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TLS/DTLS 1.3 Profiles for the Internet of Things  
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Abstract

RFC 7925 offers guidance to developers on using TLS/DTLS 1.2 for Internet of Things (IoT) devices with resource constraints. This document is a companion to RFC 7925, defining TLS/DTLS 1.3 profiles for IoT devices. Additionally, it updates RFC 7925 with respect to the X.509 certificate profile and ciphersuite requirements.

Discussion Venues

This note is to be removed before publishing as an RFC.

Source for this draft and an issue tracker can be found at  
<https://github.com/thomas-fossati/draft-tls13-iot>.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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## 1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving Internet of Things (IoT) ecosystem, communication security is a critical requirement. The Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Datagram Transport Layer Security (DTLS) protocols have been foundational for ensuring encryption, integrity, and authenticity in communications. However, the constraints of a certain class of IoT devices render conventional, off-the-shelf TLS/DTLS implementations suboptimal for many IoT use cases. This document addresses these limitations by specifying TLS 1.3 and DTLS 1.3 profiles that are optimized for resource-constrained IoT devices.

Note that IoT devices vary widely in terms of capabilities. While some are highly resource-constrained, others offer performance comparable to regular desktop computers but operate without end-user interfaces. For a detailed description of the different classes of IoT devices, please refer to [RFC7228] and [I-D.ietf-iotops-7228bis]. It is crucial for developers to thoroughly assess the limitations of their IoT devices and communication technologies to implement the most suitable optimizations. The profiles in this document aim to balance strong security with the hardware and software limitations of IoT devices.

TLS 1.3 has been re-designed and several previously defined extensions are not applicable to the new version of TLS/DTLS anymore. The following features changed with the transition from TLS 1.2 to 1.3:

- \* TLS 1.3 introduced the concept of post-handshake authentication messages, which partially replaced the need for the re-negotiation feature [RFC5746] available in earlier TLS versions. However, the rekeying mechanism defined in Section 4.6.3 of [RFC8446] does not provide post-compromise security (see Appendix E.1.5 of [RFC8446]). Furthermore, post-handshake authentication defined in Section 4.6.2 of [RFC8446] only offers client authentication (client-to-server). The "Exported Authenticator" specification, see [RFC9261], added support for mutual post-handshake authentication, but this requires the Certificate, CertificateVerify and the Finished messages to be conveyed by the application layer protocol, as it is exercised for HTTP/2 and HTTP/3 in [I-D.ietf-httpbis-secondary-server-certs]. Therefore, the application layer protocol must be enhanced whenever this feature is required.
- \* Rekeying of the application traffic secret does not lead to an update of the exporter secret (see Section 7.5 of [RFC8446]) since the derived export secret is based on the exporter\_master\_secret and not on the application traffic secret.
- \* Flight #4, which was used by EAP-TLS 1.2 [RFC5216], does not exist in TLS 1.3. As a consequence, EAP-TLS 1.3 [RFC9190] introduced a placeholder message.
- \* [RFC4279] introduced PSK-based authentication to TLS, a feature re-designed in TLS 1.3. The "PSK identity hint" defined in [RFC4279], which is used by the server to help the client in selecting which PSK identity to use, is, however, not available anymore in TLS 1.3.
- \* Finally, ciphersuites were deprecated and the RSA-based key transport is not supported in TLS 1.3. As a consequence, only a Diffie-Hellman-based key exchange is available for non-PSK-based (i.e., certificate-based) authentication. (For PSK-based authentication the use of Diffie-Hellman is optional.)

The profiles in this specification are designed to be adaptable to the broad spectrum of IoT applications, from low-power consumer devices to large-scale industrial deployments. It provides guidelines for implementing TLS/DTLS 1.3 in diverse networking contexts, including reliable, connection-oriented transport via TCP for TLS, and lightweight, connectionless communication via UDP for DTLS. In particular, DTLS is emphasized for scenarios where low-latency communication is paramount, such as multi-hop mesh networks and low-power wide-area networks, where the amount of data exchanged needs to be minimized.

This document offers comprehensive guidance for deploying secure communication in resource-constrained IoT environments. It outlines best practices for configuring TLS/DTLS 1.3 to meet the unique needs of IoT devices, ensuring robust security without overwhelming their limited processing, memory, and power resources. The document aims to facilitate the development of secure and efficient IoT deployments and promote the broad adoption of secure communication standards.

This document updates [RFC7925] with respect to the X.509 certificate profile (Section 17) and ciphersuite requirements (Section 20).

