



nShield Security Policy
nShield and payShield modules



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Patents

UK Patent GB9714757.3. Corresponding patents/applications in USA, Canada, South Africa, Japan and International Patent Application PCT/GB98/00142.



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Chapter I Purpose

Introduction

The nShield tamper resistant Hardware Security Module are multi-tasking hardware modules that are optimized for performing modular arithmetic on very large integers. The modules also offer a complete set of key management protocols.

Unit ID	Model Number	RTC	SEE	Potting	EMC	Crypto Accelerator	Overall
nShield F3 Ultrasign PCI	nC4033P-300	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	6 DSPs	3
nShield F3 Ultrasign 32 PCI	nC4132P-300	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	6 DSPs	3
nCipher F3 PCI for NetHSM	nC4032P-300N	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	6 DSPs	3
payShield Ultra PCI	nC4232P-300	Yes	Yes	Yes	B	6 DSPs	3
payShield Ultra PCI for NetHSM	nC4232P-300N	Yes	Yes	Yes	B	6 DSPs	3
nShield F3 PCI	nC4032P-150	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	3 DSPs	3
payShield PCI	nC4232P-150	Yes	Yes	Yes	B	3 DSPs	3
nShield F3 PCI	nC4032P-150	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	3 DSPs	3
nShield lite	nC4032P-10	Yes	Optional	Yes	B	0	3

The units are identical in operation and only vary in the processing speed and the support software supplied.

The modules are also used to provide the security of the nCipher NetHSM.

nCipher also supply modules to third party OEM vendors for use in a range of security products.

The module can be initialized to comply with the roles and services section at either level 2, role based authorization, or level 3, identity based authorization. See *Identification and authentication* on page 24.

- When initialized in level 2 mode the firmware version 2.22.6-2 (level 2 mode) and the level 2 certificate applies.
- When initialized in level 3 mode the firmware version 2.22.6-3 (level 3 mode) and the level 3 certificate applies.

The initialization parameters are reported by the NewEnquiry and SignModuleState services. A user can determine which mode the module is operating in using the KeySafe GUI or the command line utilities supplied with the module, or their own code - these operate outside the security boundary.

The module connects to the host computer via a PCI bus. The modules must be accessed by a custom written application. Full documentation for the nCore API can be downloaded from the nCipher web site: <http://www.nCipher.com>.

nShield modules have on-board non-volatile memory. There are services that enable memory to be allocated as files. Files have Access Control Lists that determine what operations can be performed on their contents. nShield modules have on-board Real-time clock.

These modules do not offer SEE, if a customer requires this functionality, they should purchase an nShield module.

nShield modules include a technology called, the Secure Execution Environment (SEE). This enables users to load a SEE machine. A SEE machine is user written code that implements a specific Software Interrupt interface. This enables users to implement non-cryptographic code in a protected memory space on the module that is outside the logical security boundary.

SEE code is executed in a protected environment. Whenever the SEE machine is running the nCore kernel is locked. Whenever the nCore kernel is active the SEE machine is locked. The SEE machine is excluded from the requirements of FIPS PUB 140-2. While the SEE machine is active the module is running in a non-FIPS mode.

The SEE machine has no direct access to objects stored on the module. In order to use cryptographic functions it must submit a job to the nCore kernel using the nCore API. The testing shows that the interface between the nCore kernel and the SEE machine is secure and that a malicious SEE machine cannot gain access to objects protected by the nCore kernel.

Before a user can send commands to the SEE machine they must create an instance called a SEE World. A SEE World is treated as a separate user by the module and must present the correct authentication before they can submit commands to the nCore kernel.

nShield modules are supplied with the SEE functions disabled. In order to use these functions the customer must purchase a feature-enable certificate enabling the functions for a specific module. The SEE feature is export controlled and therefore is not available in some territories.

All payShield modules are supplied with a SEE licence that enables them to run the nCipher Secure payments Processing library which supports a number of payments specific algorithms and functions which provide support for 3-D Secure, EMV (Europay, MasterCard, Visa) and PIN processing.

The module can be connected to a computer running one of the following operating systems:

- Windows 2000 and 2003
- Solaris
- HP-UX
- AIX
- Linux x86
- FreeBSD x86

Windows 2000 and Linux were used for the validation.

Module Ports and Interfaces

The following table lists the logical interfaces to the module and how they map to physical interfaces.

Logical Interface	Physical Interface
Data In	PCI bus, Serial Interface, 16-way header
Data Out	PCI bus, Serial Interface, 16-way header
Control In	PCI bus, Temperature Sensor, PSU Monitor, Reset Switch, Mode Switch, 16-way header
Status Out	PCI bus, 16-way header LED
Power	PCI bus

The 16-way header is only fitted to modules used within a NetHSM. It duplicates the Serial port, mode switch, reset switch and Status LED - so that these can be connected remotely when the module is mounted inside another device.

Excluded Components

The following components are excluded from FIPS 140-2 validation:

Roles

The module defines the following roles:

Unauthorised

All connections are initially unauthorized. If the module is initialized in level three mode, an unauthorized user is restricted to status commands, and commands required to complete authorization protocol.

User

A user enters the user role by providing the required authority to carry out a service. The exact accreditation required to perform each service is listed in the table of services.

In order to perform an operation on a stored key, the user must first load the key blob. If the key blob is protected by a logical token, the user must load the logical token by loading shares from smart cards.

If the module is initialized in level 3 mode, the user requires a certificate from the security officer to import or generate a new key. This certificate is linked to a token protected key.

Once they have loaded a key they can then use it to perform cryptographic operations as defined by the Access Control List (ACL) stored with the key.

Each key blob contains an ACL that determines what services can be performed on that key. This ACL can require a certificate from a Security Officer authorizing the action. Some actions including writing tokens always require a certificate.

nCipher Security Officer

The nCipher Security Officer (NSO) is responsible for overall security of the module.

The nCipher Security Officer is identified by a key pair, referred to as K_{NSO} . The hash of the public half of this key is stored when the unit is initialized. Any operation involving a module key or writing a token requires a certificate signed by K_{NSO} .

The nCipher Security Officer is responsible for creating the authentication tokens (smart cards) for each user and ensuring that these tokens are physically handed to the correct person.

An operator assumes the role of NSO by loading the private half of K_{NSO} and presenting the KeyID for this key to authorize a command.

Junior Security Officer

Where the nCipher Security Officer wants to delegate responsibility for authorizing an action they can create a key pair and give this to their delegate who becomes a Junior Security Officer (JSO). An ACL can then refer to this key, and the JSO is then empowered to sign the certificate authorizing the action. The JSO's keys should be stored on a key blob protected by a token that is not used for any other purpose.

