in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halt</td>
<td>Halt the system, losing the core dump in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poweroff</td>
<td>Power off the system, losing the core dump in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shell</td>
<td>Run a shell session from within the initramfs, allowing the user to record the core dump manually.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.8.6. Estimating kdump size

When planning and building your **kdump** environment it is necessary to know how much space is required for the dump file before one is produced. The `makedumpfile` command can help with this.

Estimate the space required for the dump file using the **--mem-usage** functionality as:

```
# makedumpfile -f --mem-usage /proc/kcore
```

**NOTE**

The **--mem-usage** functionality using **-f** option, works with the Kernel version v4.11 and later.

For Kernel versions earlier than v4.11, before using **--mem-usage** with option **-f**, ensure that the Kernel is patched with upstream commit 464920104bf7.

The **--mem-usage** option provides a useful report about excludable pages, that can be used to determine which dump level you want to assign. Run this command when the system is under representative load, otherwise `makedumpfile` returns a smaller value than is expected in your production environment.

```
[root@hostname ~]# makedumpfile -f --mem-usage /proc/kcore
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
<th>EXCLUDABLE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IMPORTANT

The `makedumpfile` command reports in **pages**. This means that you must calculate the size of memory in use against the kernel page size, which in the Red Hat Enterprise Linux kernel, is 4 kilobytes for AMD64 and Intel 64 architectures, and 64 kilobytes for IBM POWER architecture.

### 7.8.7. Support for architectures on kernel and kernel-alt packages

The following table provides an overview of architectures and available memory support on kernel and kernel-alt packages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPU architecture</th>
<th>Available memory</th>
<th>RHEL 7.5 and earlier</th>
<th>RHEL 7.6 and later</th>
<th>RHEL-ALT-7.4</th>
<th>RHEL-ALT-7.5 and later</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMD64 and Intel 64 (x86_64)</strong></td>
<td>2GB and more</td>
<td>161MB + 64MB per 1TB</td>
<td>161MB + 64MB/1TB</td>
<td>2GB to 160MB</td>
<td>2GB to 160MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>64-bit ARM architecture (arm64)</strong></td>
<td>2GB and more</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2GB to 512MB</td>
<td>2GB to 512MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IBM POWER ppc64/ppc64le (Upto POWER8)</strong></td>
<td>2GB to 4GB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4GB to 16GB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16GB to 64GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64GB to 128GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>128GB and more</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IBM POWER ppc64/ppc64le (Upto POWER9)</strong></td>
<td>2GB to 4GB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4GB to 16GB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16GB to 64GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU architecture</td>
<td>Available memory</td>
<td>RHEL 7.5 and earlier</td>
<td>RHEL 7.6 and later</td>
<td>RHEL-ALT-7.4</td>
<td>RHEL-ALT-7.5 and later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64GB to 128GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128GB and more</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM POWER ppc64le (POWER9)</td>
<td>2GB to 4GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>384MB</td>
<td>384MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4GB to 16GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>512MB</td>
<td>512MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16GB to 64GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1GB</td>
<td>1GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64GB to 128GB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2GB</td>
<td>2GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>128GB and more</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4GB</td>
<td>4GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM Z (s390x)</td>
<td>4GB and more</td>
<td>161MB + 64MB per 1TB</td>
<td>161MB + 64MB per 1TB</td>
<td>161MB + 64MB per 1TB</td>
<td>160MB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.9. USING KEXEC TO REBOOT THE KERNEL

7.9.1. Rebooting kernel with kexec

The `kexec` system call enables loading and booting into another kernel from the currently running kernel, thus performing a function of a boot loader from within the kernel.

The `kexec` utility loads the kernel and the `initramfs` image for the `kexec` system call to boot into another kernel.

The following section describes how to manually invoke the `kexec` system call when using the `kexec` utility to reboot into another kernel.

1. Execute the `kexec` utility:

   ```bash
   # kexec -l /boot/vmlinuz-3.10.0-1040.el7.x86_64 --initrd=/boot/initramfs-3.10.0-1040.el7.x86_64.img --reuse-cmdline
   
   The command manually loads the kernel and the initramfs image for the `kexec` system call.
   