## 2. Conventions and Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [RFC2119] [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

This document reuses the terms "SHOULD+", "SHOULD-" and "MUST-" from [RFC8221].

## 3. Credential Types

TLS/DTLS allow different credential types to be used. These include X.509 certificates and raw public keys, pre-shared keys (PSKs), and passwords. The extensions used in TLS/DTLS differ depending on the credential types supported. Self-signed X.509 certificates are still X.509, not raw public keys; raw public keys are conveyed via the `raw_public_key` extension.

This profile considers three authentication modes for IoT devices: (1) certificate-based, (2) raw public key-based and (3) external PSK-based. PSK with (EC)DHE is optional and not assumed by default.

TLS/DTLS 1.3 supports PSK-based authentication, wherein PSKs can be established via session tickets from prior connections or via some external, out-of-band mechanism. To distinguish the two modes, the former is called resumption PSK and the latter external PSK. For performance reasons the support for resumption PSKs is often found in implementations that use X.509 certificates for authentication. Implementations that only support external PSKs are common in constrained devices; implementations using certificates often also support resumption PSKs for performance.

A "plain" PSK-based TLS/DTLS client or server, which only implements support for external PSKs as its long-term credential, MUST implement the following extensions:

- \* Supported Versions,
- \* Cookie,
- \* Server Name Indication (SNI),
- \* Pre-Shared Key,
- \* PSK Key Exchange Modes, and
- \* Application-Layer Protocol Negotiation (ALPN).

Note that these extensions may also appear in ECDHE or resumption handshakes; the requirement here is that external PSK-only endpoints MUST support them.

For external pre-shared keys, [RFC9258] recommends that applications SHOULD provision separate PSKs for (D)TLS 1.3 and prior versions.

Where possible, the importer interface defined in [RFC9258] MUST be used for external PSKs. This ensures that external PSKs used in (D)TLS 1.3 are bound to a specific key derivation function (KDF) and hash function.

SNI is discussed in Section 12; the justification for implementing and using the ALPN extension can be found in [RFC9325].

An implementation supporting authentication based on certificates and raw public keys MUST support digital signatures with `ecdsa_secp256r1_sha256`. A compliant implementation MUST support the key exchange with `secp256r1` (NIST P-256) and SHOULD support key exchange with `X25519`.

For TLS/DTLS clients and servers implementing raw public keys and/or certificates the guidance for mandatory-to-implement extensions described in Section 9.2 of [RFC8446] MUST be followed.

Entities deploying IoT devices may select credential types based on security characteristics, operational requirements, cost, and other factors. Consequently, this specification does not prescribe a single credential type but provides guidance on considerations relevant to the use of particular types.

#### 4. Error Handling

TLS 1.3 simplified the Alert protocol but the underlying challenge in an embedded context remains unchanged, namely what should an IoT device do when it encounters an error situation. The classical approach used in a desktop environment where the user is prompted is often not applicable with unattended devices. Hence, it is more important for a developer to find out from which error cases a device can recover from.

#### 5. Session Resumption

TLS 1.3 has built-in support for session resumption by utilizing PSK-based credentials established in an earlier exchange.

#### 6. Compression

TLS 1.3 does not define compression of application data traffic, as offered by previous versions of TLS. Applications are therefore responsible for transmitting payloads that are either compressed or use a more efficient encoding otherwise.

With regards to the handshake itself, various strategies have been applied to reduce the size of the exchanged payloads. TLS and DTLS 1.3 use less overhead, depending on the type of key confirmations, when compared to previous versions of the protocol.

#### 7. Forward Secrecy

RFC 8446 has removed Static RSA and Static Diffie-Hellman cipher suites, therefore all public-key-based key exchange mechanisms available in TLS 1.3 provide forward secrecy.

Pre-shared keys (PSKs) can be used with (EC)DHE key exchange to provide forward secrecy or can be used alone, at the cost of losing forward secrecy for the application data. For PSK use, endpoints SHOULD use (EC)DHE to achieve forward secrecy; PSK-only SHOULD be avoided unless the application can tolerate the loss of forward secrecy.

## 8. Authentication and Integrity-only Cipher Suites

For a few, very specific Industrial IoT use cases [RFC9150] defines two cipher suites that provide data authenticity, but not data confidentiality. For details and use constraints, defer to [RFC9150] (especially Section 9 of [RFC9150]). Implementations may not support these suites; deployments should not assume availability. This document does not add new guidance beyond [RFC9150].

