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Draft NISTIR 8011
Volume 4

Automation Support for Security Control Assessments:

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Software Vulnerability Management

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NIST

**National Institute of
Standards and Technology**

U.S. Department of Commerce

Automation Support for Security Control Assessments:

Software Vulnerability Management

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75   **Reports on Computer Systems Technology**

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77   Technology (NIST) promotes the U.S. economy and public welfare by providing technical
78   leadership for the Nation's measurement and standards infrastructure. ITL develops tests, test
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81   development of management, administrative, technical, and physical standards and guidelines for
82   the cost-effective security and privacy of other than national security-related information in federal
83   information systems.

84   **Abstract**

85   The NISTIR 8011 capability-specific volumes focus on the automation of security control
86   assessment within each individual information security capability. They add tangible detail to the
87   more general overview given in NISTIR 8011 Volume 1, providing a template for transition to a
88   detailed, NIST standards-compliant automated assessment. This document, Volume 4 of NISTIR
89   8011, addresses the management of risk created by defects present in software on the network.
90   Software vulnerability management, in the scope of this document, focuses on known defects
91   that have been discovered in software in use on a system. The Common Weakness Enumeration
92   (CWE) provides identifiers for weaknesses that result from poor coding practices and have the
93   potential to result in software vulnerabilities. The Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures
94   (CVEs) program provides a list of many known vulnerabilities. Together, CVE and CWE are
95   used to identify software defects and the weaknesses that cause a given defect. Vulnerable
96   software is a key target that attackers use to initiate an attack internally and to expand control.
97   Patching vulnerabilities discovered in existing software and improving coding practices for
98   future releases of software are two ways to limit the success of attacks.

107

117   **Document Conventions**

118   The terms "shall" and "shall not" indicate requirements to be followed strictly in order to
119   conform to the publication and from which no deviation is permitted.

120   The terms "should" and "should not" indicate that among several possibilities one is
121   recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain
122   course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form) a certain
123   possibility or course of action is discouraged but not prohibited.

124   The terms "may" and "need not" indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the
125   publication.

126   The terms "can" and "cannot" indicate a possibility and capability, whether material, physical or
127   causal.

128   **Note to Reviewers**

129   Your feedback on this draft publication is important to us. We appreciate each contribution from
130   our reviewers. The very insightful comments from both the public and private sectors, nationally
131   and internationally, continue to help shape the final publication to ensure that it meets the needs
132   and expectations of our customers.

133   **Call for Patent Claims**

134   This public review includes a call for information on essential patent claims (claims whose use
135   would be required for compliance with the guidance or requirements in this Information
136   Technology Laboratory (ITL) draft publication). Such guidance and/or requirements may be
137   directly stated in this ITL Publication or by reference to another publication. This call also
138   includes disclosure, where known, of the existence of pending U.S. or foreign patent applications
139   relating to this ITL draft publication and of any relevant unexpired U.S. or foreign patents.
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154   demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination.
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156   Such assurance shall indicate that the patent holder (or third party authorized to make assurances
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158   assurance, provisions sufficient to ensure that the commitments in the assurance are binding on
159   the transferee, and that the transferee will similarly include appropriate provisions in the event of
160   future transfers with the goal of binding each successor-in-interest.
161
162   The assurance shall also indicate that it is intended to be binding on successors-in-interest
163   regardless of whether such provisions are included in the relevant transfer documents.
164
165   Such statements should be addressed to: sec-cert@nist.gov

166 **Executive Summary**

167 The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Department of Homeland
168 Security (DHS) have collaborated on the development of a process that automates the test
169 assessment method described in NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-53A for the security controls
170 catalogued in SP 800-53. The process is consistent with the Risk Management Framework as
171 described in SP 800-37 and the Information Security Continuous Monitoring (ISCM) guidance in
172 SP 800-137. The multi-volume NIST Interagency Report 8011 (NISTIR 8011) has been
173 developed to provide information on automation support for ongoing assessments. NISTIR 8011
174 describes how ISCM facilitates automated, ongoing assessment to provide near-real-time
175 security-related information to organizational officials on the security posture of individual
176 systems and the organization as a whole.

177 NISTIR 8011, Volume 1 includes a description of *ISCM Security Capabilities*—groups of
178 security controls working together to achieve a common purpose. The subsequent NISTIR 8011
179 volumes are capability-specific. Each volume focuses on one specific ISCM information security
180 capability in order to (a) add tangible detail to the more general overview given in NISTIR 8011
181 Volume 1 and (b) provide a template for the transition to detailed, standards-compliant
182 automated assessments.

183 This publication, Volume 4 of NISTIR 8011, addresses the management of risk created by
184 defects present in software on the network. A *software vulnerability* is caused by one or more
185 known defects that have been discovered in software. *Vulnerable software* is software in use on a
186 system that has a software vulnerability but has not yet been patched or otherwise mitigated. The
187 Common Weakness Enumeration (CWE) provides identifiers for weaknesses that result from
188 poor coding practices and *have the potential* to result in software vulnerabilities. The Common
189 Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs) program works with software providers, vulnerability
190 coordinators, bug bounty programs, and vulnerability researchers to provide a list of publicly
191 disclosed vulnerabilities. Together, CVE and CWE are used to identify software defects and the
192 weaknesses that caused a given defect. Vulnerable software is a key target that attackers use to
193 initiate an attack internally and to expand control. Patching vulnerabilities discovered in existing
194 software and improving coding practices for future releases of software are two ways to limit the
195 success of attacks.

196 | The term *vulnerability* is used herein to denote *software* vulnerability as opposed to the more
197 | general use of the term *vulnerability*. See glossary for the distinction.

198 When known software vulnerabilities are unmanaged, uncorrected, or undetected, attack vectors
199 are left open to exploitation. As a result, vulnerable software is a key target that attackers use to
200 initiate an attack on an organization's network and expand control to attack other components on
201 the network. A well-designed vulnerability management capability helps prevent software with
202 vulnerabilities from being installed on a network, detect software with vulnerabilities already
203 installed on a network, and respond to the vulnerabilities detected (e.g., by patching the
204 vulnerabilities or other mitigations). By managing the vulnerabilities, the level of effort needed
205 to initiate an attack and expand control to other components on the network is greatly increased.
206 Automated assessment of known software vulnerabilities and weaknesses helps verify that the
207 software vulnerability management capability is working.

208   **Known** vulnerabilities (CVEs) are the most likely flaws to be exploited. The software
209   vulnerability management capability (VULN) focuses on managing known vulnerabilities *and*
210   poor coding practices (CWEs) known to produce vulnerabilities.

211   **Unknown** vulnerabilities are addressed to a large degree—although not completely—through
212   software asset management (whitelisting) [IR8011-3]. When software whitelisting is effective, it
213   blocks unauthorized software of any kind, thereby limiting vulnerabilities to only those
214   remaining in the organization's *authorized* software.

215   NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 outlines detailed, step-by-step processes to automate the assessment of
216   security controls that support vulnerability management implemented for a given assessment
217   boundary (target network) and apply the results to the assessment of all authorization boundaries
218   within that network. A process is also provided to implement the assessment (diagnosis) and
219   response. Automated testing related to the controls for the VULN capability, as outlined herein,
220   is consistent with other NIST guidance.

221   NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 documents a detailed assessment plan to evaluate the effectiveness of
222   controls related to vulnerability management. Included are specific tests that form the basis for
223   such a plan, how the tests apply to specific controls, and the resources needed to operate and use
224   the assessment to mitigate defects found. For the VULN capability, it can be shown that the
225   assessment of 87.5%[1] of determination statements for controls in the SP 800-53 Low-Medium-
226   High baselines can be fully or partially automated.

227   The methods outlined here are designed to facilitate risk management by providing objective,
228   timely, and complete identification of security control defects related to the VULN capability at
229   a lower cost than manual assessment methods. Using security control defect information can
230   drive the most efficient and effective responses to the security defects found.

231   NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 assumes the reader is familiar with the concepts and ideas presented in
232   the Overview (NISTIR 8011, Volume 1). Many terms used herein are also defined in the Volume
233   1 glossary.

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[1] Derived from the Control Allocation Tables (CAT) in this volume. With respect to security controls selected in the SP 800-53
   [SP800-53] Low-Medium-High baselines that support the VULN capability, 42 of 48 determination statements (87.5%) can
   be fully or partially automated.

234   **Table of Contents**

298
299

300 **List of Figures**

309

310 **List of Tables**

321

1   Introduction

1.1   Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Interagency Report
(NISTIR) 8011, Volume 4 is to provide an operational approach for automating the assessment
of SP 800-53 [SP800-53] security controls related to the ISCM-defined security capability of
software vulnerability management (VULN) that is consistent with the principles outlined in
NISTIR 8011, Volume 1 [IR8011-1].

The scope of this report is limited to the assessment of security controls/control items that are
implemented for managing software security vulnerabilities (CVEs) and weaknesses (CWEs),
also referred to as *flaws*, as defined in SP 800-53.

1.2   Target Audience

Because it is focused on the VULN capability, NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 is of special relevance to
those who authorize, download, install and/or execute software—particularly software patches.
In addition, NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 is relevant to those who code and test software and those
who wish to understand the risks that software might impose on non-software assets.

1.3   Organization of this Volume

Section 2 provides an overview of the VULN capability to clarify both scope and purpose and
provides links to additional information specific to the VULN capability. Section 3 provides
detailed information on the VULN defect checks and how the defect checks are used to automate
assessment of the effectiveness of SP 800-53 security controls that support the VULN capability.
Section 3 also provides artifacts that can be used by an organization to produce an automated
security control assessment plan for most of the control items supporting software vulnerability
management.

1.4   Interaction with Other Volumes in this NISTIR

Volume 1 of this NISTIR (Overview) provides a conceptual synopsis of using automation to
support security control assessment as well as definitions and background information that
facilitate understanding of the information in this and subsequent volumes. NISTIR 8011,
Volume 4 assumes that the reader is familiar with the information in Volume 1.

The VULN capability detects vulnerable software that has been placed or is being executed on
hardware in the target network and responds in accordance with organizational policy.
Identifying vulnerable software allows vulnerabilities to be mitigated. The VULN capability
depends on the Software Asset Management (SWAM) capability [IR8011-3] to provide an
inventory of installed software. The inventory is then examined to detect the presence of known
vulnerabilities and poor coding practices. Changing configuration settings (the subject of the
Configuration Setting Management (CSM) capability in a future NISTIR 8011 volume) can
sometimes be used to mitigate vulnerabilities by disabling or otherwise protecting vulnerable
software features, especially when patches are not available, thereby supporting software

359   vulnerability management.

360   In practice, vulnerability scanning software is often used to find vulnerable software. If the
361   metadata used to guide software scanning is organized appropriately, the same digital
362   fingerprints used for whitelisting [IR8011-3] can be used to accurately and reliably identify
363   vulnerable code as discussed further in Section 2.5.2.3. The adoption of software whitelisting
364   makes vulnerability detection highly reliable.

365

2   Software Vulnerability Management (VULN) Capability Definition, Overview, and Scope

Software vulnerability management recognizes that even authorized software—software that has been assessed and approved by the organization for execution on a system—can have known vulnerabilities and (presumably) unknown instances of coding weaknesses that result in security vulnerabilities. Networked devices with coding defects in authorized software are also likely to be exploitable. A key attack vector for external and internal attackers is to exploit software defects, either for what the software itself can offer or as a platform from which to attack other assets. Attacks can make use of previously unknown software vulnerabilities (often referred to as zero-day vulnerabilities), although attacks against known vulnerabilities are more likely to be attempted first. By removing or mitigating software flaws and assigning software with flaws to a person or team for vulnerability management, the VULN capability helps reduce the probability that attackers find and exploit software weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

2.1   VULN Capability Description

The software vulnerability management (VULN) capability provides an organization visibility into the vulnerabilities in software authorized to operate—or being considered for authorization—on its network(s). Visibility into the vulnerabilities allows the organization to manage and defend itself in an appropriate manner. The VULN capability also provides a view of software management responsibility that helps prioritize identified defects and facilitate risk response decisions (e.g., mitigation or acceptance) by the assigned managers.

The VULN capability identifies software that is present on the network (the *actual* state) and compares it with the *desired* state software inventory to determine if there are less vulnerable (usually newer) versions of software that can be deployed or if non-patch-related mitigation strategies are needed. The VULN capability is focused on ensuring that all software operating on the target network have as little risk from known vulnerabilities as possible, and that an effective patching and response policy[2] is applied.

2.2   VULN Attack Scenarios and Desired Result

NISTIR 8011 uses an attack step model to summarize the six primary steps of cyber-attacks that SP 800-53 controls work together to block or delay. The *VULN* security capability is intended to block or delay attacks only at the attack steps addressed in Figure 1 and Table 1.

---

[2] Patching and response policy may be addressed in the organization's vulnerability management policy.

Attack Steps	VULN Impacts
1) Gain Internal Entry	
2) Initiate Attack ←	**Block Attempted Compromise:** Stop or delay the compromise of devices due to software vulnerabilities and weaknesses
3) Gain Foothold	
4) Gain Persistence	
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate ←	**Block Expansion:** Stop or delay expansion or escalation via software vulnerabilities and weaknesses
6) Achieve Attack Objective	

397   **Figure 1: VULN Impact on an Attack Step Model**

398   **Notes on Figure 1**

399   The attack steps shown in Figure 1 apply only to adversarial attacks. (See NISTIR 8011, Volume
400   1, Section 3.2.)

401   If the initiated internal attack succeeds in Step 2, the normal attack progression is that the
402   attacker immediately gains a foothold on the affected device (via the software) in Step 3. Step 5
403   (propagation, expansion of control) is a loop back to Step 2 on a different device from the one
404   compromised in Step 5.

405

406   **Table 1: VULN Impact on an Attack Step Model**

Attack Step Name	Attack Step Purpose (General)	Capability-Specific Defense
2) Initiate Attack Internally	The attacker is inside the boundary and initiates an attack on some assessment object inside the boundary. Examples include but are not limited to: user opens spear phishing email and/or clicks on attachment, laptop lost or stolen, user installs unauthorized software and/or hardware, unauthorized personnel gain physical access to restricted facility.	Block Attempted Compromise: Stop or delay the compromise of devices due to software vulnerabilities. Examples include but are not limited to: unauthorized software, weak setting configuration, and incomplete patching.
5) Expand Control - Escalate or Propagate	The attacker has persistence on the assessment object and seeks to expand control by escalation of privileges on the assessment object or propagation to another assessment object. Examples include but are not limited to: administrator privileges hijacked and/or stolen, administrator's password used by unauthorized party, secure configuration is changed and/or audit function is disabled, authorized users access resources the users do not need to perform job, process or program that runs as root is compromised and/or hijacked.	Block Expansion: Stop or delay expansion or escalation via software vulnerabilities. Examples include but are not limited to: unauthorized software, weak setting configuration, and incomplete patching.