In order to assume the role of JSO the user loads the JSO key and presents the KeyID of this key, and if required the certificate signed by K_{NSO} that delegates authority to the key, to authorize a command.

A JSO can delegate portions of their authority to a new user in the same way. The new user will be a JSO if they have authority they can delegate, otherwise they will be a user.

Services available to each role

For more information on each of these services refer to the nCipher Developer's Guide and nCipher Developer's Reference.

The following services provide user authentication or cryptographic functionality. The functions available depend on whether the user is in the unauthenticated role, an authorized user including junior security officer (JSO), or the nCipher Security Officer (NSO). For each operation it lists the supported algorithms.

Note Algorithms marked with an asterisk are only available when the module is initialized in level 2 mode.

Key Access	Description
Create	Creates a in-memory object, but does not reveal value.
Erase	Erases the object from memory, smart card or non-volatile memory without revealing value
Export	Discloses a value, but does not allow value to be changed.
Report	Returns status information
Set	Changes a CSP to a given value
Use	Performs an operation with an existing CSP - without revealing or changing the CSP

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Bignum Operation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Performs simple mathematical operations.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Change Share PIN	No	pass phrase	pass phrase	Updates the pass phrase used to encrypt a token share. The pass phrase supplied by the user is not used directly, it is first hashed and then combined with the module key. To achieve this the command decrypts the existing share using the old share key derived from old pass phrase, module key and smart card identity. It then derives a new share key based on new pass phrase, module key and smart card identity, erases old share from smart card and writes a new share encrypted under the new share key.	Sets the pass phrase for a share, uses module key, uses share key, uses module key, creates share key, uses new share key, exports encrypted share, erases old share	
Channel Open	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Opens a communication channel which can be used for bulk encryption or decryption.	Uses a key object	AES, DES, Triple DES, Arc Four*, Blowfish*, CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*
Channel Update	No	handle	handle	Performs encryption / decryption on a previously opened channel. The operation and key are specified in ChannelOpen.	Uses a key object	AES, DES, Triple DES, Arc Four*, Blowfish*, CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*
CheckUserACL	No	handle	handle	Determines whether the ACL associated with a key object allows a specific user defined action.	Uses a key object	
Clear Unit	No	No	No	Zeroises all loaded keys, tokens and shares. Clear unit does not erase long term keys, such as module keys.	Erases objects.	All

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Create Buffer	No	cert [handle]	cert [handle]	Allocates an area of memory to load data. If the data is encrypted, this service specifies the encryption key and IV used. This service is feature enabled. The decrypt operation is performed by LoadBuffer	Uses a key object	
Create SEE World	No	handle cert	handle cert	Creates a SEE World, passing in the initialization data stored in a buffer. This command checks the DSA signatures on the buffer using the public key provided. It also specifies whether debugging is allowed or not. Enabling debugging requires a certificate from the nCipher Security Officer.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Decrypt	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Decrypts a cipher text with a stored key returning the plain text.	Uses a key object	AES, DES, Triple DES, Diffie-Hellman, ECDH, RSA, El Gamal, Arc Four*, Blowfish*, CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*, KCDSA*
Derive Key	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	The nCipher DeriveKey service provides functions that the FIPS 140-2 standard describes as key wrapping and split knowledge - it does not provide key derivation in the sense understood by FIPS 140-2. Creates a new key object from a variable number of other keys already stored on the module and returns a handle for the new key. This service can be used to split, or combine, encryption keys. This service is used to wrap keys according to the nCipher KDP so that a key server can distribute the wrapped key to micro-HSM devices.	Uses a key object, create a new key object.	AES, DES, Triple DES, PKCS #8, TLS key derivation, XOR, DLIES (D/H plus Triple DES or D/H plus AES), CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Blowfish*, Arc Four*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*
Destroy	No	handle	handle	Removes an object, if an object has multiple handles as a result of RedeemTicket service, this removes the current handle.	Erases a Impath, SEEWORLD, logical token, or any key object.	
Duplicate	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Creates a second instance of a key object with the same ACL and returns a handle to the new instance.	Creates a new key object	
Encrypt	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Encrypts a plain text with a stored key returning the cipher text.	Uses a key object	AES, DES, Triple DES, RSA, El Gamal, Arc Four*, Blowfish*, CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*, KCDSA*
EraseFile	level 2 only	cert	yes	Removes a file, but not a logical token, from a smart card or software token.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Erase Share	level 2 only	cert	yes	Removes a share from a smart card or software token.	Erases a share	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Existing Client	yes	yes	yes	Starts a new connection as an existing client.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Export	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	If the unit is operating in FIPS mode this operation is only available for public keys - see <i>Operating a level 2 module in FIPS mode</i> on page 29. If the unit has been initialized to comply with FIPS 140-2 level 3 roles and services and key management, this service is only available for public keys.	Exports a [public] key object.	Level 2 mode -Any key type Level 3 mode - Random keys, RSA, DSA, ECDSA, Diffie-Hellman, El-Gamal and ECDH public keys
Feature Enable	No	cert	cert	Enables a service. This requires a certificate signed by the nCipher Master Feature Enable key.	Uses the public half of the nCipher Master Feature Enable Key	
Firmware Authenticate	yes	yes	yes	Reports firmware version. Performs a zero knowledge challenge response protocol based on HMAC that enables a user to ensure that the firmware in the module matches the firmware supplied by nCipher. The protocol generates a random value to use as the HMAC key.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Foreign Token Command (Bypass)	No	handle	handle	Sends an ISO-7816 command to a smart card over the channel opened by ForeignTokenOpen.	Uses a bypass channel.	
Foreign Token Open (Bypass)	No	FE, cert	FE	Opens a channel to foreign smart card that accepts ISO-7816 commands. This service cannot be used if the smart card has been formatted using FormatToken. The channel is closed when the card is removed from the reader, or if the handle is destroyed. This service is feature enabled.	Creates a bypass channel.	
FormatToken	level 2 only	cert	yes	Formats a smart card or software token ready for use.	May use a module key to create challenge response value Creates a new symmetric key object. Sets the ACL and Application data for that object.	
Generate Key	level 2 only	cert	yes	Generates a symmetric key of a given type with a specified ACL and returns a handle. Optionally returns a certificate containing the ACL.	Optionally uses module signing key and exports the key generation certificate.	AES, DES, Triple DES, Arc Four*, Blowfish*, CAST 5*, CAST 6*, Serpent*, SEED*, Twofish*

