

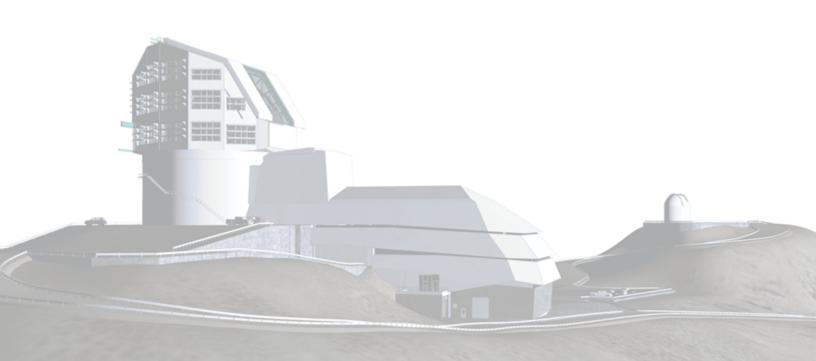
# Vera C. Rubin Observatory Rubin Observatory Project Office

# **CentOS System Disk Encryption**

**Heinrich Reinking** 

**ITTN-048** 

Latest Revision: 2021-06-16





#### **Abstract**

Disk encryption rises due to the need of protecting the information by converting it into unreadable code that cannot be deciphered easily. It uses hardware or software to encrypt bit by bit all data that goes on a disk. The Linux Unified Key Setup (LUKS) is a disk encryption software, that implements a platform-independent standard ondisk format for use in various tools.

The Policy-Based Decryption (PBD) is a collection of technologies that enable unlocking encrypted root and secondary volumes of hard drives on physical and virtual machines using different methods like a user password, a Trusted Platform Module (TPM) device, a PKCS11 device connected to a system, for example, a special network server. The PBD as technology allows combining different unlocking methods into a policy creating an ability to unlock the same volume in different ways. The current implementation of the PBD in Red Hat Enterprise Linux consists of the Clevis framework and plugins called pins. Each pin provides a separate unlocking capability. For now, the only two pins available are the ones that allow volumes to be unlocked with TPM or with a network server.

The Network Bound Disk Encryption (NBDE) is a subcategory of the PBD technologies that allows binding the encrypted volumes to a special network server. The current implementation of the NBDE includes a Clevis pin for the Tang server and the Tang server itself.

Based on these tools, the Servers System Disk will be encrypted and when they boot, they will request decryption to a centralized server that withholds the Decryption key, avoiding the password prompt at boot.



# **Change Record**

Version	Date	Description	Owner name
1	2021-05-09	First Release	Heinrich Reinking
2	2021-06-01	First Commit Concluded	Heinrich Reinking
3	2021-06-010	Performance Test	Heinrich Reinking

Document source location: https://github.com/lsst-it/ittn-048



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# **CentOS System Disk Encryption**

## 1 System Disk Encryption

An encrypted system disk prevents that the data contained in it can be cloned or replicated without the passphrase or authentication server. For this design, the disks will be encrypted through a kickstart passphrase and then removed once the remote Tang server is reached. If a non-authorized user gains physical access to the server:

- If halted and attempted to change the root password, the encryption passphrase prompt will be requested which was deleted.
- If booted through a Live USB OS, the encrypted partitions remain unreadable.
- If the drive is removed/stolen, the disk's data remains cyphered.



#### 1.1 LUKS - Linux Unified Key Setup

According to a paper subscribed by Danut Anton and Emil Simion <sup>1</sup>, LUKS is one of the most common FDE solutions for Linux-based systems. FDE works by encrypting every single bit on a storage device, so if the user doesn't have the password, data cannot be recovered. The most common problem for FDE solutions is password management, which at what concerns this implementation, will be handled by a two-level key hierarchy. A strong master key is generated by an OS, which is used to encrypt/decrypt the hard drive. That key has to be split and encrypted with a secret user key and stored on the device, at the beginning of the memory. The advantage of this approach is that you can have multiple systems with multiple keys, allowing you to have multiple decryption Servers.