407

408   **Other examples of traceability among requirement levels**. While Table 1 shows software
409   vulnerability management impacts on example attack steps, it is frequently useful to observe
410   traceability among other sets of requirements. To examine such traceability, see Table 2. To
411   reveal traceability from one requirement type to another, look up the cell in the matching row
412   and column of interest, and click on the link.

413

Table 2: Traceability Among Requirement Levels

	Example Attack Steps	Capability	Sub-Capability/ Defect Check	Control Items
Example Attack Steps		Figure 1 Table 1	Table 6	
Capability	Figure 1 Table 1		Table 6	Section 3.3[a]
Sub-Capability/ Defect Check	Table 6	Table 6		Section 3.3[b]
Control Items		Section 3.3[a]	Section 3.3[b]	

414 [a] Each level-four section (e.g., 3.3.1.1) is a control item that supports this capability.
415 [b] Refer to the table under the heading *Supporting Control Items* within each defect check.

416

2.3 Assessment Objects Managed and Assessed by VULN

418 The objects managed and assessed by VULN are *software flaws*. Two kinds of software flaws
419 are directly managed and assessed by the VULN capability: (1) **Common Vulnerabilities and**
420 **Exposures (CVEs)** [CVE] identified, analyzed, and proven to exist in specific versions and
421 patch levels of software files in use on devices, and (2) poor programming practices, called
422 **Common Weakness Enumerations (CWEs)** [CWE], revealed in software code of software
423 products and files in use on devices. Devices are protected when levels of risk arising from
424 CVEs and CWEs contained in the software running on them are kept within organizational risk
425 tolerances.

426 The number of software flaws present on a system rises and falls over time. The number
427 increases as flaws are discovered, and decreases as flaws are mitigated. Assessments are
428 therefore periodically repeated to maintain currency of information.

429 The VULN capability is most useful in protecting against attackers who are only modestly
430 funded, less capable, or less motivated. The capability concentrates on protecting from *known*
431 vulnerabilities for which every potential threat community can easily and cheaply obtain
432 knowledge and tools to guide their exploits. For most known vulnerabilities, patches exist to
433 repair the vulnerabilities (if a patch does not yet exist, the vulnerability is considered to be a
434 zero-day vulnerability; see §2.3.1). Paradoxically, most organizations do a poor job of mitigating
435 even the *known* vulnerabilities (e.g., not applying patches in accordance with the organization's
436 patching and response requirements), which means that at any point in time large numbers of
437 targets are exploitable. So, while the VULN capability only focuses on *known* vulnerabilities,
438 there is typically much within the category of *known* software vulnerabilities that still remains to
439 be done to improve defenses.

440 An effective vulnerability management program—even one that is concentrating only on *known*

441 vulnerabilities—is still useful in defending against well-funded, highly motivated/capable
442 attackers. Sophisticated attackers spend significant resources to find, weaponize, and conceal
443 *unknown* vulnerabilities. They are frugal in deploying the weaponized *unknown* vulnerabilities,
444 because the act of deployment risks revealing the vulnerability (i.e., taking it from unknown to
445 known) and, once known, could lead to mitigation and neutralization by defenders. Well-funded
446 and highly capable/motivated attackers, therefore, often prefer to exploit *known* vulnerabilities
447 because known vulnerabilities are very cost-effective to attack and using them does not require
448 spending precious *unknown* vulnerabilities to achieve the attack objectives. As such, if software
449 is protected against *known* vulnerabilities, it raises the cost for even sophisticated attackers to
450 succeed.

2.3.1 Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVEs)

452 Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) [CVE] is a list of entries—each of which
453 contains a unique identification number—a description, and at least one public reference—for
454 publicly disclosed cybersecurity vulnerabilities that have been found in specific software and
455 reported (to https://cve.mitre.org). Important characteristics of CVEs for purposes of automated
456 assessment are:

457 CVE is a standard way of describing publicly disclosed cybersecurity vulnerabilities found in
458 software. CVE has a dictionary format with one entry per vulnerability or exposure. The unique
459 identifier of a CVE is designed to be interoperable with software systems across the industry. A
460 CVE is designed to convey the same meaning across products, tools, and services.
461
462 Once a CVE is disclosed, the organization controlling the software begins work on creating a
463 patch to close the vulnerability. The intent of patching and alternate methods to fix coding flaws
464 is to discover and mitigate issues before the attacker can find and exploit them. The challenge for
465 the defender is to stay one step ahead of the attacker while managing the increasing complexity
466 of the code.
467
468 From the time that a vulnerability is discovered (by someone) until the organization controlling
469 the software learns of it and provides a patch, the vulnerability is known as a zero-day
470 vulnerability. The software is exposed during that interval and until a patch is released and
471 applied. During this period of exposure there is likely to be no defense from attack short of
472 isolation or removal.[3]
473
474 Software that is used across platforms (e.g., Acrobat and Java), or used on the most widely used
475 platforms (e.g., Microsoft or Cisco) usually present the most attractive investments of time for
476 attackers looking to cost-effectively exploit vulnerabilities. Consequently, code on widely used
477 platforms reports the most CVEs. The higher volume of CVEs might be due to the increased
478 focus of vulnerability research and reporting on more widely used software. However, a larger

---

[3] Note that while *malware*—because it is unauthorized—cannot execute in a whitelisted environment, attackers can still gain
    entry to an environment via *unmitigated vulnerabilities* in the whitelisted software itself. Consequently, software
    vulnerability management is of high priority even in a whitelisted software environment.

479 number of publicly disclosed vulnerabilities over a series of software releases could indicate a
480 higher degree of software *provider* maturity. It is not unusual for the providers of software
481 platforms to have robust vulnerability disclosure, reporting, and management programs, all
482 positive indicators of good risk management practices by the software provider.
483
484 The National Vulnerability Database (NVD) [NVD] publishes CVE information to the public in
485 a standard, machine-readable format. The NVD is the best *open* source of information on known
486 software vulnerabilities. On occasion, industry is aware of publicly disclosed vulnerabilities not
487 yet catalogued in NVD, but such sources are generally proprietary, not open.
488
489   1. Each known vulnerability in NVD is identified by the CVE program, from which the
490   NVD receives a data feed.
491
492   2. Reputable software manufacturers with a mature and robust vulnerability management
493   program report CVEs within a short time after they verify CVE existence.
494
495   3. Sometimes CVEs are reported by third-party ethical hackers. Not all vulnerabilities
496   discovered in software are publicly disclosed, so not all are included in the NVD.
497
498 Some vulnerabilities in code that *can* be exploited as vulnerabilities are not reported as CVEs
499 and are therefore not listed in the NVD. There are several reasons a vulnerability known to
500 someone might not be publicly disclosed. Examples include:
501
502   1. The vulnerability may have been discovered only by criminals and/or intelligence
503   services who plan to exploit the vulnerability at some point and thus do not want it
504   disclosed.
505
506   2. The vulnerability might exist in custom software and/or industrial control systems.
507   Because of the limited number of users—and the potential sensitivity of the systems
508   involved—such vulnerabilities might not be listed in the NVD because disclosing them is
509   judged to increase the risk of attack more than it would protect the affected systems.
510
511   3. The vulnerability might exist in COTS software but might not be announced until a patch
512   is available, because disclosing it is thought to increase the risk of attack more than it
513   would protect systems.
514
515   4. The vulnerability might have been discovered by a vulnerability scanning provider, and
516   they just happened to discover it before a CVE numbering authority [CNA] had assigned
517   it a CVE ID.
518
519 Because of variations in vendor and attacker efforts to expose CVEs as well as attacker efforts to
520 conceal unreported vulnerabilities they have discovered, the number of *known* CVEs in a
521 software product is not necessarily reflective of the number of vulnerabilities *actually* present in
522 the product.

523   **2.3.2   Common Weakness Enumerations (CWEs)**

524   The Common Weakness Enumeration (CWE) is a list of categories of well-known poor coding
525   practices that are observed to manifest themselves in production software [CWE]. Important
526   characteristics of CWEs relevant to automated assessment are:

527   There are three primary methods employed to ensure that code does not contain CWEs. In order
528   of effectiveness, the methods are:
529
530   1. Acquisition of developers experienced with secure coding practices;
531
532   2. Adoption of processes to ensure that code is independently reviewed by a team of
533   programmers experienced with secure coding practices; and
534
535   3. Use of code analyzers, which can frequently find poor coding practices in code after it
536   has been written or compiled. Code analyzers automate review of applications.
537
538   Code analyzers are typically either static or dynamic. Static code analyzers are used to review
539   bodies of source code (at the programming language level) or compiled code (at the machine
540   language level). Dynamic code analyzers are used for observing code behavior *as it executes,*
541   probing the application, and analyzing the application responses.
542
543   While a CVE entry in the NVD often conveys information about the poor coding practice(s) that
544   resulted in the CVE, there is no guarantee that a poor coding practice will actually result in a
545   CVE. If the code is not analyzed or probed, then the flaw may not be noticed.
546
547   Even if the code is analyzed, and a piece of code is tagged as a CWE, it still might not actually
548   result in a CVE because the code analyzers employed to detect CWEs produce many *false*
549   *positive* results (i.e., the code analyzers identify code as containing poor coding practices when it
550   does not).
551
552   A code analyzer-identified CWE that has not yet been verified to be a false positive is treated as
553   if it were a software vulnerability. Because of the frequent occurrence of false positives in
554   reports from code analyzers, CWE remediation efforts often involve independent validation and
555   verification of the identified CWE. The additional analysis is needed to decide whether specific
556   reported instances of poor programming practices are ignored (because they are false positives)
557   or acted upon (because they are confirmed true positives) with subsequent appropriate response
558   or reporting.
559
560   CWEs are primarily of interest to parties who have *control* over source code—developers or
561   testers in an organization that creates COTS, GOTS, or custom code. However, CWEs are also
562   of interest to organizations requiring verification of the security-worthiness (i.e., the need for
563   additional software security assurance) of software before deploying that software in a
564   production environment.

565 ### 2.3.3   Mitigation Roles for CVEs and CWEs

566 For supported software, the roles involved in the mitigation of CVEs and CWEs are the roles of
567 Software Flaw Manager (SWFM) and Patch Manager (PatMan). Mitigation roles are depicted in
568 Figure 2. Note that for *unsupported* software, no patch is generated for a CVE, and there is likely
569 to be *no* mitigation short of isolation or removal.

SWFM

Software Flaw Manager (SWFM)

For supported software:
- Creates patches for CVEs on software controlled (e.g., COTS and GOTS, software developed for others, and custom software developed for the organization)
- Finds CWEs on software controlled and remediates
- Sometimes finds CWEs on COTS and GOTS developed by others

For unsupported software:
- No patches (unsupported)

PatMan

Patch Manager (PatMan)

For supported software:
1. Finds devices and software needing patches (i.e., software with CVEs)
2. Applies patches to repair CVEs

For unsupported software:
3. Implements mitigation for unsupported software (e.g., removal, isolation, etc.)

570 **Figure 2: CVE and CWE Mitigation Roles**

571

572 #### 2.3.3.1   Software Flaw Manager (SWFM)

573 When a *CVE* is confirmed to exist for supported software, it is turned over to a Software Flaw
574 Manager (SWFM) of the organization controlling the code, who is then charged with the task of
575 creating a patch. The patch may be for COTS, GOTS, or custom software supported by the
576 controlling organization. Similarly, when a *CWE* is confirmed to require mitigation, it is turned
577 over to the SWFM inside the organization controlling the code for the purpose of creating a
578 patch. The repair of a CVE is given high urgency since by virtue of its status as a CVE, an
579 exploitable flaw has already been discovered in the production code, and until that code is
580 patched, it is open to attack. Repair of a CWE is less urgent because the viability of an attack is
581 not certain.

582 In either case—CVE or CWE mitigation—the SWFM is responsible for assessing the extent of
583 code repairs required, making the necessary repairs, preparing a patch, performing integration
584 testing of the patch, preparing documentation, and distributing the patch.

585 **2.3.3.2   Patch Manager (PatMan)**

586 The Patch Manager (PatMan) is responsible for detecting CVEs present on devices and
587 supported software. Software (code), as used here, is typically managed at the following levels of
588 analysis:

589 • Software files (identified by digital fingerprint);
590
591 • Software source code (at the version/release/patch level);
592
593 • Software products (at the version/release/patch level);
594
595 • Firmware, if it can be modified (usually includes the BIOS, at the version/release/patch
596   level)

597 The importance of accurately detecting the particular version/release and patch level of software
598 cannot be overstated with respect to vulnerability management. Accurate version/release and
599 patch level detection is important because variations of a software version/release and its
600 corresponding patch level present different vulnerabilities depending on which patches have
601 already been applied to that version/release. Digital fingerprints uniquely identify a particular
602 version/release and patch level of a software file.

603 The primary tools employed by the PatMan in detecting CVEs present on a system are
604 commercial vulnerability scanners. Vulnerability scanners automate the identification of CVEs
605 and the associated patches needed for each software file installed on each device in a system.
606 Patches, in turn, contain information on the respective CVE(s) they are mitigating.

607 The PatMan is responsible for receiving patches from internal or external development
608 organizations, testing patch interoperability on the local system, and applying patches to devices
609 in the production environment. Some CVEs can be mitigated by means other than patching
610 before a patch becomes available. If so, the PatMan is responsible for applying any workaround
611 mitigations in the interim period.

612 Patches are typically applied via a package management system—which automates the steps of
613 installation, upgrade, configuration, and removal of software files.[4] Alternatively, patches can be
614 applied manually.

615 Some software products have patches that must be applied in a sequential order, in which case it

---

[4] Examples of package management systems include but are not limited to Microsoft Windows Store, Linux Red Hat RPM
     Package Manager, Apple Mac App Store, Debian DPKG, and Comprehensive Perl Archive Network.