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Generate Key Pair	level 2 only	cert	yes	Generates a key pair of a given type with specified ACLs for each half or the pair. Performs a pair wise consistency check on the key pair. Returns two key handles. Optionally returns certificates containing the ACL.	Creates two new key objects. Sets the ACL and Application data for those objects. Optionally uses module signing key and exports two key generation certificates.	DSA, ECDSA, RSA, El Gamal, KCDSA*
Generate KLF	No	FE	FE	Generates a new long term key.	Erases the module long term key, creates new module long term key.	
Generate Logical Token	level 2 only	cert	yes	Creates a new logical token, which can then be written as shares to smart cards or software tokens	Uses module key, Creates a logical token.	
Get ACL	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Returns the ACL for a given handle.	Exports the ACL for a key object.	
Get Application Data	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Returns the application information stored with a key.	Exports the application data of a key object.	
Get Challenge	yes	yes	yes	Returns a random nonce that can be used in certificates	No access to keys or CSPs	
Get Key Info	No	handle	handle	Superseded by GetKeyInfoEx retained for compatibility.	Exports the SHA-1 hash of a key object	
Get Key Info Extended	No	handle	handle	Returns the hash of a key for use in ACLs	Exports the SHA-1 hash of a key object	
Get Logical Token Info	No	handle	handle	Superseded by GetLogicalTokenInfoEx retained for compatibility.	Exports the SHA-1 hash of a logical token.	
Get Logical Token Info Extended	No	handle	handle	Returns the token hash and number of shares for a logical token	Exports the SHA-1 hash of a logical token.	
Get Module Signing Key	yes	yes	yes	Returns the public half of the module's signing key. This can be used to verify certificates signed with this key.	Exports the public half of the module's signing key.	
Get Module Long Term Key	yes	yes	yes	Returns a handle to the public half of the module's signing key. this can be used to verify key generation certificates and to authenticate inter module paths.	Exports the public half of the module's long term key.	
Get RTC	yes	yes	yes	Reports the time according to the on-board real-time clock	No access to keys or CSPs	
Get Share ACL	yes	yes	yes	Returns the access control list for a share	Exports the ACL for a token share on a smart card.	
GetSlot Info	yes	yes	yes	Reports status of the physical token in a slot. Enables a user to determine if the correct token is present before issuing a ReadShare command. If the token is formatted with a challenge response key, performs the protocol.	May use a module key.	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Get Slot List	yes	yes	yes	Reports the list of slots available from this module.	No access to keys or CSPs	
GetTicket	No	handle	handle	Gets a ticket - an invariant identifier - for a key. This can be passed to another client or to a SEE World which can redeem it using RedeemTicket to obtain a new handle to the object,	Uses a key object, logical token, Impath, SEEWORLD.	
Get World Signers	No	handle	handle	Returns a list of the keys used to sign a SEEWORLD identified by the key hash and the signing mechanism used. This command can only be called from inside the SEE world.	Uses a SEEWORLD object.	
Hash	yes	yes	yes	Hashes a value.	No access to keys or CSPs	HSA-160, MD2, MD5, RIPEMD 160, SHA-1, SHA-256, SHA-384, SHA-512
Impath Get Info	No	handle	handle	Reports status information about an impath	Uses an Impath, exports status information.	
Impath Key Exchange Begin	FE	FE	FE	Creates a new inter-module path and returns the key exchange parameters to send to the peer module.	Creates a set of Impath keys	DSA and AES, Triple-DES
Impath Key Exchange Finish	No	handle	handle	Completes an impath key exchange. Require the key exchange parameters from the remote module.	Creates a set of Impath keys.	DSA and AES, Triple-DES
Impath Receive	No	handle	handle	Decrypts data with the Impath decryption key.	Uses an Impath key.	
Impath Send	No	handle	handle	Encrypts data with the impath encryption key.	Uses an Impath key.	
Import	level 2 only	cert	yes	Loads a key and ACL from the host and returns a handle. If the unit is operating in FIPS mode at level 2, this operation must only be used for public keys - see Operating a level 2 module in FIPS mode on page 29 If the unit has been initialized to comply with FIPS 140-2 level 3 roles and services and key management, this service is only available for public keys.	Creates a new key object, sets the key value, ACL and App data.	Level 2 mode -Any key type Level 3 mode - Random keys, RSA, DSA, Diffie-Hellman, El-Gamal, ECDSA or ECDH public keys
Initialise	init	init	init	Initializes the module, retraining it to the factory state. This clears all NVRAM files, all loaded keys and all module keys and the module signing key. It also generates a new KM0 and module signing key. The only key that is not zeroized is the long term signing key. This key only serves to provide a cryptographic identity for a module that can be included in a PKI certificate chain. nCipher may issue such certificates to indicate that a module is a genuine nCipher module. This key is not used to encrypt any other data.	Erases keys, Creates KM0 and KML	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Load Blob	No	handle	handle	Loads a key that has been stored in a key blob. The user must first have loaded the token or key used to encrypt the blob.	Uses module key, logical token, or archiving key, creates a new key object.	
Load Buffer	No	handle	handle	Loads signed data into a buffer. Several load buffer commands may be required to load all the data, in which case it is the responsibility of the client program to ensure they are supplied in the correct order. Requires the handle of a buffer created by CreateBuffer.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Load Logical Token	yes	yes	yes	Allocates space for a new logical token - the individual shares can then be assembled using ReadShare or ReceiveShare. Once assembled the token can be used in LoadBlob or MakeBlob commands.	Uses module key	
Make Blob	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Creates a key blob containing the key and returns it. The key object to be exported may be any algorithm.	Uses module key, logical token or archiving key, exports encrypted key object.	
Mod Exp	yes	yes	yes	Performs a modular exponentiation on values supplied with the command.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Mod Exp CRT	yes	yes	yes	Performs a modular exponentiation on values, supplied with the command using Chinese Remainder Theorem.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Module Info	yes	yes	yes	Reports low level status information about the module. This service is designed for use in nCipher's test routines.	No access to keys or CSPs	
NewClient	yes	yes	yes	Returns a client id.	No access to keys or CSPs	
New Enquiry	yes	yes	yes	Reports status information.	No access to keys or CSPs	
No Operation	yes	yes	yes	Does nothing, can be used to determine that the module is responding to commands.	No access to keys or CSPs	
NVMem Allocate	No	cert	yes	Allocates an area of non-volatile memory as a file and sets the ACLs for this file. This command can now be used to write files protected by an ACL to a smart card	No access to keys or CSPs	
NVMem Free	No	cert	yes	Frees a file stored in non-volatile memory. This command can now be used to write files protected by an ACL to a smart card	No access to keys or CSPs	
NVMem List	yes	yes	yes	Reports a list of files stored in the non-volatile memory. This command can now be used to list files protected by an ACL on a smart card	No access to keys or CSPs	
NVMem Operation	No	cert, ACL	ACL	Performs an operation on a file stored in non-volatile memory. Operations include: read, write, increment, decrement, etc. This command can now be used to write files protected by an ACL to a smart card	No access to keys or CSPs	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Pause For Notifications	yes	yes	yes	This service enables the module to report status information to the nCipher server. The command is automatically submitted by the server.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Programming Begin Programming Begin Chunk Programming Load Block Programming End Chunk Programming End	monitor	monitor	monitor	These commands are used in the firmware upgrade process. The user uses the LoadROM utility which issues the correct command sequence to load the new firmware. The module will only be operating in a FIPS approved mode if you install firmware that has been validated by NIST / CSE. Users who require FIPS validation should only upgrade firmware after NIST / CSE issue a new certificate. The monitor also checks that the Version Sequence Number (VSN) of the firmware is as high or higher than the VSN of the firmware currently installed.	Uses Firmware Integrity Key and Firmware Confidentiality Keys. Sets Firmware Integrity Key and Firmware Confidentiality Keys.	
Query Long Jobs	yes	yes	yes	The user can now tag a command as 'long'. Such commands do not time out - but are only processed by a restricted number of threads. This command returns a list of the job identifiers for all currently active 'long' jobs. This command is issued automatically by the nCipher server.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Random Number	yes	yes	yes	Generates a random number for use in a application using the on-board random number generator. There are separate services for generating keys. The random number services are designed to enable an application to access the random number source for its own purposes - for example an on-line casino may use GenerateRandom to drive its applications.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Random Prime	yes	yes	yes	Generates a random prime. This uses the same mechanism as is used for RSA and Diffie-Hellman key generation. The primality checking conforms to ANSI X9.31.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Read File	No	cert	yes	Reads a file, but not a logical token, from a smart card or software token. This command can only read files without ACLs.	Reads a file, but not a logical token, from a smart card or software token. This command can only read files without ACLs. No access to keys or CSPs	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Read Share	yes	yes	yes	Reads a share from a physical token. Once sufficient shares have been loaded recreates token- may require several ReadShare or ReceiveShare commands.	Uses pass phrase, module key, creates share key, uses share key, creates a logical token.	
Receive Share	No	handle, encrypted share	handle, encrypted share	Takes a share encrypted with SendShare and a pass phrase and uses them to recreate the logical token. - may require several ReadShare or ReceiveShare commands	Uses an Impath key, uses pass phrase, module key, creates share key, uses share key, creates a logical token	
Redeem Ticket	No	ticket	ticket	Gets a handle in the current name space for the object referred to by a ticket created by GetTicket.	Uses a key object, logical token, Impath, or SEEWORLD	
Remove KM	No	cert	yes	Removes a loaded module key.	Erases a module key	
SEE Job	No	cert	yes	Sends a command to a SEE World.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Set ACL	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Sets the ACL for an existing key. The existing ACL for the key must allow the operation.	Sets the Access Control List for a key object	
Set Application Data	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Stores information with a key.	Sets the application data stored with a key object	
Set KM	No	cert	yes	Loads a key object as a module key.	Uses a key object, sets a module key	AES or Triple DES
Set KNSO	init	init	No	Superseded by SetNSOPerm. Although this command can still be used it cannot authorize recently added services added.	Sets the nCipher Security officer's key hash.	
Set NSO Perm	init	init	No	Loads a key hash as the nCipher Security Officer's Key and sets the security policy to be followed by the module. This can only be performed while the unit is in the initialisation state.	Sets the nCipher Security officer's key hash.	
Set RTC	No	cert	yes	Sets the real-time clock.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Set SEE Machine	No	cert handle	handle	Loads the contents of a buffer (created by CreateBuffer / LoadBuffer) as the SEE machine for this module. This command checks the signatures on the buffer.	Uses a public key provided in buffer	DSA, DES MAC, Triple DES MAC, HMAC
Sign	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Returns the digital signature or MAC of plain text using a stored key.	Uses a key object	RSA, DSA, ECDSA, DES MAC, Triple DES MAC, HMAC, KCDSA*
Sign Module State	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Signs a certificate describing the modules security policy, as set by SetNSOPerm	Uses the module signing key	
Send Share	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Reads a logical token share and encrypts it under an impath key for transfer to another module where it can be loaded using ReceiveShare	Uses an Impath key, exports encrypted share.	
Statistics Enumerate Tree	yes	yes	yes	Reports the statistics available.	No access to keys or CSPs	