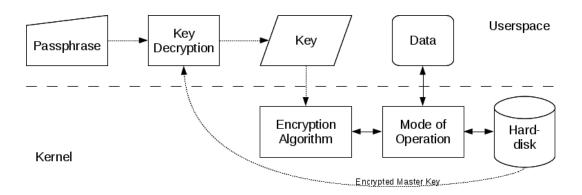


FIGURE 1: LUKS Operational Diagram

https://ieeexplore-ieee-org.usm.idm.oclc.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?tp=&arnumber=8678978



#### 1.2 Clevis

Clevis is a pluggable framework for automated decryption. It can be used to provide automate decryption of data or even automated unlocking of LUKS volumes <sup>2</sup>. Once Clevis has subscribed the decryption to a server, the encryption passphrase is removed, which means in a lost communication event, the server won't be able to decrypt, not even with the passphrase. To prevent this Clevis can subscribe up to 8 keys to 8 different servers/users and it can be restricted to how many of them are required as a minimum. If you set a value t=2, means that at least 2 servers have to be available at the moment of decryption.

#### 1.3 Clevis Puppet Profile

```
1 #Clevis Profile
2 class profile::core::clevis() {
    $packages = [
      'clevis',
      'clevis -luks',
     'clevis – dracut'
6
    1
7
8
    ##Add require packages
    package { $packages:
      ensure => 'present',
11
12
    ->exec { '/sbin/dracut -f --regenerate-all':
13
           => ['/usr/bin', '/sbin'],
      path
14
      onlyif => 'test ! -f /usr/lib/dracut/modules.d/60clevis/clevis-hook.sh'
15
16
17 }
```

This profile installs the clevis packages needed to encrypt and manage the LUKS encryption drives. This is not quite required, because the clevis packages are being installed during provisioning, but, it grants some useful tools like 'cryptosetup' to check the subscribed Tang servers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>https://github.com/latchset/clevis



## 2 Tang Server - Decryption Server

#### 2.1 Tang Service

Tang <sup>3</sup> is a server for binding data to network presence. In simple terms: you have some data, but you only want it to be available when the system containing the data is on a certain, usually secure, network, This is where Tang comes in. First, the client gets a list of the Tang server's advertised asymmetric keys. This can happen online by a simple HTTP GET. Second, the client uses one of these public keys to generate a unique, cryptographically strong encryption key. The data is then encrypted using this key. Once the data is encrypted, the key is discarded. Some small metadata is produced as part of this operation which the client should store in a convenient location. This process of encrypting data is the provisioning step. Third, when the client is ready to access its data, it simply loads the metadata produced in the provisioning step and performs an HTTP POST to recover the encryption key. This process of encrypting data is the provisioning step.

### Bind the LUKS device to the Tang server

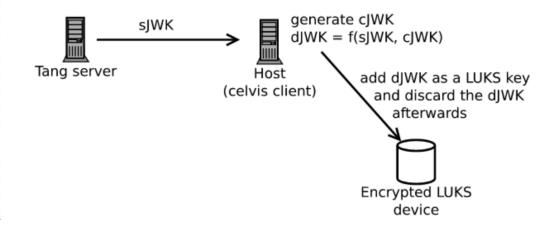


FIGURE 2: LUKS device interaction with Tang Server

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>https://github.com/latchset/tang



### 2.2 Tang Puppet Profile and Role

```
1 # Tang Server Encryption Module
3 class profile::core::tang() {
    #Variables
    $packages = [
      'tang'
    ]
7
8
    #Add require packages
    package { $packages:
      ensure => 'present',
11
12
13
    systemd::dropin_file {'override.conf':
14
              => 'tangd.socket',
     unit
15
      content => @(OVERRIDE/L)
16
        [Socket]
17
        ListenStream=7500
18
        | OVERRIDE
19
    # Ensure tang service is running
    ->service { 'tangd.socket':
22
      ensure => 'running',
23
      require => Package[$packages],
    }
25
26 }
```

Tang profile handles the installation of the tangd.socket service, and then modifies it so it listens on port 7500 for incoming connections from clevis-dracut.