616   is reasonable to refer to a patch *level*. Other products allow the selective application of patches in
617   various orders. In such cases, the use of the expression *patch level* is more accurately denoted by
618   the term *patch set*. Patch sets are inherently more complex than *patch levels* because of the large
619   number of combinations possible for the allowable order in which patches are applied. In this
620   document, when the term *patch level* is used, it refers to *whichever* patch level or patch set is
621   applicable.

622   **Patching complexity introduced by shared code**. Some executables are *shared* by several
623   software products. Dynamic Linked Library (DLL) executable files are prominent examples of
624   shared software. In the case of DLL patching, one product may either protect or expose another
625   product, depending on the vulnerabilities in the latest patch of the DLL installed and how the
626   dependent software makes use of the library. For example, the "Heartbleed" vulnerability was
627   found in the OpenSSL cryptography library but affected only the TLS implementation provided
628   by OpenSSL. At the same time, OpenSSL cryptographic algorithm application programming
629   interfaces (APIs) were not vulnerable. Thus, OpenSSL implementations of TLS exposed the
630   Heartbleed vulnerability while OpenSSL implementations of only the cryptographic functions
631   did not. The shared nature of some software products is therefore a factor which complicates
632   software vulnerability management.

633   **Patches on top of patches**. Unfortunately, due to the continued prevalence of poor coding
634   practices, it is still possible for a patch itself to contain *additional* software flaws that may be
635   discovered later. Even if a given patch is free of *known* flaws, it is possible and even likely that
636   different poor coding practices will be subsequently discovered that create new CVE entries in
637   the NVD or result in new zero-day attacks to be exploited by adversaries.

638   ## 2.4   Example VULN Data Requirements[5]

639   The desired state for the VULN capability is that the list of known vulnerabilities is up to date,
640   accurate, and complete; and software products installed on all devices are free of known
641   vulnerabilities.[6] Examples of data requirements for the VULN capability actual state are in Table
642   3. Examples of data requirements for the VULN capability desired state are in Table 4.

643   **Table 3: Example VULN Actual State Data Requirements**

Data Item	Justification
The vulnerable software installed on every device is identified	To identify software flaws
Device software that is compliant with *alternative* mitigation specifications (to include the corresponding CVEs or local identifiers for flaws that are appropriately mitigated)	To preclude appropriately mitigated flaws from appearing in the results

[5] Specific data required to support the VULN capability is variable based on organizational platforms, tools, configurations, etc.

[6] Often, it is not possible or feasible to have *no* known vulnerabilities present (e.g., when a patch is not yet available or when a low risk vulnerability has not yet been patched), so the goal is to *minimize* the presence of known vulnerabilities in the environment.

Data necessary to determine how long the flaw has been present on a device. At a minimum: • Date/time flaw was first discovered • Date/time flaw was last seen	To determine how long vulnerabilities have been present on a device

644

645

Table 4: Example VULN Desired State Data Requirements

Data Item	Justification
Authorized Hardware Inventory	To identify what devices to check
The associated value for every device attribute[a]	To prioritize defects associated with devices
A version-controlled, dated listing of all software products that have at least one known flaw, to include: • Vulnerable software product in same format as the Authorized Software Inventory (CPE or SWID equivalent) • All CVEs associated with that software product • All CWEs associated with that software product For every locally defined[b] known vulnerability, maintain a version-controlled, dated listing to include: • Vulnerable software product in same format as the Authorized Software Inventory (CPE or SWID equivalent) • Identifier of all local vulnerabilities associated with that software product (e.g., CWE or other local identifier) • Severity for each local vulnerability (e.g., CVSS score equivalent)	To report on known flaws present on the system
Alternative mitigation specification[c] for any known vulnerability where the source vendor provides a mitigation option that can be implemented instead of patching/reversioning the software to include: • CVE or local identifier • Associated system attributes • Required/acceptable values	To prevent reporting on flaws mitigated by alternative methods for which the mitigation can be automatically checked[d]
Compliance definition	To determine compliance with each specific check

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653

[a] This value is defined by the organization based on the value assigned by the organization to assets. See the HWAM volume for an explanation of device attributes.
[b] Organizations can define data requirements and associated defects for their local environment.
[c] Some known vulnerabilities can be effectively mitigated by not installing sections of code, executables, or via configuration options.
[d] If the check that determines implementation of the alternative mitigation method can be verified by checking registry settings, executable hashes, or configuration settings, then a specification can be defined to automatically determine presence of the vulnerability.

654   **2.5   VULN Concept of Operational Implementation**

655   VULN identifies software (including on/in virtual machines) that is actually present on network
656   devices (the actual state) and compares it with the desired state inventory to determine what
657   known vulnerabilities (or weaknesses) are present on this software and deploy patching (or
658   alternate methods of mitigation) to reduce the exploitability of the system.

659   The software vulnerability management capability concept of operations (CONOPS) illustrates
660   how the VULN capability might be implemented. The CONOPS is central to the automated
661   assessment process. (See Figure 3.)

662

Managers validate assigned roles and responsibility

Search for and identify all software product versions and files installed on devices, as well as their associated flaws

Collect Actual State

Identify patch versions authorized for software products and files, software flaws for the product patch levels, and corresponding mitigation methods

Collect Desired State

Compute the differences between actual state and desired state (CVEs and CWEs) and score them

Find/Prioritize Defects

❷ **CVE: Remove or replace software on device, or respond to software flaws**

CWE: Recode software to avoid CWE (and potential CVEs), creating a new patch

Scored Defects ONLY

❶ **Add patch identifiers to desired state if appropriate; assign a manager if not already done; periodically update known software flaws.**

Remove, replace, patch, mitigate, authorize, assign for management, and/or (temporarily?) accept the risk of not mitigating software flaws

Mitigate Defects

❸ **Accept risk (e.g., while awaiting patch)?**

663

664　　　**Figure 3: VULN Concept of Operations (CONOPS)**

665

15

666 **2.5.1   Collect Actual State**

667   The ISCM data collection process uses tools to identify the software files (and products) on
668   network devices at the patch level, including software residing on mass storage and in firmware.
669   The tools further provide the information required to compare the actual software and patch
670   levels discovered (actual state) with the authorized patch levels (desired state). Examples of
671   methods used to identify actual and desired patch levels are described in this section.

672   The ISCM data collection process also identifies how much of the target network is being
673   monitored and how frequently in order to complete the completeness and timeliness
674   metrics. Devices might not be monitored on a specific scan because: the device is not connected;
675   the device is turned off; there is an error with the scanning process; the device is in a protected
676   enclave not available to scanning; the device is in an unexpected IP range (if the scanner is
677   programmed for specific ranges); etc. Note that the inventory from HWAM can also be used as a
678   check on what should be scanned if the quality of inventory data is acceptable.

679   The actual state data for all capabilities requires effective configuration management. Appendix
680   G specifies how configuration management of the actual state is to be performed. The controls
681   listed in Appendix G are metacontrols for the assessment process for the VULN capability.

682   **2.5.1.1   Actual State Data from the Operating System Software Database[7]**

683   Some organizations use the operating system software database (OSSD) as a source for actual
684   state data on the software versions present. However, OSSDs have several operating
685   characteristics that may result in errors in identifying software versions. Some of those
686   characteristics are described below:

687   • **Software is missing in the OSSD**. Some software on the device can run *without* having
688   an OSSD entry (i.e., the OSSD might not be able to identify some software because there
689   is no OSSD entry for the software).
690
691   • **Entry in the OSSD does not completely identify the software installed**. Different
692   instances of installation media for a particular product version might install slightly
693   different executables and thus might have a different set of vulnerabilities. The OSSD
694   might not pick this up.
695
696   • **Uninstall processes for a product might remove the entry for a software file in the**
697   **OSSD but not remove all of the code**. Problems with the uninstall process leave open
698   the possibility that vulnerable code remains on the device, which can therefore be
699   exploited but is not identified in the OSSD.
700

---

[7] For example, the Windows registry or Linux package manager.

701 • **OSSD does not contain shared code**. Use of the OSSD as a source does not address
702 shared code, which might be changed in the process of patching any of the programs that
703 use the shared code. See Section 2.5.2.6.

704 **2.5.1.2 Actual State Data from Vulnerability Scanners**

705 Use of vulnerability scanners is one of the most common ways to find CVEs in the actual state.
706 Vulnerability scanners compare a list of software file versions known to contain vulnerabilities
707 to the actual software file versions present on system devices. To ensure risk is accurately
708 portrayed, verification of vulnerability scanner functionality is advisable before trusting results
709 from a scanner. Vulnerability scanner verification includes the following:

710 • Ensure the vulnerability scanner is programmed by the organization to check for a high
711 percentage of known vulnerabilities. If not, it might report a low level of vulnerabilities
712 when the level is actually higher. The organization verifies the percentage of known
713 vulnerabilities addressed by the scanner by comparing what the scanner checks for with
714 the NVD, and accepts the percentage addressed as part of the acquisition process for the
715 scanner.
716

717 • Ensure that the false positive and false negative rates of the scanner are acceptable. No
718 test is 100% reliable. The tests used by the scanner to identify a vulnerability can report
719 vulnerabilities when none exists (false positives), or the tests can fail to report
720 vulnerabilities that do exist (false negatives). The false positive and false negative rates of
721 the scanner are assessed as part of the acquisition process. Typically, there is an inverse
722 relationship between false positive and false negative frequencies—as one goes up, the
723 other goes down. There is a need to balance the two (i.e., balancing the risk of allowing
724 excessive reporting of vulnerabilities that are not actual vulnerabilities [false positives]
725 against the risk of too frequently failing to catch vulnerabilities that are actually present
726 [false negatives]).
727

728 • Ensure that the vulnerability scanner vendor provides timely updates when new
729 vulnerabilities are found and that the scanner can be updated quickly[8] with new detection
730 code. Note that implementation of both detection (scanning) and response (patching) are
731 necessary for vulnerability management to be effective.

732 **2.5.1.3 Actual State Data from Software Whitelisting Inventory**

733 To the extent that the digital fingerprint for a software file with a vulnerability is known, it can
734 be reliably and correctly found by inventorying software files on a device by their digital
735 fingerprints. See more in Section 2.5.2.3.

736 The main problem with data from a software whitelisting inventory is that, *at the time of this*

---

[8] *Quickly,* here, is defined by the organization considering the expected speed with which adversaries are likely to exploit an
    undetected vulnerability.

737   *writing,* neither the NVD nor vendors report the digital fingerprint(s) of the software files
738   carrying specific known vulnerabilities.[9]

739   ### 2.5.1.4   Actual State Data from Code Analyzers

740   Both dynamic and static code analyzers (see Glossary) are used to identify coding weaknesses
741   that might materialize as vulnerabilities. Code analyzers are usually deployed *prior* to moving
742   software to the operational state (i.e., in the earlier phases of the system engineering/system
743   development life cycle) because the weaknesses found are cheaper to fix at the early stages of
744   development.

745   In cases where the organization does not control the source code but desires to assess whether
746   acquired products (or products whose acquisition is under consideration) have been engineered
747   securely, *dynamic* code analyzers are frequently deployed to identify and diagnose security
748   weaknesses. The organization deploys the acquired code in a production-like test environment,
749   preferably *before* final purchasing decisions are made, and assesses whether weaknesses are at an
750   acceptable level considering organizational risk tolerances.

751   ### 2.5.2   Collect Desired State

752   The desired state for the VULN capability is the list or inventory of acceptable software file
753   versions that limit *known* flaws in software installed on the network to within organizational risk
754   tolerances. Thus, defining the desired state requires knowing how to identify—for all software
755   files on the network—the optimal versions (i.e., patch levels) which contain the fewest known
756   flaws. As is indicated in the discussion of data collection methods below, identifying the desired
757   state is a continually evolving process of incorporating and integrating information from multiple
758   sources and, in some cases applying organizational risk tolerances to specific cases.

759   The desired state data for all capabilities requires effective configuration management. Appendix
760   G specifies how configuration management of the desired state is to be performed. The controls
761   in Appendix G are metacontrols for the assessment process for the VULN capability.

762   ### 2.5.2.1   Desired State Data from the National Vulnerability Database (NVD)

763   Since the desired state for the VULN capability with respect to CVEs is to have the most flaw-
764   free software available, the NVD is an important source of information about CVEs to be
765   minimized in the desired state. Each CVE has a unique identifier, and the NVD is the
766   authoritative source of known CVEs. Since NVD data is available to the public in digital form,
767   many parties engaged in vulnerability identification and remediation download the NVD data
768   and then integrate it with additional data, such as signatures for software files containing the
769   CVE, articles written about the CVE, or identifiers for patches to the CVE.

---

[9] Requiring vendors to report data using digital fingerprints to reliably detect vulnerabilities would be a significant improvement
    to the vulnerability detection process.

770   **2.5.2.2   Desired State Data from Vulnerability Scanners**

771   In addition to providing actual state data (as described in section 2.5.1.2), vulnerability scanners
772   are also a source of desired state data. Vulnerability scanners attempt to find known
773   vulnerabilities in software on networked devices on a system by taking the CVE information
774   from the NVD, linking the CVEs to identifiers for the software known to contain the CVEs, and
775   then checking for the existence of the CVE-mitigating software patches on networked devices.
776   The desired state, from the perspective of any given scan, is to have no CVEs present in
777   software.[10]

778   *Note:* Since any given vulnerability scanner might only check for a portion of known
779   vulnerabilities, each scanner defines the desired state differently.

780   **2.5.2.3   Desired State Data from Developer Package Manifests**

781   One reason that vulnerability scanners are commercially viable is that they provide an acceptable
782   approximation—within tolerable ranges of precision—of the specific instances of code on a
783   device matching code known to contain CVEs. Package manifests provide an even more reliable
784   option for identifying CVEs and their patches if they also contain digital fingerprints of each
785   file.[11] Now, developers can (and frequently do) provide the following patch level file manifest
786   information about each version:

787   • Known vulnerabilities (CVEs) in that version
788
789   • An enumeration of the software files that contain each vulnerability, files that contain the
790   fix for the vulnerability, and the respective digital fingerprint for each

791   When patch level manifest information is provided, scanners can provide very precise
792   descriptions of the actual state (what CVEs are present) and desired state (what precise files
793   *should* be there and at what patch level) for vulnerabilities on devices. When vendor-provided
794   manifests at the patch level are used, the potential to limit error rates in scanning for
795   vulnerabilities—both false positives and false negatives—is highest. Patch level manifests could
796   come from SWIDs (software ID tags).