## 9. Keep-Alive

The discussion in Section 10 of [RFC7925] is applicable.

## 10. Timers and ACKs

Compared to DTLS 1.2 timeout-based whole flight retransmission, DTLS 1.3 ACKs sensibly decrease the risk of congestion collapse which was the basis for the very conservative recommendations given in Section 11 of [RFC7925].

In general, the recommendations in Section 7.3 of [RFC9147] regarding ACKs apply to DTLS 1.3 only. In particular, "(w)hen DTLS 1.3 is used in deployments with lossy networks, such as low-power, long-range radio networks as well as low-power mesh networks, the use of ACKs is recommended" to signal any sign of disruption or lack of progress. This allows for selective or early retransmission, which leads to more efficient use of bandwidth and memory resources.

Due to the vast range of network technologies used in IoT deployments, from wired LAN to GSM-SMS, it's not possible to provide a universal recommendation for an initial timeout. Therefore, it is RECOMMENDED that DTLS 1.3 implementations allow developers to explicitly set the initial timer value. Developers SHOULD set the initial timeout to be twice the expected round-trip time (RTT), but no less than 1000ms, which is a conservative default aligned with the guidance in Section 11 of [RFC7925]. For specific application/network combinations, a sub-second initial timeout MAY be set. In cases where no RTT estimates are available, a 1000ms initial timeout is suitable for the general Internet.

Regarding the timers used by the Return Routability Check (RRC) functionality, the recommendations in Section 5.5 of [I-D.ietf-tls-dtls-rrc] apply. Just like the handshake initial timers, it is RECOMMENDED that DTLS 1.2 and 1.3 implementations offer an option for their developers to explicitly set the RRC timer.

## 11. Random Number Generation

The discussion in Section 12 of [RFC7925] is applicable with one exception: the ClientHello and the ServerHello messages in TLS 1.3 do not contain `gmt_unix_time` component anymore.

## 12. Server Name Indication

This specification mandates the implementation of the Server Name Indication (SNI) extension. Where privacy requirements require it, the ECH (Encrypted Client Hello) extension [I-D.ietf-tls-esni] prevents an on-path attacker to determine the domain name the client is trying to connect to.

Since the Encrypted Client Hello extension requires use of Hybrid Public Key Encryption (HPKE) [RFC9180] and additional protocols require further protocol exchanges and cryptographic operations, there is a certain overhead associated with this privacy feature.

Note that in industrial IoT deployments the use of ECH may be disabled because network administrators inspect the SNI to detect malicious behaviour.

Besides, to avoid leaking DNS lookups from network inspection altogether further protocols are needed, including DNS-over-HTTPS (DoH) [RFC8484], DNS-over-TLS (DoT) [RFC7858] and DNS-over-QUIC (DoQ) [RFC9250].

## 13. Maximum Fragment Length Negotiation

The Maximum Fragment Length Negotiation (MFL) extension has been superseded by the Record Size Limit (RSL) extension [RFC8449]. Implementations in compliance with this specification MUST implement the RSL extension and SHOULD use it to indicate their RAM limitations.

## 14. Crypto Agility

The recommendations in Section 19 of [RFC7925] are applicable.

## 15. Key Length Recommendations

The recommendations in Section 20 of [RFC7925] are applicable.

## 16. 0-RTT Data

Appendix E.5 of [RFC8446] establishes that:

Application protocols MUST NOT use 0-RTT data without a profile that defines its use. That profile needs to identify which messages or interactions are safe to use with 0-RTT and how to handle the situation when the server rejects 0-RTT and falls back to 1-RTT.

For any application protocol, 0-RTT MUST NOT be used unless a protocol-specific profile exists. At the time of writing, no such profile has been defined for CoAP [CoAP]. Therefore, 0-RTT MUST NOT be used by CoAP applications.

## 17. Certificate Profile

This section contains updates and clarifications to the certificate profile defined in [RFC7925]. The content of Table 1 of [RFC7925] has been split by certificate "type" in order to clarify exactly what requirements and recommendations apply to which entity in the PKI hierarchy.

This profile does not define a specific certificate policy OID; deployments MAY define one if needed for local policy enforcement.

A Device Identifier (DevID) consists of:

- \* a private key,
- \* a certificate containing the public key and the identifier certified by the certificate issuer, and
- \* a certificate chain leading up to a trust anchor (typically the root certificate).