Command / Service	Role			Description	Key/CSP access	Key types
	Unauth	JSO / User	NSO			
Statistic Get Value	yes	yes	yes	Reports a particular statistic.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Trace SEE World	No	cert	yes	Reports debugging output from a SEE World.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Verify	No	handle, ACL	handle, ACL	Verifies a digital signature using a stored key.	Uses a key object.	RSA, DSA, ECDSA, DES MAC, Triple DES MAC, HMAC, KCDSA*
Write File	No	cert	yes	Writes a file, but not a logical token, to a smart card or software token. Note these files do not have an ACL, use the NVMEM commands to create files with an ACL.	No access to keys or CSPs	
Write Share	No	cert handle	handle	Writes a new share to a smart card or software token. The number of shares that can be created is specified when the token is created. All shares must be written before the token is destroyed.	Sets pass phrase, uses module key, creates share, uses pass phrase and module key, creates share key, uses module key, uses share key, exports encrypted share.	

Code	Description
No	The user can not perform this service in this role.
yes	The user can perform this service in this role without further authorization.
handle	The user can perform this service if they possess a valid handle for the resource: key, channel, impath, token, buffers, SEEWORLD. The handle is an arbitrary number generated when the object is created. The handle for an object is specific to the user that created the object. The ticket services enable a user to pass an ID for an object they have created to another user or SEEWORLD.
ACL	The user can only perform this service with a key if the ACL for the key permits this service. The ACL may require that the user present a certificate signed by a Security Officer or another key. The ACL may specify that a certificate is required, in which case the module verifies the signature on the certificate before permitting the operation.
pass phrase	A user can only load a share, or change the share PIN, if they possess the pass phrase used to encrypt the share. The module key with which the pass phrase was combined must also be present.
cert	A user can only perform this service if they are in possession of a certificate from the nCipher Security Officer. This certificate will reference a key. The module verifies the signature on the certificate before permitting the operation.
FE	This service is not available on all modules. It must be enabled using the FeatureEnable service before it can be used.
level 2 only	These services are available to the unauthenticated user only when the module is initialized in it FIPS 140-2 level 2 mode. The module can be initialized to comply with FIPS 140-2 level 3 roles and services and key management by setting the FIPS_level3_compliance flag. If this flag is set: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Generate Key, Generate Key Pair and Import commands require authorization with a certificate signed by the nCipher Security Officer. the Import command fails if you attempt to import a key of a type that can be used to Sign or Decrypt messages. the GenerateKey, GenerateKeyPair, Import and DeriveKey operations will not allow you to create an ACL for a secret key that allows the key to be exported in plain text.