## 3 Lab Testing - Proof of Concept

#### 3.1 Kickstart Modifications - Use of Encryption in Provisioning Template

Since the drive must be encrypted with LUKS early during the provisioning, new Kickstart Provisioning Template and Partition Tables had to be created at Foreman.

"Encrypted VDA" initialize the System disk with two regular partitions - /boot and /boot/efi - and then a PV, a VG and a LV, been the LV encrypted through LUKS with a temporary password

In the packages section, clevis-dracut is installed, to then be used at post to communicate with







#### 3.2 Test Environment

- Two Tang servers using the tang puppet profile.
- A client with the clevis puppet profile.
- The client VM (clevis01.cp.lsst.org) is provisioned through PXE with 'Encrypted VDA' Partitioning Table and 'Kickstart Encrypted Provisioning Template'.
- During partition creation, clevis01 root partition is encrypted through LUKS with a passphrase.
- Then at packages, clevis-dracut is installed to then communicate with the Tang servers at post section.
- At post, clevis01 subscribes to the Tang servers (tang01.cp.lsst.org and tang02.cp.lsst.org) and the temporary passphrase encryption key is removed as a decryption mechanism.

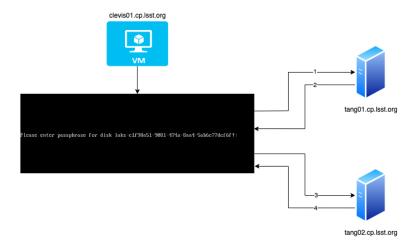


FIGURE 3: Booting procedure for an enrolled or newly enrolled client.

- 1. During boot, the client machine attempts to reach the first Tang server.
- 2. If reached, the decryption server hands over the decryption key.
- 3. If the first Tang server wasn't reachable, it attempts with the next one in the key slot.
- 4. The second Tang server sends the decryption key.



#### 3.3 Lab Results

- The encrypted client clevis01 successfully decrypt during dracut by reaching tang01.
- The primary Tang server (tang01) was powered off and the client was able to decrypt through tang02.
- Both Tang servers were powered off and the server remains on hold requesting a passphrase (which doesn't exist) until at least one of the Tang servers is back online (Figure 3).
- For the scope of this PoC, the deletion and recreation of one or both Tang servers was not done, but presumably the client decryption would not happened and the content would be irrecoverable.
- One way of handling the loss of all Tang servers, is to add the keys to lsst-private repo, but key rotation is suggested by the documentation to increase safety.

```
2021-08-10720:39:36.774608-080:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:37.356081-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.360839-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.373746-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.373746-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.373746-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.47.793299-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.79358-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.79358-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:40.79358-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.806121-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.806121-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.80743-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.80743-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org dracut-inituauus: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.80743-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org systemd: Error communicating with the server!
2021-08-10720:39:51.80743-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org systemd: Started Cryptography Setu for luks-clf09a51-9081-74748-8aaf-5a be677dcf6f.
2021-08-10720:40:00.508667-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org systemd: Started Cryptography Setu for luks-clf09a51-9081-7448-8aaf-5a be677dcf6f.
2021-08-10720:40:00.508667-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org systemd: Reached target Basic System .
2021-08-10720:40:00.508749-00:00 clevis01.cp.lsst.org s
```

FIGURE 4: Access to LUKS encrypted drive while Tang server is rebooting



#### 3.4 Performance Test - Virtual Drive over HDD

Besides securing your data, Encryption has an impact on performance as well. Every written bit of data has to be encrypted before written on disk, which impacts both the CPU and the Disk I/O. In modern CPU architectures, the impact is not as much as it was in the past, but disks do suffer consequences. To test the performance impact of encryption, we are going to use **sysbench**, an open-source tool that performs series of tests to verify systems under intensive load. To have a baseline, two CentOS VM, with the same specs, were deployed: one encrypted with LUKS and a regular not encrypted one.