797   **2.5.2.4   Desired State Data from Approved Patch Level List**

798   Some organizations simply develop an approved (and required) patch list. The approved patch
799   list becomes the desired state. Any software without the required patches and/or other

---

[10] Stated more precisely, the desired state is to have all of the software patched to the level consistent with organization risk
      tolerances. Some organizations can tolerate CVEs considered by the organization to be low risk, for example.

[11] Package manifests enumerate the files contained in a patch distribution. If the manifest also contains a digital fingerprint for
      each file, then the entire contents of the patch can be validated for integrity/authenticity. If software vendors were required
      to provide package manifests for their patches that included a digital fingerprint for each file, this more reliable approach of
      identifying CVEs could be universally used.

800 mitigations is tagged as vulnerable. The organizationally approved patch list is based on risk
801 tolerance and is manually managed.

2.5.2.5 Desired State Data from CWE (Weakness) Information

803 The desired state for the VULN capability with respect to CWEs is that software exhibits no
804 CWEs inconsistent with the organization's risk tolerance. Collecting and responding to CWE
805 information is an important part of the process for custom software development. CWE
806 information is also important for commercial software that organizations plan to deploy where
807 the vendor is not yet trusted to find and report software vulnerabilities. Examples of tools for
808 discovery of the actual and desired states for CWEs are discussed in Section 2.3.2.

2.5.2.6 Desired State Data from Shared Code

810 While many organizations ignore shared code, it is possible for an organization to identify
811 software files updated by different products and compare the identified software files to the
812 vulnerability list for the product or products using the shared code to identify whether a shared
813 code file included in a patch is in the desired state.

2.5.3 Find/Prioritize Defects

815 The VULN capability is all about comparing the versions of software objects discovered on the
816 network (actual state) with the up-to-date list of the versions of software objects which *should* be
817 there (desired state) and prioritizing a response (usually patching the vulnerable software). While
818 the comparison of actual and desired state is most frequently performed with the assistance of
819 commercial vulnerability scanners using publicly disclosed vulnerability and patch information,
820 other defects related to vulnerability management—such as CWEs the organization determines
821 must be fixed—might be identified with code analyzers. In any case, after the actual state to
822 desired state comparison is completed, identified defects are prioritized[12] so that the appropriate
823 response action (i.e., higher risk problems addressed first) can be taken.

2.6 NIST SP 800-53 Control Items that Support VULN

825 Section 2.6 describes how control items that support the VULN capability were identified as well
826 as the nomenclature used to clarify each control item's focus on software vulnerabilities.

2.6.1 Process for Identifying Needed Controls

828 The process used to determine the controls needed to support a capability is described in detail in
829 Volume 1 of this NISTIR, Section 3.5.2, Tracing Security Control Items to Capabilities. In short,
830 the two steps are:

831 1. Use a keyword search of the control text to identify control items that might support the
832   capability. See keyword rules in .

---

[12] Risk prioritization methods, necessary to score or prioritize defects, are out of scope for this publication.

833
834   2. Manually identify those that *do* support the capability (true positives) and ignore those
835   that do not (false positives).

836   The two steps above produce three sets of controls:

837   1. Control items in the low, moderate, and high baselines that support the VULN capability
838   (listed in Section 3.3 as well as Section 3.4).
839
840   2. Control items in the low, moderate, and high baselines that were selected by the keyword
841   search but were manually determined to be false positives (listed in).
842
843   3. Control items which were not in a baseline, and not analyzed further after the keyword
844   search as follows:
845
846   a. Program management (PM) controls, because PM controls do not apply to individual
847   systems;
848
849   b. Not selected controls—controls that are in SP 800-53 but are not assigned to (selected
850   in) a baseline; and
851
852   c. Privacy controls.

853   The unanalyzed control items are listed in , in case the organization wants to develop automated
854   tests.

2.6.2   Control Item Nomenclature

856   Many control items that support the VULN capability also support several other capabilities. For
857   example, the hardware asset management, software asset management, and configuration
858   settings management capabilities can benefit from *configuration management* controls.

859   To clarify the scope of control items that support multiple capabilities as they relate to the VULN
860   capability, expressions in the control item text are enclosed in curly brackets, e.g.,
861   {…software…}, to denote that a particular control item supports the VULN capability and
862   focuses on—*and only on*—what is inside the curly brackets.

2.7   VULN-specific Roles and Responsibilities

864   Table 5 describes VULN-specific roles and the corresponding responsibilities. Figure 4 shows
865   how the roles integrate with the concept of operations. An organization implementing automated
866   assessment can customize its approach by assigning (allocating) the responsibilities to persons in
867   existing roles.

868   **Table 5: Operational and Managerial Roles for VULN**

Role Code	Role Title	Role Description	Role Type
DSM	Desired State Managers (DSM)	Desired state managers are needed for both the ISCM Target Network and each assessment object. The desired state managers ensure that data specifying the desired state of the relevant capability is entered into the ISCM system's desired state data and is available to guide the actual state collection subsystem and identify defects. The DSM for the ISCM Target Network also resolves any ambiguity about which system authorization boundary has defects (if any). Authorizers share some of the responsibilities by authorizing specific items (e.g., devices, software, or settings) and thus defining the desired state as delegated by the DSM. The DSM oversees and organizes this activity.	Operational
ISCM-OPS	ISCM Operators (ISCM-Ops)	ISCM operators are responsible for operating the ISCM system (see ISCM-Sys).	Operational
ISCM-Sys	The system that collects, analyzes and displays ISCM security-related information	The ISCM system: a) collects the desired state specification, b) collects security-related information from sensors (e.g., scanners, agents, training applications, etc.), and c) processes that information into a useful form. To support task C, the system conducts specified defect check(s) and sends defect information to an ISCM dashboard covering the relevant system(s). The ISCM system is responsible for the assessment of most SP 800-53 security controls.	Operational
MAN	Manual Assessors	Assessments not automated by the ISCM system are conducted by human assessors using manual/procedural methods. Manual/procedural assessments might also be conducted to verify the automated security-related information collected by the ISCM system when there is a concern about data quality.	Operational
PatMan	Patch Manager (PatMan)	Assigned to a specific device or group of devices, patch managers are responsible for patching software products on affected devices. The patch managers are specified in the desired state specification. The patch manager may be a person or a group. If a group, a group manager is designated. *Note*: The patch manager *role* might be performed by the device manager from the HWAM capability or the SWMan from the SWAM capability, depending on the volume of patching required. The role might also be performed by an automated central process managed by a centralized or distributed patch management team.	Operational
RskEx	Risk Executive, System Owner, and/or Authorizing Official (RskEx)	Defined in SPs 800-37 [SP800-37] and 800-39 [SP800-39]	Managerial

Role Code	Role Title	Role Description	Role Type
SWFM	Software Flaw Manager (SWFM)	Assigned to a specific software product or group of software products, software flaw managers are responsible for providing independent oversight to verify that the software development team is using secure coding practices (resulting in low CWE rates) for all code, including any patches the team develops to fix known software flaws like CVEs. The SWFMs are specified in the desired state specification for software products. The SWFM may be a person or a group. If a group, a group manager is designated. *Note*: Most SWFM activities occur during systems engineering, but the process produces data to ensure that flaws are scored for software in production on the target network. Many (but not all) COTS software manufacturers track and score flaws independently. The SWFM supports the desired state manager to ensure that risks from poor coding are tracked for custom software and software for which the manufacturer does not track security flaws.	Operational
SWMan	Software Manager	Software managers are assigned to specific devices and responsible for installing and/or removing software from the device. The key aspects of the software manager's responsibility are to ONLY install authorized software and to promptly remove ALL unauthorized software found. The software manager is also responsible for ensuring software media is available to support the roll back of changes and restoration of software to prior states. This role might be performed by the DM (device manager) and/or the PatMan (patch manager). If users are authorized to install software, they are also SWMans (software managers) for the relevant devices.	Operational

869

870

Software Flaw and Patch Managers

Managers validate assigned roles and responsibility

Search for and identify all software product versions and files installed on devices, as well as their associated flaws
ISCM-Sys
Collect Actual State

Identify patch versions authorized for software products and files, software flaws for the product patch levels, and corresponding mitigation methods
ISCM-Sys
Collect Desired State

Software Flaw and Patch Managers

❷

CVE: Remove or replace software on device, or respond to software flaws

CWE: Recode software to avoid CWE (and potential CVEs), creating a new patch

Compute the differences between actual state and desired state (CVEs and CWEs) and score them
ISCM-Sys
Find/Prioritize Defects

Desired State Manager

❶

Add patch identifiers to desired state if appropriate; assign a manager if not already done; periodically update known software flaws.

Scored Defects ONLY

Remove, replace, patch, mitigate, authorize, assign for management, and/or (temporarily?) accept the risk of not mitigating software flaws
(See arrows)
Mitigate Defects

❸ *Accept risk (e.g., while investigating)?*
Risk Executive, et al.

Figure 4: Primary Roles in Automated Assessment of VULN

871   **2.8   VULN Assessment Boundary**

872   The assessment boundary is all software on an entire *network* of computers from the innermost
873   enclave out to where the network either ends in an airgap or interconnects to other network(s) —
874   typically the internet or the network(s) of a partner or partners. For the VULN capability, the
875   boundary includes software on all devices, including software on removable devices found at the
876   time of the scan. For more detail and definitions of some of the terms applicable to the
877   assessment boundary, see Section 4.3.2 in Volume 1 of this NISTIR.

878   **2.9   VULN Actual State and Desired State Specification**

879   For information on the actual state and desired state specification for the VULN capability, see
880   the assessment criteria notes section of the defect check tables in Section 3.2.

881   Note that many controls that support the VULN capability refer to a developed and updated
882   inventory of software on devices (or other inventories). Software inventory is addressed in the
883   SWAM capability. Note also that per the SP 800-53A [SP800-53A] definition of *test*, testing of
884   the VULN controls implies the need for specification of both an actual state inventory and a
885   desired state inventory, allowing the test to compare the two inventories. The details of the
886   comparison are described in the defect check tables in Section 3.2.

887   **2.10   VULN Authorization Boundary and Inheritance**

888   See Section 4.3.1 of Volume 1 of this NISTIR for information on how authorization boundaries
889   are addressed in automated assessment. In short, for the VULN capability, software on each
890   device is assigned to one and only one authorization (system) boundary per SP
891   800-53, CM-08(5), "Information System Component Inventory | No Duplicate Accounting of
892   Components." The ISCM dashboard can include a mechanism for recording the assignment of
893   software to authorization boundaries, making sure all software are assigned to at least one
894   authorization boundary and that no software product is assigned to more than one authorization
895   boundary.

896   For information on how inheritance of common controls is managed, see Section 4.3.3 of
897   Volume 1 of this NISTIR. For VULN, many utilities, database management software products,
898   web server software objects, and parts of the operating system provide inheritable support and/or
899   controls for other systems. The ISCM dashboard can include a mechanism to record information
900   about inheritance and use it in assessing the system's overall risk.

901   **2.11   VULN Assessment Criteria Recommended Scores and Risk-Acceptance Thresholds**

902   General guidance on options for risk scores[13] to be used to set thresholds is outside of the scope
903   of this NISTIR and is being developed elsewhere. In any case, for the VULN capability,
904   organizations are encouraged to use metrics that look at both average risk score and maximum

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[13] A risk score, also called a *defect score*, in the context of VULN, is a measure of how exploitable a defect is.

905 risk score per device.

2.12 VULN Assessment Criteria Device Groupings to Consider

907 To support automated assessment and ongoing authorization, software is clearly grouped by
908 authorization boundary (see Control Items CM-8(a) and CM-8(5) in SP 800-53). Software is also
909 clearly organized by the role of the persons—device managers, patch managers, software
910 managers, and software flaw managers—performing software vulnerability management on
911 specific devices (see Control Item CM-8(4) in SP 800-53). In addition to these two important
912 groupings, the organization may want to use other groupings for risk analysis as discussed in
913 Section 5.6 of Volume 1 of this NISTIR.

914

3   VULN Security Assessment Plan Documentation Template

3.1   Introduction and Steps for Adapting This Plan

Section 3.1 provides templates for the security assessment plan in accordance with SP 800-37 and SP 800-53A. The documentation elements are described in Section 6 of Volume 1 of this NISTIR. Section 9 of the same volume specifically describes how the templates and documentation relate to the assessment tasks and work products defined in SP 800-37 and SP 800-53A. The following are suggested steps to adapt the security assessment plan to the organization's needs and implement automated monitoring.

Figure 5 shows the main steps in the adaptation process. The steps are expanded to more detail in the following three sections.

Figure 5: Main Steps in Adapting the Plan Template

3.1.1   Select Defect Checks to Automate

The sub-steps for selecting defect checks to automate are described in this section.

Figure 6: Sub-Steps to Select Defect Checks to Automate

Take the following sub-steps, shown in Figure 6, to select which defect checks to automate:

Sub-step 1.1   Identify Assessment Boundary: Identify the assessment boundary to be covered. (See Section 4.3 of Volume 1 of this NISTIR.)

Sub-step 1.2   Identify System Impact: Identify the Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 199-defined impact level (high water mark) for the assessment boundary identified in Sub-step 1.1 [FIPS199]. (See [SP 800-60-v1] and/or organizational categorization records.)

Sub-step 1.3   Review Security Assessment Plan Documentation:

- Review the defect checks documented in Section 3.2 to get an initial sense of the proposed items to be tested.

- Review the security assessment plan narratives in Section 3.2 to understand how the defect checks apply to the controls that support vulnerability management.

945   **Sub-step 1.4   Select Defect Checks:**

946   • Based on Sub-steps 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, and an understanding of the organization's risk
947   tolerance, use Table 6 in Section 3.2.3 to identify the defect checks necessary to assess
948   the effectiveness of controls implemented in accordance with the system impact level and
949   organizational risk tolerance.
950

951   • Mark the defect checks necessary as selected in Section 3.2.2. The organization is not
952   required to use automation, but automation of control assessment adds value to the extent
953   that it:
954
955   1. Produces assessment results timely enough to better defend against attacks;
956   and/or
957   2. Reduces the cost of assessment over the long term.