Code	Description
encrypted share	The ReceiveShare command requires a logical token share encrypted using an Impath key, created by the SendShare command.
ticket	The RedeemTicket command requires the ticket generated by GetTicket.
init	These services are used to initialise the module. They are only available when the module is in the initialisation mode. To put the module into initialisation mode you must have physical access to the module and put the mode switch into the initialisation setting. In order to restore the module to operational mode you must put the mode switch back to the Operational setting.
monitor	These services are used to reprogram the module. They are only available when the module is in the monitor mode. To put the module into monitor mode you must have physical access to the module and put the mode switch into the monitor setting. In order to restore the module to operational mode you reinitialize the module and then return it to operational state.

Keys

For each type of key used by the nShield and nCipher modules, the following section describes the access that a user has to the keys.

The nShield and nCipher modules refers to keys by their handle, an arbitrary number, or by its SHA-1 hash.

Security Officer's key

The nCipher Security officer's key must be set as part of the initialisation process. This is a public / private key pair that the nCipher Security Officer uses to sign certificates to authorize key management and other secure operations.

The SHA-1 hash of the public half of this key pair is stored in the module EEPROM.

The public half of this key is included as plain text in certificates.

The module treats anyone in possession of the private half of this key as the Security Officer.

If you use the standard tools supplied by nCipher to initialise the module, then this key is a DSA key stored as a key blob protected by a logical token on the Administrator Card Set. If a customer writes their own tools to initialise the module, they can choose between RSA, DSA or KDSA, and are responsible for ensuring the private half of this key is stored securely.

Junior Security Officer's key

Because the nCipher Security Officer's key has several properties, it is good practice to delegate authority to one or more Junior Security Officers, each with authority for defined operations.

To create a Junior Security Officer (JSO) the NSO creates a certificate signing key for use as their JSO key. This key must be protected by a logical token in the same manner as any other application key.

Then to delegate authority to the JSO the nCipher Security Officer creates a certificate containing an Access Control List specifying the authority to be delegated and the hash of the JSO key to which the powers are to be delegated.

The JSO can then authorize the actions listed in the ACL - as if they were the NSO - by presenting the JSO key and the certificate. If the JSO key is created with the Sign permission in its ACL the JSO may delegate parts of their authority to another key, the holder of the delegate key will need to present the certificate signed by the NSO and the certificate signed by the JSO. If the JSO key only has UseAsCertificate permissions, then they cannot delegate authority.

If you use the standard tools supplied by nCipher to initialise the module, then this key is a DSA key stored as a key blob protected by a logical token on the Administrator Card Set. If a customer writes their own tools to initialise the module, they can choose between RSA, DSA or KDSA, and are responsible for ensuring the private half of this key is stored securely.

Long term signing key

The nShield and nCipher modules stores a 160 bit random number in the EEPROM provided by the Dallas 4320. This data is combined with a discrete log group stored in the module firmware to produce a DSA key.

This key can be reset to a new random value by the GenerateKLF service. It can be used to sign a module state certificate using the SignModuleState service and the public value retrieved by the non-cryptographic service GetLongTermKey.

This is the only key that is not zeroized when the module is initialized.

This key is not used to encrypt any other data. It only serves to provide a cryptographic identity for a module that can be included in a PKI certificate chain. nCipher may issue such certificates to indicate that a module is a genuine nCipher module.

Module signing key

When the nShield and nCipher modules is initialized it automatically generate a DSA key pair that it uses to sign certificates. The private half of this pair is stored internally in EEPROM. and never released. The public half is revealed in plaintext, or encrypted as a key blob under some other key. This key is only ever used to verify that a certificate was generated by a specified module.

Module keys

Module keys are AES or Triple DES used to protect tokens. The nShield and nCipher modules generates the first module key K_{M0} when it is initialized. This module key is guaranteed never to have been known outside this module. K_{M0} is an AES key. The Security Officer can load further module keys. These can be generated by the module or may be loaded from an external source. Setting a key as a module key stores the key in EEPROM..

Module keys can not be exported once they have been assigned as module keys. They may only be exported on a key blob when they are initially generated.

Logical tokens

A logical token is an AES or Triple DES key used to protect key blobs. Logical tokens are associated with module keys. The key type depends on the key type of the module key.

When you create a logical token, you must specify parameters, including the total number of shares, and the number or shares required to recreate the token, the quorum. The total number can be any integer between 1 and 64 inclusive. The quorum can be any integer from 1 to the total number.

A logical token is always generated randomly, using the on-board random number generator.

While loaded in the module logical tokens are stored in the object store.

Tokens keys are never exported from the module, except on physical tokens or software tokens. When a module key is exported the logical token - the Triple DES key plus the token parameters - is first encrypted with a module key. Then the encrypted token is split into shares using the Shamir Threshold Sharing algorithm, even if the total number of shares is one. Each share is then encrypted using a share key and written to a physical token - a smart card - or a software token. Logical tokens can be shared between one or more physical token. The properties for a token define how many shares are required to recreate the logical token. Shares can only be generated when a token is created. The firmware prevents a specific share from being written more than once.

Share Key

A share key is used to protect a logical token share when they are written to a smart card or software token that is used for authentication. The share key is created by creating a message comprised of an nCipher secret prefix, Module key, Share number, smart card unique id and an optional 20 bytes supplied by the user (expected to be the SHA-1 hash of a pass phrase entered into the application), and using this as the input to the approved pRNG function to form a unique key used to encrypt the share - this is either an AES or Triple

DES key depending on the key type of the logical token which is itself determined by the key type of the module key. This key is not stored on the module. It is recalculated every time share is loaded. The share data includes a MAC, if the MAC does not verify correctly the share is rejected.

The share key is not used directly to protect CSPs. The logical token needs to be reassembled from the shares using Shamir Threshold Sharing Scheme and then be decrypted using the module key. Only then can the logical token be used to decrypt application keys.

Impath keys

An impath is a secure channel between two modules.

To set up an impath two modules perform a validated key-exchange, currently using Diffie-Hellman.

The key exchange parameters are signed by the modules signing key. Once the modules have validated the signatures the module derives four symmetric keys using a protocol based on SHA-1. Currently symmetric keys are Triple DES. The four keys are used for encryption, decryption, MAC creation, MAC validation. The protocol ensures that the key Module 1 uses for encryption is used for decryption by module 2.

All impath keys are stored as objects in the object store in SDRAM.

Key objects

Keys used for encryption, decryption, signature verification and digital signatures are stored in the module as objects in the object store in SDRAM. All key objects are identified by a random identifier that is specific to the user and session.