The IEEE 802.1AR specification [IEEE-802.1AR] introduces the concept of DevIDs and defines two specialized versions:

- \* Initial Device Identifiers (IDevIDs): Provisioned during manufacturing to provide a unique, stable identity for the lifetime of the device.
- \* Locally Significant Device Identifiers (LDevIDs): Provisioned after deployment and typically used for operational purposes within a specific domain.

Thus, IDevIDs and LDevIDs are specialized forms of DevIDs as defined in IEEE 802.1AR.

The IDevID is typically provisioned by a manufacturer and signed by the manufacturer CA. It is then used to obtain operational certificates, the LDevIDs, from the operator or owner of the device. Some protocols also introduce an additional hierarchy with application instance certificates, which are obtained for use with specific applications.

IDevIDs are intended for device identity and initial onboarding or bootstrapping protocols, such as the Bootstrapping Remote Secure Key Infrastructure (BRSKI) protocol [RFC8995] or by LwM2M Bootstrap [LwM2M-T] [LwM2M-C]. Hence, the use of IDevIDs is limited on purpose even though they have a long lifetime, or do not expire at all. While some bootstrapping protocols use TLS (and therefore make use of the IDevID as part of client authentication) there are other bootstrapping protocols that do not use TLS/DTLS for client authentication, such as FIDO Device Onboarding (FDO) [FDO]. In many cases, the IDevID profile/content is provided by those specifications. For these reasons, this specification focuses on the description of LDevIDs.

This document uses the terminology and some of the rules for populating certificate content defined in IEEE 802.1AR. However, this specification does not claim conformance to IEEE 802.1AR; 802.1AR is broader and mandates hardware, security, and process requirements outside IoT constraints, while this profile borrows terminology and fields but intentionally omits those operational requirements. Since such a compliance statement goes beyond the use of the terminology and the certificate content and would include the use of management protocols, fulfillment of certain hardware security requirements, and interfaces to access these hardware security modules. Placing these requirements on network equipment like routers may be appropriate but designers of constrained IoT devices have opted for different protocols and hardware security choices.

#### 17.1. All Certificates

To avoid repetition, this section outlines requirements on X.509 certificates applicable to all PKI entities. These requirements apply to certificates issued within the IoT device PKI (root, subordinate, and end entity certificates used to authenticate IoT devices), not to public WebPKI server certificates. Note that TLS 1.3 allows conveying payloads other than X.509 certificates in the Certificate message; this section focuses on X.509 v3 certificates and leaves other formats to other sections or specifications.

#### 17.1.1. Version

Certificates MUST be of type X.509 v3.

#### 17.1.2. Serial Number

CAs MUST generate non-sequential serial numbers greater than or equal to eight (8) octets from a cryptographically secure pseudo-random number generator. [RFC5280] limits this field to a maximum of 20 octets. The serial number MUST be unique for each certificate issued by a given CA (i.e., the issuer name and the serial number uniquely identify a certificate).

This requirement is aligned with [RFC5280]. CA/Browser Forum requirements for public WebPKI certificates are out of scope for this profile.

#### 17.1.3. Signature

The signature MUST be ecdsa-with-SHA256 or stronger [RFC5758].

Note: In contrast to IEEE 802.1AR this specification does not require end entity certificates, subordinate CA certificates, and CA certificates to use the same signature algorithm. Furthermore, this specification does not utilize RSA for use with constrained IoT devices and networks. For certificates expected to be validated by IoT devices, CAs SHOULD use a single signature algorithm supported by those devices (e.g., ECDSA P-256).

#### 17.1.4. Issuer

The issuer field MUST contain a non-empty distinguished name (DN) of the entity that has signed and issued the certificate in accordance with [RFC5280].

#### 17.1.5. Validity

Vendors must determine the expected lifespan of their IoT devices. This decision directly affects how long firmware and software updates are provided for, as well as the level of maintenance that customers can expect. It also affects the maximum validity period of certificates. Constrained devices often lack precise UTC time; implementations SHOULD treat time checks with coarse granularity (e.g., day- or hour-level) and ignore leap seconds when validating notAfter.

In most IoT deployments, IDevIDs are provisioned with an unlimited lifetime as per [IEEE-802.1AR]. For this purpose, a special value for the notAfter date field, the GeneralizedTime value of 99991231235959Z, is utilized. This special value was introduced in Section 4.1.2.5 of [RFC5280]. When this is done, then the CA certificates and the certificates of subordinate CAs have a maximum validity period. Therefore, careful consideration is required as to whether it is appropriate to issue IDevID certificates with no maximum validity period.