958
959   ### 3.1.2   Adapt Roles to the Organization

960   The sub-steps for adapting roles to the organization are described in this section.

961

962
963

964   **Figure 7: Sub-Steps to Adapt Roles to the Organization**

965   Take the following sub-steps, shown in Figure 7, to adapt the roles to the organization.

966   **Sub-step 2.1   Review Proposed Roles**: Proposed roles are described in Section 2.7, VULN
967   Specific Roles and Responsibilities (Illustrative).

968   **Sub-step 2.2   Address Missing Roles:** Identify any required roles not currently assigned in the
969   organization. Determine how to assign the unassigned roles.

970   **Sub-step 2.3   Rename Roles:** Identify the organization-specific names that match each role.
971   (Note that more than one proposed role might be performed by the same organizational role.)

972   **Sub-step 2.4   Adjust Documentation:** Map the organization-specific roles to the roles
973   proposed herein, in one of two ways (either may be acceptable):

974   • Add a column to the table in Section 2.7 for the organization-specific role and list the
975   organization-specific role names there; or
976
977   • Use global replace to change the role names throughout the documentation from the
978   names proposed in this NISTIR to the organization-specific names.

3.1.3   Automate Selected Defect Checks

The sub-steps for automating selected defect checks are described in this section.

| 3.1 Add Defect Checks | 3.2 Adjust Data Collectio | 3.3 Operate the ISCM System | 3.4 Use the Results to Manage Risk |

Figure 8: Sub-Steps to Automate Selected Defect Checks

Take the following sub-steps, shown in Figure 8, to implement automation defect checks.

Sub-step 3.1   Add Defect Checks: Review the defect check definition and add checks as needed based on organizational risk tolerance and expected attack types. [Role: DSM (See Section 2.7.)]

Sub-step 3.2   Adjust Data Collection:

- Review the actual state information needed and configure automated sensors to collect the required information. [Role: ISCM-Sys (See Section 2.7.)]

- Review the matching desired state specification that was specified or add additional specifications to match the added actual state to be checked. Configure the collection system to receive and store the desired state specification in a form that can be automatically compared to the actual state data. [Role: ISCM-Sys (See Section 2.7.)]

Sub-step 3.3   Operate the ISCM System:

- Operate the collection system to identify both security and data quality defects.

- Configure the collection system to send security and data quality information to the defect management dashboard.

Sub-step 3.4   Use the Results to Manage Risk: Use the results to respond to higher risk findings first and to measure potential residual risk to inform aggregate risk acceptance decisions. If risk is determined to be too great for acceptance, the results may also be used to help prioritize further mitigation actions.

3.2   VULN Sub-Capabilities and Defect Check Tables and Template

Section 3.2 describes the specific test templates that are proposed and considered adequate to assess the control items that support the VULN capability. See Section 5 of Volume 1 of this NISTIR for an overview of defect checks and Section 4.1 of Volume 1 for an overview of the actual state and desired state specifications discussed in the Assessment Criteria Notes for each defect check. Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, and 3.2.3 of this document describe the foundational, data

1012   quality, and local defect checks, respectively. The *Supporting Control Item(s)* data in Sections
1013   3.2.1, 3.2.2, and 3.2.3 specify which controls, when ineffective, might cause a particular defect
1014   check to fail. The association between control items and defect checks provides further
1015   documentation on why the check (test) might be needed. Refer to Section 3.1 on how to adapt
1016   the defect checks (and roles specified therein) to the organization.

1017   Data found in this section can be used in both defect check selection and root cause analysis.
1018   Section 3.2.4 documents how each sub-capability (tested by a defect check) serves to support the
1019   overall capability by addressing certain example attack steps and/or data quality issues.
1020   Appendix G can also be used to support root cause analysis.

1021   The Defect Check Templates are organized as follows:

1022   • In the section beginning "*The purpose of this sub-capability…*," the sub-capability being
1023   tested by the defect check is defined and assessment criteria described. How the sub-
1024   capabilities block or delay certain example attack steps is described in Section 3.2.4.
1025

1026   • In the section beginning "*The defect check to assess…*," the defect check name and the
1027   assessment criteria to be used to assess sub-capability effectiveness in achieving its
1028   purpose are described.
1029   • In the section beginning "*Example Responses*," examples of potential responses when the
1030   check finds a defect and what role is likely responsible are described. Potential responses
1031   (with example primary responsibility assignments) are common actions and are
1032   appropriate when defects are discovered in a given sub-capability. The example primary
1033   responsibility assignments do not change the overall management responsibilities defined
1034   in other NIST guidance. Moreover, the response actions and responsibilities can be
1035   customized by each organization to best adapt to local circumstances.
1036

1037   • Finally, in the section beginning "*Supporting Control Items,*" the control items that work
1038   together to support the sub-capability are listed. Identification of the supporting control
1039   items is based on the mapping of defect checks to control items in Section 3.3. Each sub-
1040   capability is supported by a set of control items. Thus, if any of the listed supporting
1041   controls fail, the defect check fails, and overall risk is likely to increase.

1042   As noted in Section 3.1, this material is designed to be customized and adapted to become part of
1043   an organization's security assessment plan.

3.2.1   Foundational Sub-Capabilities and Corresponding Defect Checks

1045   NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 proposes one foundational security-oriented defect check for the VULN
1046   capability. The foundational check is designated VULN-F01.

1047   Defect checks may be computed for individual checks (e.g., foundational, data quality, or local)
1048   or summarized for various groupings of devices (e.g., device manager, device owner, system,
1049   etc.) out to the full assessment boundary. The foundational defect check was selected for its
1050   value for summary reporting. The *Selected* column indicates whether the check is to be

1051   implemented.

1052 **3.2.1.1   Reduce Software Vulnerabilities Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-F01**

1053 The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Reduce software vulnerabilities	Prevent or reduce the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs) listed in the reference defect list (e.g., National Vulnerability Database [NVD]).

1054

1055 The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected
VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	1) The actual state is the list (inventory) of software product, version, release, and patch levels present on the device. 2) The desired state specification is to have minimal (i.e., acceptable) risk from CVEs or equivalent. 3) A defect is the presence of an unacceptable software vulnerability (CVE or equivalent) as listed in the reference defect list (i.e., National Vulnerability Database [NVD] or other vulnerability dataset accepted for use by the organization).	Yes

1056

1057 Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-F01	Patch the software	PatMan
VULN-F01	Remove the software	SWMan
VULN-F01	Assess as false positive	RskEx
VULN-F01	Reduce false positives	ISCM-Ops
VULN-F01	Apply workaround mitigation	PatMan
VULN-F01	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-F01	Oversee and coordinate response	DSM

1058

1059   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-F01	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-F01	Low	RA-5(b)
VULN-F01	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-F01	Low	RA-5(d)
VULN-F01	Low	RA-5(e)
VULN-F01	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-F01	Low	SI-2(c)
VULN-F01	Low	SI-2(d)
VULN-F01	Moderate	SA-11(d)
VULN-F01	High	SI-2(1)

1060

1061   **3.2.2   Foundational Sub-Capabilities and Corresponding Defect Checks**

1062   NISTIR 8011, Volume 4 proposes four *data quality* defect checks, designated VULN-Q01
1063   through VULN-Q04. The data quality defect checks are important because they provide the
1064   information necessary to determine how reliable the overall assessment automation process is—
1065   information which can be used to decide how much to trust the other defect check data (i.e.,
1066   provide greater assurance about security control effectiveness). The data quality defect checks
1067   were selected for their value for summary reporting and are not associated with specific control
1068   items. The *Selected* column indicates which of the checks is implemented by the organization.
1069   Data quality checks are described more completely in NISTIR 8011, Volume 1, Overview,
1070   Section 5.5., "Data Quality Measures."

1071

1072   **3.2.2.1   Ensure Completeness of Device-Level Reporting Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-Q01**

1073   The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Ensure completeness of device-level reporting	Ensure that devices expected to report VULN information to the actual state inventory have reported to prevent CVEs and CWEs from going undetected.

1074

1075   The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected
VULN-Q01	Non-reporting devices	1) The actual state is the list of devices in the desired state in HWAM-F01 that report software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent, and CWEs) 2) The desired state is the list of actual devices detected in HWAM-F01, whether authorized or not. 3) A defect occurs when a device in the desired state has not been detected as recently as expected in the actual state. Criteria are developed to define the threshold for "as recently as expected" for each device or device type based on the same considerations listed in HWAM-Q01.	Yes

1076

1077   Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-Q01	Restore device reporting	ISCM-Ops
VULN-Q01	Declare device missing	DM
VULN-Q01	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-Q01	Oversee and coordinate response	RskEx

1078

1079   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-Q01	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-Q01	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-Q01	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-Q01	Low	SI-2(b)
VULN-Q01	High	SI-2(1)

1080

1081   **3.2.2.2   Ensure Completeness of Defect Check-Level Reporting Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-Q02**

1082   The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Ensure completeness of defect check-level reporting	Ensure that defect check information is correctly reported in the actual state inventory to prevent systematic inability to check any applicable defect on any device.

1083

1084   The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected

VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	1) The actual state is the set of vulnerabilities that was tested and collected in each collection cycle for each device.
		2) The desired state is the set of vulnerabilities that are defined as applicable for that device and that *should* therefore have been tested and collected.
		3) A defect is any vulnerability for a device from the desired state that was not tested and collected in the actual state. The defects may be of two types:
		    a. The collection system does not test and collect data for the defect on *any* applicable device; or
		    b. The collection system only tests and collects data for the defect on *some* of the applicable devices.
		
		Notes on root cause:
		Item 3a) is usually a systematic error of the collection system.
		Item 3b) may be a related to the interaction of the device and the collection system; either the device or the collection system may be the root cause.
			Yes

1085

1086   Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-Q02	Restore defect check reporting	ISCM-Ops
VULN-Q02	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-Q02	Oversee and coordinate response	RskEx

1087

1088   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-Q02	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-Q02	Low	RA-5(b)
VULN-Q02	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-Q02	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-Q02	Low	SI-2(b)
VULN-Q02	Moderate	RA-5(1)
VULN-Q02	Moderate	RA-5(2)
VULN-Q02	High	SI-2(1)

1089

1090   **3.2.2.3   Ensure Overall Defect Check Reporting Completeness Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-Q03**

1091   The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Ensure overall defect check reporting completeness	Ensure that data for as many defect checks as possible are correctly reported in the actual state inventory to prevent defects from going undetected.

1092   The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected

VULN-Q03	Low completeness-metric	The completeness metric is not a device-level defect but is applied to any collection of devices such as those in an authorization boundary. The completeness metric is used in assessing the trustworthiness of the collection system.
		
		1) The actual state is the number of specified defect checks provided by the collection system in a reporting window.
		    Note: A specific check-device combination may only be counted once in the required minimal reporting period. For example, if checks are to be done every three days, a check done twice in that timeframe would still count as one check. However, if there are 30 days in the reporting window, that check-device combination could be counted for each of the 10 three-day periods included.
		2) The desired state is the number of specified defect checks that should have been provided in that same reporting window.
		    Note: Different devices may have different sets of specified checks, based on device function/type. The desired state in this example includes 10 instances of each specified defect check combinations for each of the three-day reporting cycles in a 30-day reporting window.
		3) The metric is *completeness*, defined as the actual state number divided by the desired state number. Completeness is the percentage of specified defect checks collected during the reporting window. Completeness measures long term ability to collect all needed data.
		4) A defect is when completeness is too low (based on the defined threshold). When completeness is low, the risk of defects being undetected increases. An acceptable level of completeness balances technical feasibility against the need for 100% completeness.
			Yes

1093

1094   Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-Q03	Restore completeness	ISCM-Ops
VULN-Q03	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-Q03	Oversee and coordinate response	RskEx

1095

1096   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-Q03	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-Q03	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-Q03	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-Q03	Low	SI-2(b)
VULN-Q03	Moderate	SI-2(2)
VULN-Q03	High	SI-2(1)

1097

1098 **3.2.2.4   Ensure Overall Reporting Timeliness Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-Q04**

1099   The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Ensure overall reporting timeliness	Ensure that data for as many defect checks as possible are reported in a timely manner in the actual state to limit delays in defect detection. To be effective, defects need to be found and mitigated considerably faster than they can be exploited.

1100

1101   The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected

VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	The timeliness metric is not a device-level defect but can be applied to *any* collection of devices such as those within an authorization boundary. It is used in assessing the accuracy of the collection system.
		
		1) The actual state is the number of specified defect checks provided by the collection system in one collection cycle—the period in which each defect should be checked once.
		    Note: A specific check-device combination is only counted once per collection cycle.
		2) The desired state is the number of specified defect checks that *should have been* provided by the collection system in one collection cycle.
		    Note: Different devices may have different sets of specified checks, based on device function/type.
		3) The metric is *timeliness*, defined as the actual state number divided by the desired state number. Timeliness is the percentage of specified defect checks actually collected in the reporting cycle. Timeliness measures the percentage of data that is collected as recently as required.
		4) A defect is when timeliness is too poor (based on the defined threshold). When timeliness is poor the risk of undetected defects increases.
			Yes

1102

1103

1104   Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-Q04	Restore frequency	ISCM-Ops
VULN-Q04	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-Q04	Oversee and coordinate response	RskEx

1105

1106   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-Q04	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-Q04	Low	RA-5(b)
VULN-Q04	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-Q04	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-Q04	Low	SI-2(b)
VULN-Q04	Low	SI-2(c)
VULN-Q04	Moderate	SI-2(2)
VULN-Q04	High	SI-2(1)

1107

1108   ### 3.2.3   Local Sub-Capabilities and Corresponding Defect Checks

1109   Section 3.2.3 includes one local defect check, VULN-L01, as an example of what organizations
1110   may add to the foundational check to support more complete automated assessment of SP 800-53
1111   controls that support VULN.

1112   Organizations exercise authority to manage risk by choosing whether to select specific defect
1113   checks for implementation. In general, selecting more defect checks may lower risk (if there is
1114   capacity to address defects found) and provide greater assurance but may also increase the cost
1115   of detection and mitigation. The organization selects defect checks for implementation (or not) to
1116   balance benefits and costs and prioritize risk response actions by focusing first on the problems
1117   that pose greater risk (i.e., manage risk).

1118   Note that a local defect check may also include options to make the defect check more or less
1119   rigorous as the risk tolerance of the organization and impact level of the system indicates.