All key objects are stored with an Access control List or ACL. The ACL specifies what operations can be performed with this key. Whenever a user generates a key or imports a key in plain text they must specify a valid ACL for that key type. The ACL can be changed using the SetACL service. The ACL can only be made more permissive if the original ACL includes the ExpandACL permission.

Key objects may be exported as key blobs if their ACL permits this service. Each blob stores a single key and an ACL. The ACL specifies what operations can be performed with this copy of the key. The ACL stored with the blob must be at least as restrictive as the ACL associated with the key object from which the blob was created. When you load a key blob, the new key object takes its ACL from the key blob. Working key blobs are encrypted under a logical token. Key objects may also be exported as key blobs under an archiving key. The key blob can be stored on the host disk or in the module NVRAM.

Key objects can only be exported in plain text if their ACL permits this operation. If the module has been initialized to comply with FIPS 140-2 level 3 roles and services and key management the ACL for a private or secret key cannot include the export as plain service. A user may pass a key to another user - or to a SEE World - using the ticketing mechanism. The GetTicket mechanism takes a key identifier and returns a ticket. This ticket refers to the key identifier - it does not include any key data. A ticket can be passed as a byte block to the other user who can then use the RedeemTicket service to obtain a key identifier for the same object that is valid for their session. As the new identifier refers to the same object the second user is still bound by the original ACL.

Session keys

Keys used for a single session are generated as required by the module. They are stored along with their ACL as objects in the object store. These may be of any supported algorithm.

Archiving keys

It is sometimes necessary to create an archive copy of a key, protected by another key. Keys may be archived using:

- Triple DES keys
- A combination of Triple DES and RSA keys.
In this case a random Triple DES key is created which is used to encrypt working key and then this key is wrapped by the RSA key.
- An integrated encryption scheme using Diffie-Hellman or RSA and AES or Triple DES.

When a key is archived in this way it is stored with its ACL

When you generate or import the archiving, you must specify the `UseAsBlobKey` option in the ACL. The archiving key is treated as any other key object.

When you generate or import the key that you want to archive you must specify the Archival options in the ACL. This options can specify the hash(es) of the allowed archiving key(s). If you specify a list of hashes, no other key may be used.

Certificate signing keys

The ACL associated with a key object can call for a certificate to be presented to authorize the action. The required key can either be the nCipher Security Officer's key or any other key. Keys are specified in the ACL by an identifying key SHA-1 hash. The key type is also specified in the ACL although DSA is standard, any signing algorithm may be used, all nCipher tools use DSA.

Certain services can require certificates signed by the nCipher Security Officer.

Firmware Integrity Key

All firmware is signed using a DSA key pair. A module only loads new firmware if the signature decrypts and verifies correctly.

The private half of this key is stored at nCipher.

The public half is included in all firmware. The firmware is stored in flash memory when the module is switched off, this is copied to SDRAM as part of the start up procedure.

Firmware Confidentiality Key

All firmware is encrypted using Triple DES to prevent casual decompilation.

The encryption key is stored at nCipher's offices and is in the firmware.

The firmware is stored in flash memory when the module is switched off, this is copied to SDRAM as part of the start up procedure.

nCipher Master Feature Enable Key

For commercial reasons not all nCipher modules offer all services. Certain services must be enabled separately. In order to enable a service the user presents a certificate signed by the nCipher Master Feature Enable Key. This causes the module to set the appropriate bit in the EEPROM..

The nCipher Master Feature Enable Key is a DSA key pair, The private half of this key pair is stored at nCipher's offices. The public half of the key pair is included in the firmware. The firmware is stored in flash memory when the module is switched off, this is copied to SDRAM as part of the start up procedure.

Rules

Identification and authentication

Communication with the nShield and nCipher modules is performed via a server program running on the host machine, using standard inter process communication, using sockets in UNIX operating system, named pipes under Windows NT.

In order to use the module the user must first log on to the host computer and start an nCipher enabled application. The application connects to the nCipher server, this connection is given a client ID, a 32-bit arbitrary number.

Before performing any service the user must present the correct authorization. Where several stages are required to assemble the authorization, all the steps must be performed on the same connection. The authorization required for each service is listed in the section *Services available to each role* on page 9. A user cannot access any service that accesses CSPs without first presenting a smart card, or software token.

The nShield and nCipher modules performs identity based authentication. Each individual user is given a smart card that holds their authentication data - the logical token share - in an encrypted form. All operations require the user to first load the logical token from their smart card.

Access Control

Keys are stored on the host computer's hard disk in an encrypted format, known as a key blob. In order to load a key the user must first load the token used to encrypt this blob.

Tokens can be divided into shares. Each share can be stored on a smart card or software token on the computer's hard disk. These shares are further protected by encryption with a pass phrase and a module key. Therefore a user can only load a key if they possess the physical smart cards containing sufficient shares in the token, the required pass phrases and the module key are loaded in the module.

Module keys are stored in EEPROM. in the module. They can only be loaded or removed by the nCipher Security Officer, who is identified by a public key pair created when the module is initialized. It is not possible to change the Security Officer's key without re initializing the module, which clears all the module keys, thus preventing access to all other keys.

The key blob also contains an Access Control List that specifies which services can be performed with this key, and the number of times these services can be performed. These can be hard limits or per authorization limits. If a hard limit is reached that service can no longer be performed on that key. If a per-authorization limit is reached the user must reauthorize the key by reloading the token.

All objects are referred to by handle. Handles are cross-referenced to ClientIDs. If a command refers to a handle that was issued to a different client, the command is refused. Services exist to pass a handle between ClientIDs.

Access Control List

All key objects have an Access Control List (ACL). The user must specify the ACL when they generate or import the key. The ACL lists every operation that can be performed with the key - if the operation is not in the ACL the module will not permit that operation. In particular the ACL can only be altered if the ACL includes the SetACL service. The ACL is stored with the key when it is stored as a blob and applies to the new key object created when you reload the blob.

The ACL can specify limits on operations - or groups of operations - these may be global limits or per authorization limits. If a global limit is exceeded then the key cannot be used for that operation again. If a per authorization limit is exceeded then the logical token protecting the key must be reloaded before the key can be reused.

An ACL can also specify a certifier for an operation. In this case the user must present a certificate signed by the key whose hash is in the ACL with the command in order to use the service.

An ACL can also list User Defined actions. These actions do not permit any operations within the module, but can be tested with the CheckUserAction service. This enables SEE programs to make use of the ACL system for their own purposes. For example payShield uses this feature to determine the role of a 3DES key within EMV.

An ACL can also specify a host service identifier. In which case the ACL is only met if the nCipher server appends the matching Service name. This feature is designed to provide a limited level of assurance and relies on the integrity of the host, it offers no security if the server is compromised or not used.