LDevID certificates are, however, issued by the operator or owner, and may be renewed at a regular interval using protocols, such as Enrollment over Secure Transport (EST) [RFC7030] or the Certificate Management Protocol (CMP) [RFC9483]. It is therefore RECOMMENDED to limit the lifetime of these LDevID certificates using the notBefore and notAfter fields, as described in Section 4.1.2.5 of [RFC5280]. Values MUST be expressed in Greenwich Mean Time (Zulu) and MUST include seconds even where the number of seconds is zero.

Note that the validity period is defined as the period of time from notBefore through notAfter, inclusive. This means that a hypothetical certificate with a notBefore date of 9 June 2021 at 03:42:01 and a notAfter date of 7 September 2021 at 03:42:01 becomes valid at the beginning of the :01 second, and only becomes invalid at the :02 second, a period that is 90 days plus 1 second. So for a 90-day, notAfter must actually be 03:42:00.

For devices without a reliable source of time we advise the use of a device management solution, which typically includes a certificate management protocol, to manage the lifetime of all the certificates used by the device. While this approach does not utilize certificates to its widest extent, it is a solution that extends the capabilities offered by a raw public key approach.

#### 17.1.6. Subject Public Key Info

The subjectPublicKeyInfo field indicates the algorithm and any associated parameters for the ECC public key. This profile uses the id-ecPublicKey algorithm identifier for ECDSA signature keys, as defined and specified in [RFC5480]. This specification assumes that devices support one of the following algorithms:

- \* id-ecPublicKey with secp256r1,
- \* id-ecPublicKey with secp384r1, and
- \* id-ecPublicKey with secp521r1.

There is no requirement to use CA certificates and certificates of subordinate CAs to use the same algorithm as the end entity certificate. Certificates with longer lifetime may well use a cryptographically stronger algorithm. However, CAs (or their administrators) that issue certificates intended to be validated by constrained IoT devices SHOULD select algorithms supported by those devices to ensure successful validation (e.g., P-256).

#### 17.1.7. Certificate Revocation Checks

The Certificate Revocation Lists (CRLs) distribution points extension has been defined in RFC 5280 to identify how CRL information is obtained. The Authority Information Access (AIA) extension indicates where to find additional information about the CA, such as how to access information like the online certificate status service (OCSP) or a CA issuer certificate. Constrained IoT devices often do not perform OCSP or CRL checks. Therefore, CRL distribution points and AIA for OCSP SHOULD NOT be set in IoT device certificates; if set, they MUST NOT be marked critical. AIA MAY be used solely for caIssuer to enable chain fetching by peers that have sufficient resources.

Instead of using CRLs or OCSP this document follows the guidance in Section 4.4.3 of [RFC7925]: for certificate revocation, neither OCSP nor CRL are used by constrained IoT devices. This text refers to OCSP/CRL checks during the handshake; continuous certificate validity checks are out of scope and left to application policy.

The use of device management protocols for IoT devices, which often include an onboarding or bootstrapping mechanism, has also seen considerable uptake in deployed devices. These protocols, some of which are standardized, allow for the distribution and updating of certificates on demand. An example of a standardized IoT device management protocol is the Lightweight Machine-to-Machine (LwM2M) [LwM2M-T] [LwM2M-C] protocol. Device management protocols enable a deployment model where IoT devices utilize end entity certificates with shorter lifetime making certificate revocation protocols, like OCSP and CRLs, less relevant. Certificate updates do not affect existing TLS sessions; re-authentication or session re-establishment is an application policy decision. This is particularly important when long-lived TLS connections are used. In such a case, the post-handshake authentication exchange is triggered when the application requires it. TLS 1.3 provides client-to-server post-handshake authentication only. Mutual authentication via post-handshake messages is available by the use of the "Exported Authenticator" [RFC9261] but requires the application layer protocol to carry the payloads. If continuous validation is required, the application must trigger re-authentication or re-establish a new TLS session; TLS alone does not mandate continuous checks.

Hence, instead of performing certificate revocation checks on the IoT device itself this it is RECOMMENDED to delegate this task to the IoT device operator and to take the necessary action to allow IoT devices to remain operational.

## 17.2. Root CA Certificate

This section outlines the requirements for root CA certificates.

### 17.2.1. Subject

[RFC5280] mandates that Root CA certificates MUST have a non-empty subject field. The subject field MUST contain the commonName, the organizationName, and the countryName attribute and MAY contain an organizationalUnitName attribute. If a subjectAltName extension is present, it SHOULD be set to a value consistent with the subject and SHOULD NOT be marked critical.