   2. Reboot the system:

   ```bash
   # reboot
   ```
The command detects the kernel, shuts down all services and then calls the `kexec` system call to reboot into the kernel you provided in the previous step.

**WARNING**

When you use the `kexec -e` command to reboot the kernel, the system does not go through the standard shutdown sequence before starting the next kernel, which may cause data loss or an unresponsive system.

### 7.10. PORTAL LABS RELEVANT TO KDUMP

The Portal Labs are small web applications that can help system administrators perform several system tasks. There are currently two labs focused on Kdump. The Kdump Helper and the Kernel Oops Analyzer.

#### 7.10.1. Kdump helper

The Kdump Helper is a series of questions and actions that assist in preparing the configuration files for kdump.

The Lab’s workflow includes steps for both clustered and standalone environments.

#### 7.10.2. Kernel oops analyzer

The Kernel Oops Analyzer is a tool to process Oops messages and search for known solutions without having to unwind the crash dump stack.

The KernelOopsAnalyzer uses information from `makedumpfile` to compare the oops message from a crashed machine with known issues in the knowledge base. This can enable System Administrators to rule out known issues quickly after an unexpected outage, and before opening a support ticket for a further analysis.
CHAPTER 8. ENHANCING SECURITY WITH THE KERNEL INTEGRITY SUBSYSTEM

8.1. THE KERNEL INTEGRITY SUBSYSTEM

The integrity subsystem is a part of the kernel which is responsible for maintaining the system’s data integrity. This subsystem helps to keep the system in its initial state by preventing users from making undesired modification to specific system files.

The kernel integrity subsystem consists of two major components:

**Integrity Measurement Architecture (IMA)**

- Measures files’ content whenever it is executed or opened. Users can change this behavior by applying custom policies.
- Places the measured values within the kernel’s memory space, thereby it prevents any modification by the users of the system.
- Allows local and remote parties to verify the measured values.

**Extended Verification Module (EVM)**

- Protects files’ extended attributes (also known as *xattr*) that are related to the system’s security, like IMA measurements and SELinux attributes, by cryptographically hashing their corresponding values.

Both IMA and EVM also contain numerous feature extensions that bring additional functionality. For example:

**IMA-Appraisal**

- Locally validates the current file’s content against the values previously stored in the measurement file within the kernel memory. This extension forbids any operation to be performed over a specific file in case the current measurement does not match the previous measurement.

**EVM Digital Signatures**

- Allows the use of digital signatures through cryptographic keys stored into the kernel’s keyring. EVM Digital Signatures ensures the origin and integrity of *xattr* values of those files which have the content hash (*security ima*) included.

**NOTE**

The feature extensions complement each other, but you can configure and use them independently of one another.

The kernel integrity subsystem can use the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) to further harden system security. TPM is a specification by the Trusted Computing Group (TCG) for important cryptographic functions. TPM is usually implemented as dedicated hardware that is attached to the platform’s...
motherboard and prevents software-based attacks by providing cryptographic functions from a protected and tamper-proof area of the hardware chip. Some of TPM features are:

- Random-number generator
- Generator and secure storage for cryptographic keys
- Hashing generator
- Remote attestation

8.2. INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

Integrity Measurement Architecture (IMA) is a component of the kernel integrity subsystem. IMA aims to maintain the contents of local files by measuring, storing, and appraising files’ hashes before they are accessed. This prevents the reading and execution of unreliable data and enhances system security.

8.3. EXTENDED VERIFICATION MODULE

Extended Verification Module (EVM) is a component of the kernel integrity subsystem that monitors changes in files’ extended attributes (xattr). Many security-oriented technologies, including Integrity Measurement Architecture (IMA), store sensitive file information, such as content hashes, in extended attributes. EVM creates another hash from these extended attributes and from a special key, which is loaded at boot time. The resulting hash is validated every time the extended attribute is used. For example, when IMA appraises the file.