ACL design is complex - users will not normally need to write ACLs themselves. nCipher provide tools to generate keys with strong ACLs.

Object re-use

All objects stored in the module are referred to by a handle. The module's memory management functions ensure that a specific memory location can only be allocated to a single handle. The handle also identifies the object type, and all of the modules enforce strict type checking. When a handle is released the memory allocated to it is actively zeroed.

Error conditions

If the module cannot complete a command due to a temporary condition, the module returns a command block with no data and with the status word set to the appropriate value. The user can resubmit the command at a later time. The server program can record a log of all such failures.

If the module encounters an unrecoverable error it enters the error state. This is indicated by the status LED flashing in the Morse pattern SOS. As soon as the unit enters the error state all processors stop processing commands and no further replies are returned. In the error state the unit does not respond to commands. The unit must be reset.

Security Boundary

The physical security boundary is the plastic jig that contains the potting on both sides of the PCB.

All cryptographic components are covered by potting.

There is also a logical security boundary between the nCore kernel and the SEE.

The following items are excluded from FIPS 140-2 validation as they are not security relevant.

- SEE machine
- status LED
- heatsinks
- serial connector
- PCI connector
- mode switch
- clear button

- mini-DIN connector

The module is supplied in two variants.

- The standard variant is designed to fit in an externally accessible PCI slot.
- In the NetHSM the module is not physically accessible, therefore the PCI back panel, status LED, clear button, mode switch and serial connector are removed and replaced by a daughter board that brings all these connections to a 16 way ribbon connector. Controls on the NetHSM's front panel are then connected to the module by a ribbon cable.

Status information

The module has an LED that indicates the overall state of the module.

The module also returns a status message in the reply to every command. This indicates the status of that command.

There are a number of services that report status information. Where the module is fitted inside an NetHSM this information can be displayed on the LCD on the NetHSM's front panel.

Procedures to set Strict FIPS Mode at Level 3

The nCipher enabled application must perform the following services, for more information refer to the nCipher Security Officer's Guide and Technical Reference Manual.

To initialise a module

1. Fit the initialisation link and restart the module
2. Use the Initialise command to enter the Initialisation state.
3. Generate a key pair to use a Security Officer's key.
4. Generate a logical token to use to protect the Security Officer's key.
5. Write one or more shares of this token onto software tokens.
6. Export the private half of the Security Officer's key as a key blob under this token.
7. Export the public half of the Security Officer's key as plain text.
8. Use the Set Security Officer service to set the Security Officer's key and the operational policy of the module. In order to comply with FIPS 140-2 level 3 roles and services and key management you must set at least the following flags:
 - NSOPerms_ops_ReadFile
 - NSOPerms_ops_WriteFile
 - NSOPerms_ops_EraseShare
 - NSOPerms_ops_EraseFile
 - NSOPerms_ops_FormatToken
 - NSOPerms_ops_GenerateLogToken
 - NSOPerms_ops_SetKM
 - NSOPerms_ops_RemoveKM

- NSOPerms_ops_StrictFIPS140

9. Keep the tokens and key blobs safe.

You can create extra module keys in order to distinguish groups of users.

You may want to create working keys and user authorization at this stage.

10. Remove the initialisation link and restart the module.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

If you use KeySafe, you must set the StrictFIPS 140 flag.

If you use new-world, you must select the -F flag.

To return a module to factory state

This clears the Security Officer's key, the module signing key and any loaded module keys.

1. Fit the initialisation link and restart the module
2. Use the Initialise command to enter the Initialisation state.
3. Load a random value to use as the hash of the security officer's key.
4. Set Security Officer service to set the Security Officer's key and the operational policy of the module.
5. Remove the initialisation link and restart the module.
6. After this operation the module must be initialized correctly before it can be used in a FIPS approved mode.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

To create a new user

1. Create a logical token.
2. Write one or more shares of this token onto software tokens.
3. For each key the user will require, export the key as a key blob under this token.
4. Give the user any pass phrases used and the key blob.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

To authorize the user to create keys

1. Create a new key, with an ACL that only permits UseAsSigningKey. This action may need to be authenticated.
2. Export this key as a key blob under the users token.
3. Create a certificate signed by the nCipher Security Officer's key that:
4. includes the hash of this key as the certifier
5. authorizes the action GenerateKey or GenerateKeyPair depending on the type of key required.
6. if the user needs to store the keys, enables the action MakeBlob, limited to their token.
7. Give the user the key blob and certificate.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

To authorize a user to act as a Junior Security Officer

1. Generate a logical token to use to protect the Junior Security Officer's key.
2. Write one or more shares of this token onto software tokens
3. Create a new key pair,
4. Give the private half an ACL that permits Sign and UseAsSigningKey.
5. Give the public half an ACL that permits ExportAsPlainText
6. Export the private half of the Junior Security Officer's key as a key blob under this token.
7. Export the public half of the Junior Security Officer's key as plain text.
8. Create a certificate signed by the nCipher Security officer's key includes the hash of this key as the certifier
9. authorizes the actions GenerateKey, GenerateKeyPair
10. authorizes the actions GenerateLogicalToken, WriteShare and MakeBlob, these may be limited to a particular module key.
11. Give the Junior Security Officer the software token, any pass phrases used, the key blob and certificate.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

To authenticate a user to use a stored key

1. Use the LoadLogicalToken service to create the space for a logical token.
2. Use the ReadShare service to read each share from the software token.
3. Use the LoadBlob service to load the key from the key blob.
4. The user can now perform the services specified in the ACL for this key.
5. To assume Security Officer role load the Security Officer's key using this procedure. The Security Officer's key can then be used in certificates authorising further operations.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

To authenticate a user to create a new key

1. If you have not already loaded your user token, load it as above.
2. Use the LoadBlob service to load the authorization key from the key blob.
3. Use the KeyId returned to build a signing key certificate.
4. Present this certificate with the certificate supplied by the security officer with the GenerateKey, GenerateKeyPair or MakeBlob command.

nCipher supply a graphical user interface KeySafe and a command line tool new-world that automate these steps.

Operating a level 2 module in FIPS mode

In order to comply with FIPS mode the user must not generate private or secret keys with the ExportAsPlain ACL entry; nor should they use the Import service to import such keys in plain text.

A user can verify that a key was generated correctly using the `nkmverify` utility supplied by nCipher. This utility checks the ACL stored in the key-generation certificate.

Physical security

All security critical components of the module are covered by epoxy resin.

The module has a clear button. Pressing this button put the module into the self-test state, clearing all stored key objects, logical tokens and impath keys and running all self-tests. The long term security critical parameters, module keys, module signing key and Security Officer's key can be cleared by returning the module to the factory state, as described above.