### 17.2.2. Authority Key Identifier

Section 4.2.1.1 of [RFC5280] defines the Authority Key Identifier as follows: "The authority key identifier extension provides a means of identifying the public key corresponding to the private key used to sign a certificate. This extension is used where an issuer has multiple signing keys."

The Authority Key Identifier extension SHOULD be set to aid path construction. If it is set, it MUST NOT be marked critical, and MUST contain the subjectKeyIdentifier of this certificate.

#### 17.2.3. Subject Key Identifier

Section 4.2.1.2 of [RFC5280] defines the SubjectKeyIdentifier as follows: "The subject key identifier extension provides a means of identifying certificates that contain a particular public key."

The Subject Key Identifier extension MUST be set, MUST NOT be marked critical, and MUST contain the key identifier of the public key contained in the subject public key info field. This profile aligns with CA/Browser Forum for CA certificates.

The subjectKeyIdentifier is used by path construction algorithms to identify which CA has signed a subordinate certificate.

#### 17.2.4. Key Usage

[RFC5280] defines the key usage field as follows: "The key usage extension defines the purpose (e.g., encipherment, signature, certificate signing) of the key contained in the certificate."

The Key Usage extension SHOULD be set; if it is set, it MUST be marked critical, and the keyCertSign or cRLSign purposes MUST be set. Additional key usages MAY be set depending on the intended usage of the public key.

[RFC5280] defines the extended key usage as follows: "This extension indicates one or more purposes for which the certified public key may be used, in addition to or in place of the basic purposes indicated in the key usage extension."

This extendedKeyUsage extension MUST NOT be set in CA certificates.

#### 17.2.5. Basic Constraints

[RFC5280] states that "The Basic Constraints extension identifies whether the subject of the certificate is a CA and the maximum depth of valid certification paths that include this certificate. The cA boolean indicates whether the certified public key may be used to verify certificate signatures."

For the pathLenConstraint RFC 5280 makes further statements:

- \* "The pathLenConstraint field is meaningful only if the cA boolean is asserted and the key usage extension, if present, asserts the keyCertSign bit. In this case, it gives the maximum number of non-self-issued intermediate certificates that may follow this certificate in a valid certification path."
- \* "A pathLenConstraint of zero indicates that no non-self-issued intermediate CA certificates may follow in a valid certification path."
- \* "Where pathLenConstraint does not appear, no limit is imposed."
- \* "Conforming CAs MUST include this extension in all CA certificates that contain public keys used to validate digital signatures on certificates and MUST mark the extension as critical in such certificates."

The Basic Constraints extension MUST be set, MUST be marked critical, the cA flag MUST be set to true and the pathLenConstraint MUST be omitted.

### 17.3. Subordinate CA Certificate

This section outlines the requirements for subordinate CA certificates.

#### 17.3.1. Subject

The subject field MUST be set and MUST contain the commonName, the organizationName, and the countryName attribute and MAY contain an organizationalUnitName attribute.

#### 17.3.2. Authority Key Identifier

The Authority Key Identifier extension MUST be set, MUST NOT be marked critical, and MUST contain the subjectKeyIdentifier of the CA that issued this certificate.

#### 17.3.3. Subject Key Identifier

The Subject Key Identifier extension MUST be set, MUST NOT be marked critical, and MUST contain the key identifier of the public key contained in the subject public key info field.

#### 17.3.4. Key Usage

The Key Usage extension MUST be set, MUST be marked critical, the keyCertSign or cRLSign purposes MUST be set, and the digitalSignature purpose SHOULD be set.

Subordinate certification authorities SHOULD NOT have any extendedKeyUsage. [RFC5280] reserves EKUs to be meaningful only in end entity certificates.

#### 17.3.5. Basic Constraints

The Basic Constraints extension MUST be set, MUST be marked critical, the cA flag MUST be set to true and the pathLenConstraint SHOULD be omitted.

#### 17.3.6. CRL Distribution Point

The CRL Distribution Point extension SHOULD NOT be set. If it is set, it MUST NOT be marked critical and MUST identify the CRL relevant for this certificate.

#### 17.3.7. Authority Information Access

The Authority Information Access (AIA) extension SHOULD NOT be set. If it is set, it MUST NOT be marked critical and MUST identify the location of the certificate of the CA that issued this certificate and the location it provides an online certificate status service (OCSP).