8.4. TRUSTED AND ENCRYPTED KEYS

Trusted and encrypted keys are variable-length symmetric keys generated by the kernel that are used by the kernel keyring service. This type of keys never appears in the user space in an unencrypted form, which means that their integrity can be verified. They can therefore be used, for example, by the extended verification module (EVM) to verify and confirm the integrity of a running system. User-level programs can only access the keys in the form of encrypted blobs.

Trusted keys need a hardware component: the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) chip, which is used to both create and encrypt (seal) the keys. The TPM seals the keys using a 2048-bit RSA key called the storage root key (SRK).

For more information about trusted and encrypted keys see the Trusted and Encrypted Keys section of RHEL 7 Security Guide.

8.5. ENABLING INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE AND EXTENDED VERIFICATION MODULE

Integrity measurement architecture (IMA) and extended verification module (EVM) are components of the kernel integrity subsystem that enhance system security in various ways. Configuring IMA and EVM enables you to sign files and thereby to enhance system security.

Prerequisites

- The ima-evm-utils, and keyutils packages are installed on your system.
- The securityfs filesystem is mounted on the /sys/kernel/security/ directory.
• The `/sys/kernel/security/ima/` directory exists.

```bash
# mount
...
securityfs on /sys/kernel/security type securityfs (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
...
```

Procedure

1. Prepare your system to enable IMA and EVM:

   a. Add the following kernel command line parameters:

   ```bash
   # grubby --update-kernel=/boot/vmlinuz-$(uname -r) --args="ima_appraise=fix ima_appraise_tcb evm=fix"
   ```

   The command enables IMA and EVM in the `fix` mode for the current boot entry and allows users to gather and update IMA measurements.

   The `ima_appraise_tcb` kernel command line parameter ensures that the kernel uses the default Trusted Computing Base (TCB) measurement policy and the appraisal step. The appraisal step forbids access to files whose prior and current measurements do not match.

   b. Reboot for the changes to take effect.

   c. Optionally, verify that the kernel command line includes the new parameters:

   ```bash
   # cat /proc/cmdline
   BOOT_IMAGE=/vmlinuz-3.10.0-1136.el7.x86_64 root=/dev/mapper/rhel-root ro
   crashkernel=auto spectre_v2=retpoline rd.lvm.lv=rhel/root rd.lvm.lv=rhel/swap rhgb quiet
   LANG=en_US.UTF-8 ima_appraise=fix ima_appraise_tcb evm=fix
   ```

2. Create and set a public and private keypair for EVM:

   a. Create a new keyring for EVM:

   ```bash
   # evm_kr_id=$(keyctl newring _evm @u)
   ```

   The command creates the `_evm` keyring and attaches it to the `@u` system user keyring. Then, the keyring ID of `_evm` is assigned to the `evm_kr_id` variable for more convenient handling in the future.

   b. Optionally, view the newly created keyring:

   ```bash
   # keyctl show
   Session Keyring
   1025767139 --alswrv 0 0 keyring: _ses
   548660789 --alswrv 0 65534 \ keyring: _uid.0
   456142548 --alswrv 0 0 \ keyring: _evm
   ```

   c. Create a directory for keys:

   ```bash
   # mkdir -p /etc/keys/
   ```
d. Generate a 1024-bit RSA private key into the /etc/keys/privkey.pem file:

```bash
# openssl genrsa -out /etc/keys/privkey.pem 1024
Generating RSA private key, 1024 bit long modulus
.......++++++
...++++++
e is 65537 (0x10001)
```

e. Use the previously created /etc/keys/privkey.pem private key to derive a corresponding RSA public key into the /etc/keys/pubkey.pem file:

```bash
# openssl rsa -pubout -in /etc/keys/privkey.pem -out /etc/keys/pubkey.pem
writing RSA key
```

f. Import the public key into the dedicated EVM keyring:

```bash
# evmctl import --rsa /etc/keys/pubkey.pem $evm_kr_id
1054989579
```

