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**CISCO IDENTITY SERVICES ENGINE (ISE)  
SECURITY TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE  
(STIG) OVERVIEW**

**01 July 2026**

**Developed by Cisco Systems and DISA for the DOD**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Executive Summary

The Cisco ISE Security Technical Implementation Guide (STIG) provides the technical security policies, requirements, and implementation details for applying security concepts to the Cisco ISE policy-based network access control platform. Guidance consists of a package of two STIGs that together ensure the secure implementation of the Network Device Management (NDM) function and the Network Access Control (NAC) traffic services.

The primary function of the Cisco ISE is to continuously provide a policy decision point that enables enterprises to ensure compliance. Working with other boundary devices (i.e., access switches, wireless LAN controllers [WLCs], Virtual Private Network [VPN] gateways, and data center switches), the ISE gathers information from networks and endpoint device posture to enforce endpoint compliance.

Major functions that are in scope include discovery, profiling, policy-based placement, and monitoring of endpoint devices. Per DISA scoping guidance for NAC assessments, functions that were out of scope include guest access and on-device AAA services.

Although this product is relatively new, this vendor has a large footprint with DISA's comply-to-connect initiatives. Audit record generation for the backplane is compliant with STIG requirements by default, and the product offloads the auditing, notifications, authentication, and restriction requirements to the central Syslog and LDAP servers; thus, basic compliance is met with configuration of these services.

### 1.2 Authority

Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 8500.01 requires that "all IT [information technology] that receives, processes, stores, displays, or transmits DOD information will be [...] configured [...] consistent with applicable DOD cybersecurity policies, standards, and architectures." The instruction tasks that DISA "develops and maintains control correlation identifiers (CCIs), security requirements guides (SRGs), security technical implementation guides (STIGs), and mobile code risk categories and usage guides that implement and are consistent with DOD cybersecurity policies, standards, architectures, security controls, and validation procedures, with the support of the NSA/CSS [National Security Agency/Central Security Service], using input from stakeholders, and using automation whenever possible." This document is provided under the authority of DODI 8500.01.

Although the use of the principles and guidelines in these SRGs/STIGs provides an environment that contributes to the security requirements of DOD systems, applicable NIST SP 800-53 cybersecurity controls must be applied to all systems and architectures based on the Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS) Instruction (CNSSI) 1253.

### 1.3 Vulnerability Severity Category Code Definitions

Severity Category Codes (referred to as CAT) are a measure of vulnerabilities used to assess a facility or system security posture. Each security policy specified in this document is assigned a Severity Category Code of CAT I, II, or III.

**Table 1-1: Vulnerability Severity Category Code Definitions**

Category	DISA Category Code Guidelines
CAT I	Any vulnerability, the exploitation of which will directly and immediately result in loss of Confidentiality, Availability, or Integrity.
CAT II	Any vulnerability, the exploitation of which has a potential to result in loss of Confidentiality, Availability, or Integrity.
CAT III	Any vulnerability, the existence of which degrades measures to protect against loss of Confidentiality, Availability, or Integrity.

### 1.4 STIG Distribution

Parties within the DOD and federal government's computing environments can obtain the applicable STIG from the DOD Cyber Exchange website at <https://cyber.mil/>. This site contains the latest copies of STIGs, SRGs, and other related security information. Those without a common access card (CAC) that has DOD Certificates can obtain the STIG from <https://public.cyber.mil/>.

### 1.5 SRG Compliance Reporting

All technical NIST SP 800-53 requirements were considered while developing this STIG. Requirements that are applicable and configurable will be included in the final STIG. A report marked Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) will be available for items that did not meet requirements. This report will be available to component authorizing official (AO) personnel for risk assessment purposes by request via email to: [disa.stig\\_spt@mail.mil](mailto:disa.stig_spt@mail.mil).

### 1.6 Document Revisions

Comments or proposed revisions to this document should be sent via email to the following address: [disa.stig\\_spt@mail.mil](mailto:disa.stig_spt@mail.mil). DISA will coordinate all change requests with the relevant DOD organizations before inclusion in this document. Approved changes will be made in accordance with the DISA maintenance release schedule.

### 1.7 Other Considerations

DISA accepts no liability for the consequences of applying specific configuration settings made on the basis of the SRGs/STIGs. It must be noted that the configuration settings specified should be evaluated in a local, representative test environment before implementation in a production environment, especially within large user populations. The extensive variety of environments makes it impossible to test these configuration settings for all potential software configurations.

For some production environments, failure to test before implementation may lead to a loss of required functionality. Evaluating the risks and benefits to a system's particular circumstances and requirements is the system owner's responsibility. The evaluated risks resulting from not applying specified configuration settings must be approved by the responsible AO. Furthermore, DISA implies no warranty that the application of all specified configurations will make a system 100 percent secure.

Security guidance is provided for the DOD. While other agencies and organizations are free to use it, care must be given to ensure that all applicable security guidance is applied at both the device hardening level and the architectural level due to the fact that some settings may not be configurable in environments outside the DOD architecture.

### 1.8 Product Approval Disclaimer

STIGs provide configurable operational security guidance for products being used by the DOD. STIGs, along with vendor confidential documentation, also provide a basis for assessing compliance with cybersecurity controls/control enhancements, which supports system assessment and authorization (A&A) under the DOD Risk Management Framework (RMF). Department of Defense AOs may request available vendor confidential documentation for a product that has a STIG for product evaluation and RMF purposes from [disa.stig\\_spt@mail.mil](mailto:disa.stig_spt@mail.mil). This documentation is not published for general access to protect the vendor's proprietary information.

AOs have the purview to determine product use/approval in accordance with (IAW) DOD policy and through RMF risk acceptance. Inputs into acquisition or preacquisition product selection include such processes as:

- National Information Assurance Partnership (NIAP) evaluation for National Security Systems (NSS) (<https://www.niap-ccevs.org/>) IAW CNSSP #11.
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cryptographic Module Validation Program (CMVP) (<https://csrc.nist.gov/groups/STM/cmvp/>) IAW federal/DOD mandated standards.

## 2. ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

A security assessment of the Cisco ISE must consist of a review of device hardening and the access control and threat protection function. Thus, the Cisco NDM STIG and the Cisco NAC STIG are required for all security reviews.

Like many modern platforms, the Cisco ISE is capable of performing many functions and roles in the enterprise other than the core functions within the scope of this STIG. The following functions are out of scope for the Cisco ISE STIG: Cisco ISE CA, Cisco provisioning portal, identity services, AAA services, and guest portal services. If these functions are integrated into the same device, the security requirements for that functionality must also be applied using additional SRGs and/or STIGs.