### 17.4. End Entity Certificate

This section outlines the requirements for end entity certificates.

#### 17.4.1. Subject

This section describes the use of end entity certificate primarily for (D)TLS clients running on IoT devices. Operating (D)TLS servers on IoT devices is possible but less common.

[RFC9525], Section 2 mandates that the subject field not be used to identify a service. However, certain IoT applications (for example, [I-D.ietf-anima-constrained-voucher], [IEEE-802.1AR]) use the subject field to encode the device serial number.

The requirement in Section 4.4.2 of [RFC7925] to only use EUI-64 for end entity certificates as a subject field is lifted.

Two fields are typically used to encode a device identifier, namely the Subject and the subjectAltName fields. Protocol specifications tend to offer recommendations about what identifiers to use and the deployment situation is fragmented.

The subject field MAY include a unique device serial number. If a serial number is included in the Subject DN, it MUST be encoded in the X520SerialNumber attribute. If the serial number is used as an identifier, it SHOULD also be placed in the subjectAltName (e.g., as a URI). e.g., [RFC8995] use requires a serial number in IDevID certificates.

[RFC5280] defines: "The subject alternative name extension allows identities to be bound to the subject of the certificate. These identities may be included in addition to or in place of the identity in the subject field of the certificate."

The subject alternative name extension MAY be set. If it is set, it MUST NOT be marked critical, except when the subject DN contains an empty sequence.

If the EUI-64 format is used to identify the subject of an end entity certificate, it MUST be encoded as a Subject DN using the X520SerialNumber attribute. The contents of the field is a string of the form HH-HH-HH-HH-HH-HH-HH-HH where 'H' is one of the symbols '0'-'9' or 'A'-'F'.

Per [RFC9525] domain names MUST NOT be encoded in the subject commonName. Instead they MUST be encoded in a subjectAltName of type DNS-ID. Domain names MUST NOT contain wildcard (\*) characters. The subjectAltName MUST NOT contain multiple names.

Note: The IEEE 802.1AR recommends to encode information about a Trusted Platform Module (TPM), if present, in the HardwareModuleName (Section 5 of [RFC4108]). This specification does not follow this recommendation.

Where IoT devices are accepting (D)TLS connections, i.e., they are acting as a server, it is unlikely that there will be a useful name that can go into the SNI. In general, the use of SNI for the purpose of virtual hosting on constrained IoT devices is rare. The IoT device cannot depend on a client providing a correct SNI, and so it MAY ignore the extension when SNI is not used for virtual hosting. This implies that IoT devices cannot do name-based virtual hosting of TLS connections. In the unlikely event that an IoT device has multiple servers responding with different server certificate, then the server SHOULD use different IP addresses or port numbers.

#### 17.4.2. Authority Key Identifier

The Authority Key Identifier extension MUST be set, MUST NOT be marked critical, and MUST contain the subjectKeyIdentifier of the CA that issued this certificate.

#### 17.4.3. Subject Key Identifier

The Subject Key Identifier MUST NOT be included in end entity certificates, as it can be calculated from the public key, so it just takes up space. End entity certificates are not used in path construction, so there is no ambiguity regarding which certificate chain to use, as there can be with subordinate CAs.

#### 17.4.4. Key Usage

The key usage extension MUST be set and MUST be marked as critical. For signature verification keys the digitalSignature key usage purpose MUST be specified. Other key usages are set according to the intended usage of the key.

If enrollment of new certificates uses server-side key generation, encrypted delivery of the private key is required. In such cases the key usage keyEncipherment or keyAgreement MUST be set because the encrypted delivery of the newly generated key involves encryption or agreement of a symmetric key. On-device key generation is, however, the preferred approach.

As specified in [IEEE-802.1AR], the extendedKeyUsage SHOULD NOT be present in IDevID certificates, as it reduces the utility of the IDevID. For locally assigned LDevID certificates to be usable with TLS, the extendedKeyUsage MUST contain at least one of the following: id-kp-serverAuth or id-kp-clientAuth.

### 18. Update of Trust Anchors

Since the publication of RFC 7925 the need for firmware update mechanisms has been reinforced and the work on standardizing a secure and interoperable firmware update mechanism has made substantial progress, see [RFC9019]. RFC 7925 recommends to use a software / firmware update mechanism to provision devices with new trust anchors. This approach only addresses the distribution of trust anchors and not end entity certificates or certificates of subordinate CAs.