#### 3.4.1 CPU Benchmark

#### Test: sysbench -test=cpu -cpu-max-prime=20000 run

#### Encrypted

#### sysbench 1.0.17 (using system LuaJIT 2.0.4) Running the test with following options: Number of threads: 1 Initializing random number generator from current time Prime numbers limit: 20000 Initializing worker threads... Threads started! CPU speed: 11 events per second: 314.14 13 General statistics: total time: 10.00285 15 total number of events: 3143 16 Latency (ms): 18 min: 3.16 19 avg: 3 18 20 5.40 21 95th percentile: 3.19 sum: 10000.49 Threads fairness: events (avg/stddev): 3143.0000/0.00 25 execution time (avg/stddev): 10.0005/0.00

#### Not-Encrypted

```
sysbench 1.0.17 (using system LuaJIT 2.0.4)
    Running the test with following options:
    Number of threads: 1
    Initializing random number generator
5 from current time
6 Prime numbers limit: 20000
    Initializing worker threads...
  Threads started!
11
     events per second: 314.05
12
13
    General statistics:
     total time:
                            10.0025s
15
      total number of events: 3142
16
      Latency (ms):
18
         min:
                           3.16
19
          avg:
                           3.18
20
                           5.21
21
         95th percentile: 3.19
         sum:
                           9995.36
23 Threads fairness:
     events (avg/stddev): 3142.0000/0.00
      execution time (avg/stddev): 9.9954/0.00
```

The results help us know that the CPU architecture, threads, and processing are the same for both VM, which will help us determine the accuracy for the following tests.



#### 3.4.2 Disk Benchmark

#### Test: time sysbench -test=fileio -file-total-size=30G -file-num=24 prepare

#### Encrypted

#### sysbench 1.0.17 (using system LuaJIT 2.0.4) 24 files , 1310720Kb each , 30720Mb total Creating files for the test... Extra file open flags: (none) Creating file test\_file.0 Creating file test\_file.1 Creating file test\_file.2 Creating file test\_file.3 Creating file test\_file.4 Creating file test\_file.5 Creating file test\_file.6 Creating file test\_file.7 Creating file test\_file.8 Creating file test\_file.9 Creating file test\_file.10 Creating file test\_file.11 Creating file test\_file.12 Creating file test\_file.13 Creating file test\_file.14 21 Creating file test file.15 Creating file test\_file.16 Creating file test\_file.17 Creating file test\_file.18 25 Creating file test\_file.19 Creating file test\_file.20 Creating file test file.21 Creating file test\_file.22

32212254720 bytes written in 244.25 seconds (125.77

Creating file test\_file.23

MiB/sec).

real 4m4.275s

user 0m1.205s sys 0m46.108s

30

33

#### Not-Encrypted

```
sysbench 1.0.17 (using system LuaJIT 2.0.4)
    24 files , 1310720Kb each , 30720Mb total
    Creating files for the test...
    Extra file open flags: (none)
    Creating file test_file.0
    Creating file test_file.1
    Creating file test_file.2
    Creating file test_file.3
10 Creating file test_file.4
    Creating file test_file.5
    Creating file test_file.6
13 Creating file test_file.7
    Creating file test_file.8
    Creating file test_file.9
   Creating file test_file.10
    Creating file test_file.11
    Creating file test_file.12
    Creating file test_file.13
    Creating file test_file.14
21
    Creating file test file.15
22 Creating file test_file.16
    Creating file test_file.17
24 Creating file test_file.18
    Creating file test_file.19
    Creating file test_file.20
27
    Creating file test file.21
28
    Creating file test_file.22
    Creating file test_file.23
30 32212254720 bytes written in 105.24 seconds (291.91
        MiB/sec).
31
    real 1m45.253s
33
    user 0m1.201s
    sys 0m50.978s
35
```