1120   The "Selected" column is present to indicate which of the local defect checks the organization
1121   chooses to implement as documented or as modified by the organization.

1122

1123   **3.2.3.1   Reduce Poor Coding Practices Sub-Capability and Defect Check VULN-L01**

1124   The purpose of this sub-capability is defined as follows:

Sub-Capability Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
Reduce poor coding practices	Prevent or reduce the presence of poor software coding practices (CWEs) listed in the reference https://cwe.mitre.org.

1125

1126   The defect check to assess whether this sub-capability is operating effectively is defined as follows:

Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Assessment Criteria Notes	Selected

VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	The assessment for poor coding practices applies to any software for which the organization is responsible for finding—and developing patches to correct—poor coding practices. The assessment for poor coding practices may also be applied to COTS software to verify results obtained from the software provider.
		
		1) The actual state is the list (inventory) of software products and associated version, release and patch levels present on the device to which CWE code analysis is applied.
		    Note: The inventory list of software files originates with the SWAM capability. The inventory list of hardware devices originates with the HWAM capability.
		2) The desired state specification is to have minimal (i.e., acceptable) risk present from instances of CWEs in the software files on the device.
		3) A defect is the presence of an unacceptable coding practice (CWE) on a device in the actual state.
		    Note: Because code analyzers may produce a non-negligible number of false positives, it is important that false positives be identified by an independent risk assessment function (e.g., independent verification and validation team; assessment team; system security officer; organizational risk executives) and removed from the poor coding practice instance list.
			To be determined (TBD) by organization

1127

1128

1129   Example Responses:

Defect Check ID	Potential Response Action	Primary Responsibility
VULN-L01	Assess as false positive	RskEx
VULN-L01	Remove the software	PatMan
VULN-L01	Obtain patch	SWFM
VULN-L01	Patch the software	PatMan
VULN-L01	Apply workaround mitigation	PatMan
VULN-L01	Accept risk	RskEx
VULN-L01	Oversee and coordinate response	DSM

1130

1131   Supporting Control Items:

Defect Check ID	Baseline	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
VULN-L01	Low	RA-5(a)
VULN-L01	Low	RA-5(c)
VULN-L01	Low	RA-5(d)
VULN-L01	Low	RA-5(e)
VULN-L01	Low	SI-2(a)
VULN-L01	Low	SI-2(c)
VULN-L01	Low	SI-2(d)
VULN-L01	Moderate	SA-11(d)
VULN-L01	High	SI-2(1)

1132

1133

1134   **3.2.4   Security Impact of Each Sub-Capability on an Attack Step Model**

1135   Table 6 shows the primary ways the defect checks derived from the SP 800-53 security controls contribute to blocking attacks/events
1136   as described in Figure 1: VULN Impact on an Attack Step Model.

1137   **Table 6: Mapping of Attack Steps to Security Sub-Capability**

Attack Step	Attack Step Description	Sub-Capability ID and Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
2) Initiate Attack Internally	The attacker is inside the boundary and initiates an attack on some assessment object internally. Examples include: user opens spear phishing email or clicks on attachment; user installs unauthorized software or hardware; unauthorized personnel gain physical access to restricted facility and perform a malicious act.	VULN-F01: Reduce software vulnerabilities	Prevent or reduce the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs) listed in the reference defect list (e.g., National Vulnerability Database [NVD]).
2) Initiate Attack Internally	The attacker is inside the boundary and initiates an attack on some assessment object internally. Examples include: user opens spear phishing email or clicks on attachment; user installs unauthorized software or hardware; unauthorized personnel gain physical access to a restricted facility and perform a malicious act.	VULN-L01: Reduce poor coding practices	Prevent or reduce the presence of poor software coding practices (CWEs) listed in the reference https://cwe.mitre.org.

Attack Step	Attack Step Description	Sub-Capability ID and Name	Sub-Capability Purpose
5) Expand Control - Escalate or Propagate	The attacker has persistence on the object and seeks to expand control by escalation of privileges on the object or propagation to another object. Examples include: administrator privileges hijacked or stolen; administrator's password used by unauthorized party; secure configuration is changed and/or audit function is disabled; authorized users access resources they do not need to perform job; process or program that runs as root compromised or hijacked; cascading failures take down entire communications infrastructure.	VULN-F01: Reduce software vulnerabilities	Prevent or reduce the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs) listed in the reference defect list (e.g., National Vulnerability Database [NVD]).
5) Expand Control - Escalate or Propagate	The attacker has persistence on the object and seeks to expand control by escalation of privileges on the object or propagation to another object. Examples include: administrator privileges hijacked or stolen; administrator's password used by unauthorized party; secure configuration is changed and/or audit function is disabled; authorized users access resources they do not need to perform job; process or program that runs as root compromised or hijacked; cascading failures take down entire communications infrastructure.	VULN-L01: Reduce poor coding practices	Prevent or reduce the presence of poor software coding practices (CWEs) listed in the reference https://cwe.mitre.org.

1138

3.3   VULN Control (Item) Security Assessment Plan Narrative Tables and Templates

The security assessment plan narratives in this section are designed to provide the core of an
assessment plan for the automated assessment as described in Section 6 of Volume 1 of this
NISTIR. The narratives are supplemented by the other material in this section, including defect
check tables (defining the tests to be used), and are summarized in the Control Allocation Tables
in Section 3.4.

The roles referenced in the narratives match the roles defined by NIST in relevant special
publications (e.g., SP 800-37, etc.) and/or the VULN-specific roles defined in Section 2.7. The
roles can be adapted and/or customized to the organization as described in the introduction to
Section 3.

The determination statements listed here have been derived from the relevant control item
language, specifically modified by the following adjustments:

1. The limiting or scoping phrase {…software…} (possibly along with additional
    information within the brackets as appropriate) is inserted in determination statements
    where necessary for control items that apply to more capability areas than just VULN.
    The limiting phrase tailors the control item to remain within VULN since the same
    control item could appear in other capabilities with the relevant scoping for that
    capability. For example, using the limiting phrase {…software…} is appropriate where
    the control could apply to vulnerabilities in both software and hardware.

2. Where a control item includes inherently different actions that are best assessed by
    different defect checks (typically because the assessment criteria are different), the
    control item may be divided into multiple VULN-applicable determination statements.

3. Part of a control item may not apply to VULN, while another part does. For example,
    consider the control item RA-5(b): the control text lists actions that do not necessarily
    apply to VULN capability, such as ensuring scanning tools use standards for enumerating
    platforms (applies to the HWAM and SWAM capabilities) and assessing improper
    configurations not related to vulnerabilities (applies to the CSM capability).

        RA-5 VULNERABILITY SCANNING: …Employs vulnerability scanning tools
        and techniques that facilitate interoperability among tools and automate parts of
        the vulnerability management process by using standards for: 1) **Enumerating
        platforms**, software flaws, and **improper configurations**; 2) Formatting
        checklists and test procedures; and 3) Measuring vulnerability impact…
        [Emphasis added.]

To address the issue of multi-capability control items, the determination statements in this
volume include only the portion of the control item applicable to the VULN capability.

1178 **3.3.1 Outline Followed for Each Control Item**

1179 The literal text of the control item follows the heading *Control Item Text*.

1180 There may be one or more determination statements for each control item. Each determination
1181 statement is documented in a table, noting the:

1182 • Determination statement ID (Control Item ID concatenated with the determination
1183 statement number, where determination statement number is enclosed in curly brackets);
1184

1185 • Determination statement text;
1186

1187 • Implemented by (responsibility);
1188

1189 • Assessment boundary;
1190

1191 • Assessment responsibility;
1192

1193 • Assessment method;
1194

1195 • Selected column (TBD by the organization);
1196

1197 • Rationale for risk acceptance (thresholds) (TBD by the organization);
1198

1199 • Frequency of assessment;[14] and
1200

1201 • Impact of not implementing the defect check (TBD by the organization).

1202 The determination statement details are followed by a table showing the defect checks (and
1203 related sub-capability) that might be caused to fail if the control being tested fails.

1204 The resulting text provides a template for the organization to edit as described in Section 3.1.

1205 **3.3.2 Outline Organized by Baselines**

1206 This section includes security control items selected in the SP 800-53 Low, Moderate, and High
1207 baselines and that support the VULN capability. For convenience, the control items are presented
1208 in three sections as follows:

1209 **Low Baseline Control Items** (Section 3.3.3). Security control items in the low baseline, which
1210 are required for all systems.

---

[14] While automated tools may be able to assess as frequently as every 3-4 days, organizations determine the appropriate
assessment frequency in accordance with the ISCM strategy.

1211 **Moderate Baseline Control Items** (Section 3.3.4). Security control items in the moderate
1212 baseline, which are also required for the high baseline.

1213 **High Baseline Control Items** (Section 3.3.5). Security control items that are required only for
1214 the high baseline.

1215 Table 7 illustrates the applicability of the security control items to each baseline.

1216 **Table 7: Applicability of Control Items**

FIPS-199[a] (SP 800-60)[b] System Impact Level	1) Low Control Items (Section 3.3.3)	2) Moderate Control Items (Section 3.3.4)	3) High Control Items (Section 3.3.5)
Low	Applicable		
Moderate	Applicable	Applicable	
High	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

1217 [a] FIPS-199 defines Low, Moderate, and High overall potential impact designations.
1218 [b] See [SP800-60-v1], Section 3.2.

1219

1220   **3.3.3   Low Baseline Security Control Item Narratives**

1221   ***3.3.3.1   Control Item RA-5(a): VULNERABILITY SCANNING***

1222   **Control Item Text**

1223   Control: The organization:

1224   a. Scans for vulnerabilities in the information system and hosted applications [Assignment: organization-defined
1225   frequency and/or randomly in accordance with organization-defined process] and when new vulnerabilities potentially
1226   affecting the system/applications are identified and reported.

1227   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(a){1}	Determine if the organization: scans for {software} vulnerabilities in the system and hosted applications [Assignment: organization-defined frequency and/or randomly in accordance with organization-defined process].

1228   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(a){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1229

1230   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1231   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	**Rationale** If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **conducting scans for {software} vulnerabilities in the information system and hosted applications [Assignment: organization-defined frequency and/or randomly (with adequate frequency) in accordance with organization-defined process]** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(a){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting.

1232

1233 ### *3.3.3.2   Control Item RA-5(a): VULNERABILITY SCANNING*

1234 **Control Item Text**

1235 Control: The organization:

1236 a. Scans for vulnerabilities in the information system and hosted applications [Assignment: organization-defined
1237 frequency and/or randomly in accordance with organization-defined process] and when new vulnerabilities potentially
1238 affecting the system/applications are identified and reported

1239 **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(a){2}	Determine if the organization: [ensures] that when new vulnerabilities potentially affecting the system/applications are identified, they are [added to the scanning process].

1240 **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(a){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1241

1242   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1243   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	**Rationale** If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **ensuring that when new vulnerabilities potentially affecting the system/applications are identified, they are [added to the scanning process]** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(a){2}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

1244

1245   ### *3.3.3.3   Control Item RA-5(b): VULNERABILITY SCANNING*

1246   **Control Item Text**

1247   Control: The organization:

1248   b. Employs vulnerability scanning tools and techniques that facilitate interoperability among tools and automate parts of
1249   the vulnerability management process by using standards for:

1250   1. Enumerating platforms, software flaws, and improper configurations;
1251   2. Formatting checklists and test procedures; and
1252   3. Measuring vulnerability impact.

1253   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(b){1}	Determine if the organization: employs vulnerability scanning tools and techniques that facilitate interoperability among tools and automate parts of the vulnerability management process by using standards for [identifying] software flaws.

1254   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(b){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1255

1256   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1257   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **using standards for [identifying] software flaws** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(b){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

1258   **Determination Statement 2**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(b){2}	Determine if the organization: employs vulnerability scanning tools and techniques that facilitate interoperability among tools and automate parts of the vulnerability management process by using standards for formatting checklists and test procedures avoiding false **positives**.

1259   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(b){2}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1260

1261 **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1262 A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **using standards for formatting checklists and test procedures for avoiding false positives** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(b){2}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	The presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).

1263 **Determination Statement 3**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(b){3}	Determine if the organization: employs vulnerability scanning tools and techniques that facilitate interoperability among tools and automate parts of the vulnerability management process by using standards for formatting checklists and test procedures avoiding false **negatives**.

1264 **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(b){3}	MAN	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD				

1265 **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1266 A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

1267 Not applicable because tested manually.

1268

1269   ### 3.3.3.4   *Control Item RA-5(c): VULNERABILITY SCANNING*

1270   **Control Item Text**

1271

1272   Control: The organization:

1273   c. Analyzes vulnerability scan reports and results from security control assessments.

1274   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(c){1}	Determine if the organization: analyzes vulnerability scan reports and results from security control assessments.

1275   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(c){1}	RskEx	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1276   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1277   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **analyzing vulnerability scan reports and results from security control assessments** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-Q01	Non-reporting devices	a device failing to report software vulnerabilities within the specified time frame.
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **analyzing vulnerability scan reports and results from security control assessments** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-Q03	Low completeness-metric	completeness of overall ISCM reporting not meeting the threshold.
RA-5(c){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting.

1278

1279   ### 3.3.3.5   *Control Item RA-5(d): VULNERABILITY SCANNING*

1280   **Control Item Text**

1281

1282   Control: The organization:

1283   d. Remediates legitimate vulnerabilities [Assignment: organization-defined response times] in accordance with an
1284   organizational assessment of risk

1285   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(d){1}	Determine if the organization: remediates legitimate vulnerabilities [Assignment: organization-defined response times] in accordance with an organizational assessment of risk.

1286   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(d){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1287   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1288   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **remediating legitimate vulnerabilities** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(d){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
RA-5(d){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).

1289

1290   ### 3.3.3.6   *Control Item RA-5(e): VULNERABILITY SCANNING*

1291   **Control Item Text**

1292

1293   Control: The organization:

1294   e. Shares information obtained from the vulnerability scanning process and security control assessments with
1295   [Assignment: organization-defined personnel or roles] to help eliminate similar vulnerabilities in other information
1296   systems (i.e., systemic weaknesses or deficiencies).

1297   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(e){1}	Determine if the organization: shares information obtained from the vulnerability scanning process with [Assignment: organization-defined personnel or roles] to help eliminate similar vulnerabilities in other systems (i.e., systemic weaknesses or deficiencies).