The command imports the /etc/keys/pubkey.pem public key into the _evm keyring. The _evm keyring is then attached to the kernel keyring. The key serial number is on the second line of the previous example.

g. Optionally, view the newly imported key:

```bash
# keyctl show
Session Keyring
1025767139 --alswrv 0 0 keyring: _ses
548660789 --alswrv 0 65534 _ keyring: _uid.0
456142548 --alswrv 0 0 _ keyring: _evm
1054989579 --alswrv 0 0 _ user: FA0EF80BF06F80AC
```

**NOTE**

This asymmetric key pair can be used to digitally sign the contents of an extended attribute of a file using the `evmctl sign` command. The extended attribute is later verified by the kernel.

h. Create a kernel master key to protect the EVM key:

```bash
# dd if=/dev/urandom bs=1 count=32 2>/dev/null | keyctl padd user kmk-user @u
```

The kernel master key (kmk) is kept entirely in the kernel space memory. The 32-byte long value of the kernel master key kmk is generated from random bytes from the /dev/urandom file and placed in the user ( @u) keyring.

3. Create an encrypted EVM key based on the kmk key:

```bash
# keyctl add encrypted evm-key "new user:kmk 64" @u
351426499
```
The command uses `kmk` to generate and encrypt a 64-byte user key (named `evm-key`) and places it in the user (`@u`) keyring. The key serial number is on the second line of the previous example.

**IMPORTANT**

It is necessary to name the user key `evm-key` because that is the name the EVM subsystem expects and works with.

4. Activate EVM:

```bash
# echo 1 > /sys/kernel/security/evm
```

5. Verify that EVM has been initialized:

```bash
dmesg | tail -1
[...] EVM: initialized
```

### 8.6. COLLECTING FILE HASHES WITH INTEGRITY MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

The first level of operation of integrity measurement architecture (IMA) is the measurement phase, which allows to create file hashes and store them as extended attributes (xattrs) of those files. The following section describes how to create and inspect the files’ hashes.

**Prerequisites**

- The `ima-evm-utils`, `attr`, and `keyutils` packages are installed on your system.
- Integrity measurement architecture (IMA) and extended verification module (EVM) are enabled as described in Section 8.5, “Enabling integrity measurement architecture and extended verification module”.

**Procedure**

1. Create a test file:

```bash
# echo <Test_text> > test_file
```

2. Sign the file with the private key:

```bash
# evmctl sign --imahash --key /etc/keys/privkey.pem test_file
```

By creating a hash of the `test_file` file, IMA verifies that the file remains uncorrupted. EVM ensures that the IMA hash is genuine by signing the hash content that is stored in the extended attribute of `test_file`.

3. Optionally, check the extended attributes of the signed file:

```bash
# getfattr -m . -d test_file
file: test_file
security.evm=0sAwICztVdCQCAZLtD7qAezGl8nGLggFZzMzQp7Fm1svUet2Hy7TyTevT9/9ZfBTMKK6Mjoyk0VX+DciS85XOCYX6WnV1LF2P/pmPRfputSEq9fVD4SWfKkJzrI7qwppdC1UqR
```
This example output shows extended attributes related to SELinux and the IMA and EVM hash values. EVM actively adds a `security.evm` extended attribute and detects any offline tampering to xattrs of other files such as `security ima` that are directly related to file content integrity. The value of the `security.evm` field is in Hash-based Message Authentication Code (HMAC-SHA1), which was generated with the private key.

**Additional resources**

- For details about the kernel integrity subsystem, see the [official upstream wiki page](https://example.com).
- For further information about TPM, see the [Trusted Computing Group resources](https://example.com).
- For more information about creating encrypted keys, see the [Trusted and Encrypted Keys](https://example.com) section of RHEL 7 Security Guide.
CHAPTER 9. REVISION HISTORY

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