First, there is a preparation stage, in which several files are created, so they can be then moved, synced, copied, and deleted. Based on this operations, *sysbench* will reflect the Disk IO times. Yet, it is important to notice that for only writing the files, the Encrypted vs Not-Encryption rates are significantly impact: while the Not-Encrypted had a rate of 291.91 [MiB/sec], the Encrypted one was only 125.77 [MiB/sec], which result in almost tripling the amount of time required to write 30 GB.



# Test: sysbench fileio -file-total-size=30G -file-num=24 -file-test-mode=rndrw -time=1800 -file-rw-ratio=1 -threads=16 -max-requests=0 run

#### **Encrypted**

#### Number of threads: 16 24 files , 1.25GiB each 30GiB total file size Block size 16KiB Read/Write ratio for combined random IO test: 1.00 Periodic FSYNC enabled, calling fsync() each 100 Calling fsync() at the end of **test**, Enabled. Using synchronous I/O mode Doing random r/w test Initializing worker threads... Threads started! 13 File operations: 2755.75 14 reads/s: 15 writes/s: 2755.75 1322.96 16 fsyncs/s: 17 18 Throughput: read, MiB/s: 43.06 written, MiB/s: 43.06 20 21 General statistics: 23 1800.0206s total time: 24 total number of events: 12301839 Latency (ms): 0.00 27 2.34 avg: max: 429.07 95th percentile: 8.74 30 28757517.82 sum: 31 Threads fairness: 768864.9375/3513.22 33 events (avg/stddev): execution time (avg/stddev): 1797.3449/0.09

#### Not-Encrypted

```
Number of threads: 16
    24 files, 1.25GiB each
    30GiB total file size
     Block size 16KiB
    Read/Write ratio for combined random IO test: 1.00
    Periodic FSYNC enabled, calling fsync() each 100
     Calling fsync() at the end of test, Enabled.
    Using synchronous I/O mode
    Doing random r/w test
    Initializing worker threads...
    Threads started!
13
     File operations:
14
        reads/s:
                                       6842.16
15
         writes/s:
                                       6842.16
16
                                       3284.45
        fsyncs/s:
17
18
    Throughput:
        read, MiB/s:
                                       106.91
        written, MiB/s:
                                       106.91
    General statistics:
23
                                       1800.0121s
        total time:
        total number of events:
                                       30543674
    Latency (ms):
                                        0.00
                                        0.94
               avg:
28
                                        536.87
29
               95th percentile:
                                        3.36
30
                                        28764555.92
              sum:
     Threads fairness:
                                    1908979.6250/7247.20
33
      events (avg/stddev):
       execution time (avg/stddev): 1797.7847/0.04
```

	47.70										
										L6.20, 9.58	
	: <b>130</b> t			running,				0 stop			
%Cpu0										hi, 1.7	
%Cpu1		0 us,								hi, 2.1	
KiB M		880280			836 fre		12/	84 use		3463660 but	
KiB S	wap:	ø	tota	а1,	0 fre	e,		0 use	a. :	3287380 ava	ili Mem
PTD	USER	PR	NI	VIRT	RES	SHR	S	%CPU	%MEM	TIME+	COMMAND
19480			-20	0	0		S	49.0	0.0		kworker/u5:1
19996			-20	ø	e	ĕ	s	39.7	0.0		kworker/u5:0
20942		20		95056	1816	480	s	30.5	0.0		sysbench
20280		- 0		9	9	0	s	30.1	0.0		kworker/u5:2
	root	20		ő	ő	ø	s	4.6	0.0	2:20.61	
	root	20		ø	ĕ	ø	s	1.3	0.0		dmcrypt_write
	root		-20	ø	ě		s	0.7	0.0		kworker/0:1H
	root	20		ø	ě		s	0.3	0.0		ksoftirad/0
	root	9		ē	9	ē	s	0.3	0.0		kworker/1:1H
	telegr	af 20		5274724	36380	3256	s	0.3	0.9		telegraf
	root	20		433776	8088	2376		0.3	0.2		rsyslogd
2235	root	20	0	400184	4680	1968		0.3	0.1	0:00.39	
21048	hreink	i+ 20	0	174148		476	s	0.3	0.0	0:00.71	sshd
21099	root	20		162176	1508	684	R	0.3	0.0	0:01.59	top
21118	root	20	0	0	0	0	s	0.3	0.0	0:00.81	kworker/0:0
1	root	20	0	125772	3112	1480	s	0.0	0.1	0:06.90	systemd
2	root	20	0	0	0	0	s	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kthreadd
4	root	0	-20	0	0	0	s	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kworker/0:0H
5	root	20	0	0	0	0	s	0.0	0.0	0:05.81	kworker/u4:0