1298   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(e){1}	RskEx	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1299

1300   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1301   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID[15]	Defect Check Name	**Rationale** If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **sharing information obtained from the vulnerability scanning process with [Assignment: organization-defined personnel or roles] to help eliminate similar vulnerabilities in other information systems** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(e){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
RA-5(e){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).

1302

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[15] As written, defect checks VULN-F01 and VULN-L01 assume that there is an automated dashboard to which personnel or roles designated for sharing vulnerability scanning information already have access. To be more thorough, the organization could verify: 1) that the dashboard displays scan results, 2) that the organization-defined personnel or roles have access, and/or 3) that the organization-defined personnel or roles are using the access. Such verifications could be done either manually or through automation, in each case by comparing what is desired (sharing information on vulnerability scan results with the organization-defined personnel or roles) to what is observed (whether the information is actually shared and reviewed by defined personnel or roles).

1303 ### 3.3.3.7   *Control Item SI-2(a): FLAW REMEDIATION*

1304 **Control Item Text**

1305

1306 Control: The organization:

1307 a. Identifies, reports, and corrects information system flaws

1308 **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(a){1}	Determine if the organization: identifies and reports system flaws.

1309 **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(a){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Ops	Test				

1310 **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1311 A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **identifying and reporting information system flaws** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(a){1}	VULN-Q01	Non-reporting devices	a device failing to report software vulnerabilities within the specified time frame
SI-2(a){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report
SI-2(a){1}	VULN-Q03	Low completeness-metric	completeness of overall ISCM reporting not meeting the threshold
SI-2(a){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting

1312   **Determination Statement 2**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(a){2}	Determine if the organization: corrects system flaws.

1313   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(a){2}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1314   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1315   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **correcting information system flaws** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(a){2}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
SI-2(a){2}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).

1316

1317   ### 3.3.3.8   *Control Item SI-2(b): FLAW REMEDIATION*

1318   **Control Item Text**

1319

1320   Control: The organization:

1321   b. Tests software and firmware updates related to flaw remediation for effectiveness and potential side effects before
1322   installation

1323   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(b){1}	Determine if the organization: tests software and firmware updates related to flaw remediation for effectiveness and potential side effects before installation.

1324   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(b){1}	MAN	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD				

1325   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1326   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

1327   Not applicable because tested manually.

1328

1329 **3.3.3.9   *Control Item SI-2(c): FLAW REMEDIATION***

1330 **Control Item Text**

1331

1332   Control: The organization:

1333   c. Installs security-relevant software and firmware updates within [Assignment: organization-defined time period] of the
1334   release of the updates

1335 **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(c){1}	Determine if the organization: installs security-relevant software and firmware updates within [Assignment: organization-defined time period] of the release of the updates.

1336 **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(c){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1337

1338

1339   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1340   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **installing security-relevant software and firmware updates within [Assignment: organization-defined time period] of the release of the updates** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(c){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
SI-2(c){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).
SI-2(c){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting.

1341

1342   ***3.3.3.10 Control Item SI-2(d): FLAW REMEDIATION***

1343   **Control Item Text**

1344

1345   Control: The organization:

1346   d. Incorporates flaw remediation into the organizational configuration management process

1347   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(d){1}	Determine if the organization: incorporates flaw remediation into the organizational configuration management process.

1348   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(d){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1349   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1350   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **incorporating flaw remediation into the organizational configuration management process** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(d){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable software	Presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent)
SI-2(d){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	Presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent)

1351

1352

1353   **3.3.4   Moderate Baseline Security Control Item Narratives**

1354   ***3.3.4.1   Control Item RA-5(1): VULNERABILITY SCANNING | UPDATE TOOL CAPABILITY***

1355   **Control Item Text**

1356   The organization employs vulnerability scanning tools that include the capability to readily update the information system
1357   vulnerabilities to be scanned.

1358   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(1){1}	Determine if the organization: employs vulnerability scanning tools to actually update the system vulnerabilities to be scanned.

1359   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(1){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1360   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1361   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **updating the information system vulnerabilities to be scanned** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(1){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
RA-5(1){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).
RA-5(1){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

3.3.4.2   *Control Item RA-5(2): VULNERABILITY SCANNING | UPDATE BY FREQUENCY / PRIOR TO NEW SCAN / WHEN IDENTIFIED*

Control Item Text

The organization updates the information system vulnerabilities scanned [Selection (one or more): [Assignment: organization-defined frequency]; prior to a new scan; when new vulnerabilities are identified and reported].

Determination Statement 1

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
RA-5(2){1}	Determine if the organization: updates the system vulnerabilities scanned [Selection (one or more): [Assignment: organization-defined frequency]; prior to a new scan; when new vulnerabilities are identified and reported].

Roles and Assessment Methods

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(2){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

Defect Check Rationale Table

A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **updating the information system vulnerabilities scanned when new vulnerabilities are identified and reported** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(2){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
RA-5(2){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **updating the information system vulnerabilities scanned when new vulnerabilities are identified and reported** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
RA-5(2){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

1371

1372   ### 3.3.4.3   Control Item SA-11(d): DEVELOPER SECURITY TESTING AND EVALUATION

1373   **Control Item Text**

1374

1375   Control: The organization requires the developer of the information system, system component, or information system service
1376   to:

1377   d. Implement a verifiable flaw remediation process

1378   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SA-11(d){1}	Determine if the organization: requires the developer of the system, system component, or system service to implement a verifiable flaw remediation process.

1379   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SA-11(d){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1380   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1381   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:[16]

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[16] Because control item SA-11(d) is focused on the flaw remediation *process* of the system developer, organizations requiring additional assurance may wish to supplement the automated assessment method *test*, with manual assessment methods *examine* and *interview* at an organization-defined frequency.

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	**Rationale** If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **requiring the developer of the information system, system component, or information system service to implement a verifiable flaw remediation process** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SA-11(d){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
SA-11(d){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).

1382

1383   ### 3.3.4.4   Control Item SI-2(2): FLAW REMEDIATION | AUTOMATED FLAW REMEDIATION STATUS

1384   **Control Item Text**

1385   The organization employs automated mechanisms [Assignment: organization-defined frequency] to determine the state of
1386   information system components with regard to flaw remediation.

1387   **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(2){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms [Assignment: organization-defined frequency] to determine the state of system components with regard to flaw remediation.

1388   **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(2){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1389   **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1390   A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **employing automated mechanisms [Assignment: organization-defined frequency] to determine the state of information system components with regard to flaw remediation** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(2){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent)
SI-2(2){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent)
SI-2(2){1}	VULN-Q03	Low completeness-metric	completeness of overall ISCM reporting not meeting the threshold
SI-2(2){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting

1391

1392 **3.3.5 High Baseline Security Control Item Narratives**

1393 ***3.3.5.1   Control Item SI-2(2): FLAW REMEDIATION | AUTOMATED FLAW REMEDIATION STATUS***

1394 **Control Item Text**

1395   The organization centrally manages the flaw remediation process.

1396 **Determination Statement 1**

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text
SI-2(1){1}	Determine if the organization: centrally manages the flaw remediation process.

1397 **Roles and Assessment Methods**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(1){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1398 **Defect Check Rationale Table**

1399 A failure in effectiveness of this control item results in a defect in one or more of the following defect checks:

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **centrally managing the flaw remediation process** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-F01	Vulnerable Software	the presence of software vulnerabilities (CVEs or equivalent).
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-L01	Poor coding practices	the presence of software with poor coding practices (CWEs or equivalent).
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-Q01	Non-reporting devices	a device failing to report software vulnerabilities within the specified time frame.
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-Q02	Non-reporting applicable defect checks	applicable defect checks failing to report.

Determination Statement ID	Defect Check ID	Defect Check Name	Rationale If an [organization-defined measure] for this defect check is above [the organization-defined threshold], then defects in **centrally managing the flaw remediation process** related to this control item might be the cause of the defect; i.e., ...
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-Q03	Low completeness-metric	completeness of overall ISCM reporting not meeting the threshold.
SI-2(1){1}	VULN-Q04	Poor timeliness metric	poor timeliness of overall ISCM reporting.

1400

1401 **3.4 Control Allocation Tables (CATs)**

1402 Table 8: Low Baseline Control (Item) Allocation Table, Table 9: Moderate Baseline Control
1403 (Item) Allocation Table, and Table 10: High Baseline Control (Item) Allocation Table provide
1404 the low, moderate, and high baseline control allocation tables, respectively. The following is a
1405 summary of the material in the security plan assessment narrative for each determination
1406 statement in Section 3.3. It provides a concise summary of the assessment plan.

1407

1408 **3.4.1 Low Baseline Control Allocation Table**

1409   **Table 8: Low Baseline Control (Item) Allocation Table**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(a){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(a){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(b){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(b){2}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(b){3}	MAN	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD				
RA-5(c){1}	RskEx	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(d){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(e){1}	RskEx	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
SI-2(a){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Ops	Test				
SI-2(a){2}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
SI-2(b){1}	MAN	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD				
SI-2(c){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
SI-2(d){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1410

1411 **3.4.2   Moderate Baseline Control Allocation Table**

1412   **Table 9: Moderate Baseline Control (Item) Allocation Table**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
RA-5(1){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
RA-5(2){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
SA-11(d){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				
SI-2(2){1}	ISCM-Ops	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1413

1414 **3.4.3   High Baseline Control Allocation Table**

1415   **Table 10: High Baseline Control (Item) Allocation Table**

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing
SI-2(1){1}	SWFM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test				

1416
1417

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1483

1484   **Appendix A   Traceability of VULN Control Items to Example Attack Steps**

1485   *Note*: This Appendix includes only those control items that can be assessed (at least in part) via
1486   automation.

Example Attack Step	NIST SP 800-53 Control Item Code
2) Initiate Attack Internally	RA-5(b)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	RA-5(c)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	RA-5(d)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	RA-5(e)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	SA-11(d)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	SI-2(a)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	SI-2(c)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	SI-2(d)
2) Initiate Attack Internally	SI-2(1)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	RA-5(b)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	RA-5(c)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	RA-5(d)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	RA-5(e)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	SA-11(d)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	SI-2(a)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	SI-2(c)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	SI-2(d)
5) Expand Control – Escalate or Propagate	SI-2(1)

1487

1488 **Appendix B   Keyword Rules Used to Identify Controls that Support VULN**

1489   Automated keyword searches were employed to identify candidate control items in SP 800-53
1490   that might support the VULN capability. After candidate controls were returned by the keyword
1491   searches, the language content of each control item was examined manually to separate those
1492   that support the VULN capability (true positives) from those that do not (false positives). The
1493   control items for the low, moderate, and high baselines are listed in Tables 8, 9, and 10,
1494   respectively. The specific keyword rules used to identify VULN controls appear in the table
1495   below.

Keyword Rule	Rationale
flaw remediation	Ensuring that flaws (CWEs) are found and corrected prior to approval and periodically thereafter
high-risk areas	Ensuring that software moving to high risk areas is adequately patched for the new location or environment
non-persisten OR *persisten*	Ensuring that software is loaded from persistent and trusted sources which have already had flaws removed and been patched
vulnerabil AND *scan*	Ensuring that software vulnerabilities are identified and corrected

1496

1497 **Appendix C   Control Items in the Low-High Baseline that were Selected by the Keyword**
1498   **Search for Controls that Support VULN, but were Manually Determined to be False**
1499   **Positives**

NIST SP 800-53 Control Item	Control Text	Level	Rationale for Calling a False Positive
AU-6 (5)	AUDIT REVIEW, ANALYSIS, AND REPORTING | INTEGRATION / SCANNING AND MONITORING CAPABILITIES The organization integrates analysis of audit records with analysis of [Selection (one or more): vulnerability scanning information; performance data; information system monitoring information; [Assignment: organization-defined data/information collected from other sources]] to further enhance the ability to identify inappropriate or unusual activity.	High	Relates to audit record analysis (not the VULN capability)
CA-2 (2)	SECURITY ASSESSMENTS | SPECIALIZED ASSESSMENTS The organization includes, as part of security control assessments, [Assignment: organization-defined frequency], [Selection: announced. unannounced], [Selection (one or more): in-depth monitoring; vulnerability scanning; malicious user testing; insider threat assessment; performance/load testing; [Assignment: organization-defined other forms of security assessment]].	High	Relates to assessment capability
RA-5 (4)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | DISCOVERABLE INFORMATION The organization determines what information about the information system is discoverable by adversaries and subsequently takes [Assignment: organization-defined corrective actions].	High	Does not relate to removing software vulnerabilities
RA-5 (5)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | PRIVILEGED ACCESS The information system implements privileged access authorization to [Assignment: organization-identified information system components] for selected [Assignment: organization-defined vulnerability scanning activities].	Moderate	Relates to access/trust capability

1500

1501 | **Appendix D   Control Items Not in the Low, Moderate, or High Baselines**

1502   The following security controls items are not included in an SP 800-53 baseline and were
1503   therefore not analyzed further after the keyword search:

1504   • The Program Management (PM) Family because the PM controls do not apply to
1505   individual systems;
1506

1507   • Control items selected by the VULN keywords (as specified in Appendix B) that are not
1508   assigned to an SP 800-53 baseline; and
1509

1510   • the Privacy Controls.

1511   The control items matching the criteria in the bulleted list above are provided in this appendix in
1512   case an organization wants to develop its own automated tests.

NIST SP 800-53 Control Item	Control Text
RA-5(3)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | BREADTH / DEPTH OF COVERAGE The organization employs vulnerability scanning procedures that can identify the breadth and depth of coverage (i.e., information system components scanned and vulnerabilities checked).
RA-5(6)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | AUTOMATED TREND ANALYSES The organization employs automated mechanisms to compare the results of vulnerability scans over time to determine trends in information system vulnerabilities.
RA-5(8)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | REVIEW HISTORIC AUDIT LOGS The organization reviews historic audit logs to determine if a vulnerability identified in the information system has been previously exploited.
RA-5(10)	VULNERABILITY SCANNING | CORRELATE SCANNING INFORMATION The organization correlates the output from vulnerability scanning tools to determine the presence of multi-vulnerability/multi-hop attack vectors.
SC-34(1)	NON-MODIFIABLE EXECUTABLE PROGRAMS | NO WRITABLE STORAGE The organization employs [Assignment: organization-defined information system components] with no writeable storage that is persistent across component restart or power on/off.