Checking the module

To ensure physical security, make the following checks regularly:

- Examine the epoxy resin security coating for obvious signs of damage.
- The smart card reader is directly plugged into the module and the cable has not been tampered with.

Strength of functions

Attacking Object IDs

Connections are identified by a ClientID, a random 32 bit number.

Objects are identified by a KeyID - this should be renamed ObjectID as it can now be used for more than just keys but retains its old name for code compatibility reasons. Again this is a random 32 bit number.

In order to randomly gain access to a key loaded by another user you would need to guess two random 32 bit numbers. The module can process about 2^{16} commands per minute - therefore the chance of succeeding within a minute is $2^{16} / 2^{64} = 2^{-48}$.

Attacking Tokens

If a user chooses to use a logical token with only one share, no pass phrase and leaves the smart card containing the share in the slot than another user could load the logical token. The module does not have any idea as to which user inserted the smart card. This can be prevented by:

- not leaving the smart card in the reader
if the smart card is not in the reader, they can only access the logical token by correctly guessing the ClientID and ObjectID for the token.
- requiring a pass phrase
when loading a share requiring a pass phrase the user must supply the SHA-1 hash of the pass phrase. The hash is combined with a module key, share number and smart card id to recreate the key used to encrypt the share. If the attacker has no knowledge of the pass phrase they would need to make 2^{80} attempts to load the share. The module enforces a five seconds delay between failed attempts to load a share.
- requiring more than one share
If a logical token requires shares from more than one smart card the attacker would have to repeat the attack for each share required.

Logical tokens are either 168-bit Triple DES keys or 256-bit AES keys. Shares are encrypted under a combination of a module key, share number and card ID. If you could construct a logical token share of the correct form without knowledge of the module key and the exact mechanism used to derive the share key the chance that it would randomly decrypt into a valid token are 2^{-168} or 2^{-256} .

Key Blobs

Key blobs are used to protect keys outside the module. There are two formats of blob - indirect and direct. Direct blobs are used for token and module key protected blobs. indirect blobs are used by the nCipher Security World for key-recovery and for pass-phrase recovery.

Direct blobs use a Integrated encryption scheme, which takes a 168 or 256 bit key and a nonce and uses SHA-1 to derive a triple-DES or AES encryption key, used for encryption and a HMAC key, used for integrity. Indirect key, take the public half of a 1024-bit RSA key and a none as the input, and derive the keys from this. Both forms provide at least 80-bits of security.

Impaths

Impaths protect the transfer of encrypted shares between modules.

When negotiating an Impath, the module verifies a 1024-bit DSA signatures to verify the identity of the other module. It then uses 1024-bit Diffie-Hellman key exchange to negotiate a 168-bit triple-DES encryption keys used to protect the channel. This provides a minimum of 80-bits of security for the encrypted channel.

Note The shares sent over the channel are still encrypted using their share key, decryption only takes place on the receiving module.

KDP key provisioning

The KDP protocol used to transfer keys from a module to a micro HSM uses 1024-bit DSA signatures to identify the end point and a 2048-bit Diffie-Hellman key exchange to negotiate the Triple-DES or AES keys used to encrypt the keys in transit providing a minimum of 100-bits of security for the encrypted channel.

Derived Keys

The nCore API provides a range of key derivation and wrapping options, that a user can choose to make use of in their protocols. The user must ensure they select a suitable algorithms and key lengths to ensure their protocols offer sufficient security. Refer to NIST Special Publication 800-57 for advice on choosing algorithms.

Self Tests

When power is applied to the module it enters the self test state. The module also enters the self test state whenever the unit is reset, by pressing the clear button.

In the self test state the module clears the main RAM, thus ensuring any loaded keys or authorization information is removed and then performs its self test sequence, which includes:

- An operational test on hardware components
- An integrity check on the firmware
- A statistical check on the random number generator
- Known answer and pair-wise consistency checks on all algorithms
- Consistency check on EEPROM to ensure it is correctly initialized.

This sequence takes a few seconds after which the module enters the Pre-Maintenance, Pre-Initialisation, Uninitialised or Operational state; depending on the position of the mode switch and the validity of the the EEPROM contents.

While it is powered on, the module continuously monitors the temperature recorded by its internal temperature sensor. If the temperature is outside the operational range it enters the error state.

The module also continuously monitors the hardware RNG and the approved SHA-1 based pRNG. If either fail it enters the error state.

In the error state, the module's LED repeatedly flashes the Morse pattern SOS, followed by a status code indicating the error. All other inputs and outputs are disabled.

Supported Algorithms

FIPS approved algorithms:

- AES
Certificate #258
- Triple DES
Certificate #339
Double and triple length keys
Approved for Federal Government Use - Modes are CBC and ECB
- Triple DES MAC
Certificate #339 vendor affirmed
Verified implementation functions: genblk_signbegin, genblk_verifybegin, genblk_macdata, genblk_signend, genblk_verifyend
- DSA
Certificate #136
- ECDSA
Certificate #2
- RSA
Certificate #68
- SHA-1, SHA-256, SHA-384 and SHA-512
Certificate #333
- HMAC SHA-1, HMAC SHA-256, HMAC SHA-384 and HMAC SHA-512
HMAC certificate #68
- Random Number Generator
(FIPS 186-2 Change Notice 1 SHA-1 and FIPS 186-2 RNG General Purpose RNG) Certificate #91

Non-FIPS approved algorithms

Note Algorithms marked with an asterisk (*) are only available when the module is initialised in its level 2 mode

Symmetric

- Arc Four (compatible with RC4)*
- Blowfish*
- CAST 5 (RFC2144)*
- CAST 6 (RFC2612)*
- DES

Note Non-compliant due to CAVP DES transition policy..

- Serpent*
- SEED (Korean Data Encryption Standard) - requires Feature Enable activation*
- Twofish*

Asymmetric

- Diffie-Hellman (key agreement, key establishment methodology provides 80-bits to 256-bits of encryption strength)
- Elliptic Curve Diffie-Hellman (key agreement, key establishment methodology provides 192 bits of encryption strength);
- El Gamal
- RSA (key wrapping, key establishment methodology provides 80-bits to 256-bits of encryption strength)
- KCDSA - requires Feature Enable activation*

Hash

- HAS-160 - requires Feature Enable activation*
- MD2*
- MD5*
- RIPEMD 160*

MAC

- HMAC (MD2, MD5, RIPEMD160)*

Other

- SSL/TLS master key derivation
- PKCS #8 key wrapping.

Note *TLS key derivation is approved for use by FIPS 140-2 v1.4.0-2 validated modules - though there is as yet no validation test, MD5 may be used within TLS key derivation.*



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