FIGURE 5: CPU Load while running sysbench



To get a more clear view of the performance results, let's arrange them in a more comfortable way:

Section	Metric	Encrypted	Not-Encrypted	Percentage
File	reads/s	2755.75	6842.16	40.28
Operations	writes/s	2755.75	6842.16	40.28
Operations	fsyncs/s	1322.96	3284.45	40,28
Throughput	reads MiB/s	43.06	106.91	40.28
Tillougriput	written MiB/s	43.06	106.91	40,28
General	total time	1800.0206[s]	1800.0121[s]	100.1
Stadistics	total number of events	12301839	30543674	40.28
	min	0	0	0
	avg	2.34	0.94	40,17
Latency	max	249.07	536.87	46,4
	95th Percentile	8.74	3.36	38,44
	sum	28757517.82	28764555.92	100,02
Threads	events (avg/stddev)	768864.9375/3513.22	1908979.6250/7247.20	40.28/48.48
fairness	execution time (avg/stddev)	1797.3449/0.09	1797.7847/0.04	100.02/44.44

As shown in Figure 5, during the performance test at the Encrypted VM, the load on the CPU was so high (18.28) that the ssh connection was terminated and the network connection lost. As far as the results goes:

- **Files Operations:** Reads, Writes, and File Sync operations suffered a 40.3 percent due to encryption.
- **Throughput:** lost a 40.3 percentage both at write and read operations while Encrypting.
- **General Statistics:** The number of events compared with the total time for them to occur, shows that in the same amount of time, 40.3 percentage more events happened at the Not-Encrypted VM.
- **Latency:** In the same time period, the Encrypted vs Not-Encrypted suffered a 40.17 percentage more latency.
- **Threads Fairness:** The number of events per thread, were 40.28 percent higher in a Not-Encrypted system than in an Encrypted one.



#### 3.5 Conclusions - Pros and Cons

- Encrypting a system, results in average a 40 percent payload over the read/write operations.
- The encrypted client clevis01 successfully decrypt during dracut by reaching tang01.
- The primary Tang server (tang01) was powered off and the client was able to decrypt through tang02.
- For the scope of this PoC, the deletion and recreation of one or both Tang servers was not done, but presumably, the client decryption would not happen and the content would be irrecoverable.
- One way of handling the loss of all Tang servers is to add the keys to lsst-private repo, but key rotation is suggested by the documentation to increase safety.



# **A** Acronyms

Acronym	Description
CPU	Central Processing Unit
FDE	Full Disk Encryption
GB	Gigabyte
HDD	Hard Disk Drive
HTTP	HyperText Transfer Protocol
LUKS	Linux Unified Key Setup
LV	Logical Volume
NBDE	Network Bound Disk Encryption
OS	Operating System
PBD	Policy-Based Decryption
PMO	Project Management Office
PV	Physical Volume
PoC	Proof of Concept
TPM	Trusted Platform Module
VDA	Virtual Drive A
VG	Volume Group
VM	Virtual Machine