NIST SP 800-53 Control Item	Control Text
SI-2(3)(a)	FLAW REMEDIATION | TIME TO REMEDIATE FLAWS / BENCHMARKS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTIONS The organization: (a) Measures the time between flaw identification and flaw remediation.
SI-2(3)(b)	FLAW REMEDIATION | TIME TO REMEDIATE FLAWS / BENCHMARKS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTIONS The organization: (b) Establishes [Assignment: organization-defined benchmarks] for taking corrective actions.
SI-2(5)	FLAW REMEDIATION | AUTOMATIC SOFTWARE / FIRMWARE UPDATES The organization installs [Assignment: organization-defined security-relevant software and firmware updates] automatically to [Assignment: organization-defined information system components].
SI-2(6)	FLAW REMEDIATION | REMOVAL OF PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF SOFTWARE / FIRMWARE The organization removes [Assignment: organization-defined software and firmware components] after updated versions have been installed.
SI-3(10)(b)	MALICIOUS CODE PROTECTION | MALICIOUS CODE ANALYSIS The organization: (b) Incorporates the results from malicious code analysis into organizational incident response and flaw remediation processes.
SI-14	NON-PERSISTENCE Control: The organization implements non-persistent [Assignment: organization-defined information system components and services] that are initiated in a known state and terminated [Selection (one or more): upon end of session of use; periodically at [Assignment: organization-defined frequency]].
SI-14(1)	NON-PERSISTENCE | REFRESH FROM TRUSTED SOURCES The organization ensures that software and data employed during information system component and service refreshes are obtained from [Assignment: organization-defined trusted sources].

1513

1514   **Appendix E   VULN-Specific Acronyms and Abbreviations**

1515   API   Application Programming Interface

1516   CVE   Common Vulnerability and Exposure

1517   CWE   Common Weakness Enumeration

1518   SWID Tag   Software Identification Tag

1519   **Appendix F   Glossary**

common vulnerabilities and exposures (CVE) [SP800-126]	A nomenclature and dictionary of security-related software flaws.
common vulnerabilities and exposures (CVE) [CVENVD]	A list of entries, each containing a unique identification number, a description, and at least one public reference—for publicly known cybersecurity vulnerabilities [CVENVD]. This list feeds the National Vulnerability Database (NVD). See also: CVE equivalent.
CVE equivalent	A vulnerability—known by someone—that has been found in specific software—irrespective of whether that vulnerability is publicly known. CVEs are a subset of CVE equivalents.
common weakness enumeration (CWE) [CWE]	A list of known poor coding practices that may be present in software [CWE]. See also, weakness.
common weakness enumeration (CWE) [CNSSI 4009]	A taxonomy for identifying the common sources of software flaws (e.g., buffer overflows, failure to check input data).
dynamic code analyzer	A tool that analyzes computer software by executing programs built from the software being analyzed on a real or virtual processor and observing its behavior, probing the application and analyzing application responses.
metacontrol	A control of, or about, a control. For example, a control that specifies how the desired or actual state data for another control is to be managed.
national vulnerability database (NVD) [IR7511]	The U.S. government repository of standards-based vulnerability management data represented using the Security Content Automation Protocol (SCAP). This data informs automation of vulnerability management, security measurement, and compliance. NVD includes databases of security checklists, security related software flaws, misconfigurations, product names, and impact metrics.
package management system	An administrative tool or utility that facilitates the installation and maintenance of software on a given host, device or pool of centrally managed hosts, and the reporting of installed software attributes. May also be referred to as package manager, software manager, application manager, or app manager.
package manifest	A listing of the contents of a software package.
patch level	Denotes either a patch level or a patch set. More specifically, when patches must be applied in order, the patch level is the identifier of the most recently applied patch.
patch set	When patches do not need to be applied in any particular order, the patch set includes all (and only) the applied patches.

software product and executable file version	A patch level versioning of the software product or digital fingerprint version of a software file.
software vulnerability [SP800-163, Adapted]	A security flaw, glitch, or weakness found in software code that could be exploited by an attacker (threat source).
static code analyzer	A tool that analyzes source code without executing the code. Static code analyzers are designed to review bodies of source code (at the programming language level) or compiled code (at the machine language level) to identify poor coding practices. Static code analyzers provide feedback to developers during the code development phase on security flaws that might be introduced into code.
vulnerability [CNSSI 4009]	Weakness in an information system, system security procedures, internal controls, or implementation that could be exploited by a threat source.
vulnerability scanner	(As used in this volume) A network tool (hardware and/or software) that scans network devices to identify generally known and organization specific CVEs. It may do this based on a wide range of signature strategies.
vulnerability scanner	A tool (hardware and/or software) used to identify hosts/host attributes and associated vulnerabilities (CVEs, CWEs, and others).
weakness	(As used in this volume) Poor coding practices, as exemplified by CWEs.

1520

1521 **Appendix G   Control Items Affecting Desired and/or Actual State from All Defect Checks in this Volume**

1522 This table supports:

1523 • Identification of controls necessary to ensure that both the actual state and desired state data are maintained under effective
1524 configuration management in order to support complete, timely, and valid testing.
1525

1526 • Root cause analysis when a specific defect check fails. Such a failure might be caused not only by a failure of the specific
1527 control items mapped to that defect check in the defect check narratives, but also by a failure in any of the listed control items.

1528 As used here, the controls apply to potential defects in the desired state (DS) and/or actual state (AS). The rationale column explains
1529 how a defect in the control item might cause the defect check to fail.

1530 For example, in the vulnerability management capability, suppose an organization has identified a set of vulnerabilities to be checked
1531 that is recorded in both the desired state metadata and the tool used to perform the check. The organization can then compare the
1532 desired state and the tool used to perform the check to make sure that the vulnerability "checking process" is complete. However, if the
1533 desired state data itself is not under effective configuration management, some of the vulnerability checks might be removed from the
1534 desired state checking process due to an insider threat, carelessness, or an external attack by someone who wants to exploit a particular
1535 vulnerability. If the desired state metadata is under effective configuration management, the disparity in the desired state can be found
1536 quickly. Otherwise, the removal of vulnerability checks might not be discovered until root cause analysis after a successful attack
1537 (assuming the attack is even discovered).

1538 *Note*: These items are not explicitly included in the control item assessment narratives, unless they also apply to the configuration
1539 management of items *other than the desired and actual states* for assessment.

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text	Impact Level	Affects DS and/or AS	Rationale
CM-2{1}	Determine if the organization: develops, documents, and maintains a current baseline configuration of the information system under configuration control.	Low	DS	Otherwise, there is no desired state for testing.
CM-2(1)(a){1}	Determine if the organization: reviews and updates the baseline configuration of the information system: (a) [Assignment: organization-defined frequency].	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the desired state might not be updated as needed to maintain appropriate security.
CM-2(1)(b){1}	Determine if the organization: reviews and updates the baseline configuration of the information system: (b) When required due to [Assignment organization-defined circumstances].	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, desired state might not be updated based on the organization-defined circumstances.
CM-2(1)(c){1}	Determine if the organization: reviews and updates the baseline configuration of the information system: (c) As an integral part of information system component installations and upgrades.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, desired state might not be updated as appropriate when component installations and updates occur.
CM-2(2){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to maintain an up-to-date, complete, accurate, and readily available baseline configuration of the information system.	High	DS	Otherwise, accurate testing information might not be provided.
CM-3(a){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to determine the types of changes to the system {installed software} that are configuration-controlled.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the desired state might not specify all machine-readable data needed for implemented defect checks.

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text	Impact Level	Affects DS and/or AS	Rationale
CM-3(b){1}	Determine if the organization: reviews proposed configuration-controlled changes to the {software of the} system and approves or disapproves such changes.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the decisions on desired state might not adequately reflect security impact of changes.
CM-3(b){2}	Determine if the organization: explicitly considers security impact analysis when reviewing proposed configuration-controlled changes to the {software of the} system.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the decisions on desired state might not adequately reflect security impact of changes.
CM-3(c){1}	Determine if the organization: documents configuration change decisions associated with the system {installed software}.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, changes to the desired state specification might not be documented and available as machine-readable data.
CM-3(d){1}	Determine if the organization: implements approved configuration-controlled changes to the system {installed software}.	Moderate	AS	Otherwise, defect checks might fail because changes were not implemented in the actual state.
CM-3(f){1}	Determine if the organization: audits activities associated with configuration-controlled changes to the {software of the} system.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, errors in the desired state might not be detected.
CM-3(f){2}	Determine if the organization: reviews activities associated with configuration-controlled changes to the {software of the} system.	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, errors in the desired state might not be detected.
CM-3(g){1}	Determine if the organization: coordinates configuration change control activities {of software} through [Assignment: organization-defined configuration change control element (e.g., committee, board)] that convenes [Selection (one or more): [Assignment: organization-defined frequency]; [Assignment: organization-defined configuration change conditions].	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the persons authorized to make change approval decisions, and the scope of their authority might not be clearly defined to enable knowing what decisions are authorized.

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text	Impact Level	Affects DS and/or AS	Rationale
CM-3(g){2}	Determine if the organization: provides oversight for configuration change control activities {of software} through [Assignment: organization-defined configuration change control element (e.g., committee, board)] that convenes [Selection (one or more): [Assignment: organization-defined frequency]; [Assignment: organization-defined configuration change conditions].	Moderate	DS	Otherwise, the persons authorized to make change approval decisions and the scope of their authority might not be clearly defined to enable knowing what decisions are authorized.
CM-3(1)(a){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to document proposed changes to the system {installed software}.	High	DS	Otherwise, changes to the desired state specification might not be documented and available for assessment.
CM-3(1)(b){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to notify [Assignment: organized-defined approval authorities] of proposed changes to the system {installed software} and request change approval.	High	DS	Otherwise, needed changes might not be reviewed in a timely manner.
CM-3(1)(c){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to highlight proposed changes to the system {installed software} that have not been approved or disapproved by [Assignment: organization-defined time period].	High	DS	Otherwise, needed changes might not be reviewed in a timely manner.
CM-3(1)(d){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to prohibit changes to the system {installed software} until designated approvals are received.	High	DS	Otherwise, unapproved changes might be implemented.
CM-3(1)(e){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to document all changes to the system {installed software}.	High	AS	Otherwise, documented changes might not reflect the actual state of the system.
CM-3(1)(f){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to notify [Assignment: organization-defined personnel] when approved changes to the system {installed software} are completed.	High	DS	Otherwise, required changes might be missed.

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text	Impact Level	Affects DS and/or AS	Rationale
CM-3(2){1}	Determine if the organization: tests, validates, and documents changes to the {software of the} system before implementing the changes on the operational system. Not applicable in the operational environment. This should be assessed via manual reauthorization prior to placing policy in the desired state. Because it occurs as part of system engineering, it is outside of the scope of this operational capability.	Moderate	DS and AS	Otherwise, changes might increase risk by creating operational or security defects.
CM-8(a){1}	Determine if the organization: develops and documents an inventory of system components {for software} that (1) accurately reflects the current system and (2) includes all components within the authorization boundary of the system.	Low	DS and AS	Otherwise, the desired state and actual state inventories might have errors related to accuracy, completeness, and/or content.
CM-8(a){2}	Determine if the organization: develops and documents an inventory of system components {for software} that is at the level of granularity deemed necessary for tracking and reporting [by the organization].	Low	DS and AS	Otherwise, the desired state and actual state inventories might have errors related to level of detail.
CM-8(b){1}	Determine if the organization: updates the system component inventory {for software} [Assignment: organization-defined frequency].	Low	DS and AS	Otherwise, defects in the desired state and actual state inventories, and related processes, might not be detected.
CM-8(b){2}	Determine if the organization: reviews the system component inventory {for software} [Assignment: organization-defined frequency].	Low	DS and AS	Otherwise, defects in the desired state and actual state inventories and related processes might not be detected.
CM-8(1){1}	Determine if the organization: updates the inventory of system {installed software} components as an integral part of component installations, removals, and system updates.	Moderate	DS and AS	Otherwise, defects in desired state and actual state inventories and related processes might not be detected.

Determination Statement ID	Determination Statement Text	Impact Level	Affects DS and/or AS	Rationale
CM-8(2){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms to help maintain an up-to-date, complete, accurate, and readily available inventory of system {installed software} components.	High	DS and AS	Otherwise, an up-to-date and accurate desired state and actual state inventories might not be available for automated assessment.
CM-8(3)(a){1}	Determine if the organization: employs automated mechanisms [Assignment: organization-defined frequency] to detect the presence of unauthorized software and firmware components within the system.	Moderate	AS	Otherwise, inventory accuracy (e.g., completeness and timeliness) might be difficult or impossible to maintain.
CM-8(3)(b){1}	Determine if the organization: takes the following actions when unauthorized {installed software} components are detected: [Selection (one or more): disables network access by such components; isolates the components; notifies [Assignment: organization-defined personnel or roles]].	Moderate	AS	Otherwise, detected security defects might not be mitigated.
CM-8(4){1}	Determine if the organization: includes in the {installed software} system component inventory information, a means for identifying by [Selection (one or more): name; position; role], individuals responsible/accountable for administering those components.	High	DS	Otherwise, when defects are detected, the automated systems cannot know what persons or groups to notify to take appropriate action.

1540

1541

Control Allocation Table for Appendix G

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing	Level
CM-2{1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Low
CM-2(1)(a){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-2(1)(b){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-2(1)(c){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate

Determination Statement ID	Implemented By	Assessment Boundary	Assessment Responsibility	Assessment Methods	Selected	Rationale for Risk Acceptance	Frequency of Assessment	Impact of Not Implementing	Level
CM-2(2){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(a){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD					Moderate
CM-3(b){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(b){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD					Moderate
CM-3(c){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(d){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(f){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(f){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(g){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(g){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-3(1)(a){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(1)(b){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(1)(c){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(1)(d){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(1)(e){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD					High
CM-3(1)(f){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-3(2){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	MAN	TBD					Moderate
CM-8(a){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Low
CM-8(a){2}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Low
CM-8(b){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Low
CM-8(b){2}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Low
CM-8(1){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-8(2){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High
CM-8(3)(a){1}	ISCM-Sys	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-8(3)(b){1}	PatMan	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					Moderate
CM-8(4){1}	DSM	ISCM-TN	ISCM-Sys	Test					High