As an alternative, certificate management protocols like CMP and EST have also offered ways to update trust anchors. See, for example, Section 2.1 of [RFC7030] for an approach to obtaining CA certificates via EST.

## 19. Certificate Overhead

In a public key-based key exchange, certificates and public keys are a major contributor to the size of the overall handshake. For example, in a regular TLS 1.3 handshake with minimal ECC certificates and no subordinate CA utilizing the secp256r1 curve with mutual authentication, around 40% of the entire handshake payload is consumed by the two exchanged certificates.

Hence, it is not surprising that there is a strong desire to reduce the size of certificates and certificate chains. This has led to various standardization efforts. Below is a brief summary of what options an implementer has to reduce the bandwidth requirements of a public key-based key exchange. Note that many of the standardized extensions are not readily available in TLS/DTLS stacks since optimizations typically get implemented last.

- \* Use elliptic curve cryptography (ECC) instead of RSA-based certificate due to the smaller certificate size. This document recommends the use of elliptic curve cryptography only.
- \* Avoid deep and complex CA hierarchies to reduce the number of subordinate CA certificates that need to be transmitted and processed. See [I-D.irtf-t2trg-taxonomy-manufacturer-anchors] for a discussion about CA hierarchies. Most security requirements can be satisfied with a PKI depth of 3 (root CA, one subordinate CA, and end entity certificates).
- \* Pay attention to the amount of information conveyed inside certificates.
- \* Use session resumption to reduce the number of times a full handshake is needed. Use Connection IDs [RFC9146], when possible, to enable long-lasting connections.
- \* Use the TLS cached info [RFC7924] extension to avoid sending certificates with every full handshake.
- \* Use client certificate URLs Section 5 of [RFC6066] instead of full certificates for clients. When applications perform TLS client authentication via DNS-Based Authentication of Named Entities (DANE) TLSA records then the [I-D.ietf-dance-tls-clientid] specification may be used to reduce the packets on the wire. Note: The term "TLSA" does not stand for anything; it is just the name of the RRtype, as explained in [RFC6698].
- \* Use certificate compression as defined in [RFC8879].
- \* Use alternative certificate formats, where possible, such as raw public keys [RFC7250] or CBOR-encoded certificates [I-D.ietf-cose-cbor-encoded-cert].

The use of certificate handles is a form of caching or compressing certificates as well.

Although the TLS specification does not explicitly prohibit a server from including trust anchors in the Certificate message - and some implementations do - trust anchors SHOULD NOT be transmitted in this way. Trust anchors are intended to be provisioned through out-of-band mechanisms, and any trust anchor included in the TLS Certificate message cannot be assumed trustworthy by the client. Including them therefore serves no functional purpose and unnecessarily consumes bandwidth.

However, due to limited or asymmetric knowledge between client and server, omitting trust anchors entirely is not always straightforward. Several scenarios highlight this challenge:

- \* Pinned Server Certificates: In many device-to-cloud deployments (see Section 2.2 of [RFC7452]), clients pin a specific server certificate. If the client has pinned the server certificate, retransmitting it is unnecessary - but the server cannot reliably determine this.
- \* Root Key Transitions: During root key rollover events (see Section 4.4 of [RFC4210]), new trust anchors may not yet be fully distributed across all devices. This is especially relevant in device-to-device communication Section 2.1 of [RFC7452]), where server roles are determined dynamically and trust anchor distribution may be inconsistent.
- \* Non-Root Trust Anchors: In some deployments, the client's trust anchor may be an intermediate CA rather than a root certificate. The server, lacking knowledge of the client's trust store, cannot always select a certificate chain that aligns with the client's trust anchor. To mitigate this, the client MAY include the Trusted CA Indication extension (see Section 6 of [RFC6066]) in its ClientHello to signal the set of trust anchors it supports.

[RFC4210] assumes the presence of a shared directory service for certificate retrieval. In constrained or isolated IoT environments, this assumption does not hold. Trust anchors are often distributed via firmware updates or fetched periodically using certificate management protocols, such as EST (e.g., the /cacerts endpoint).

To support transitional trust states during trust anchor updates, devices MUST handle both:

- \* newWithOld: a certificate where the new trust anchor is signed by the old one, enabling communication with peers that have not yet received the update.
- \* oldWithNew: a certificate where the old trust anchor is signed by the new one, enabling verification of peers that still rely on the older anchor.

These certificates may be presented as an unordered set, and devices may not be able to distinguish their roles without additional metadata.

A complication arises when the client's trust anchor is not a widely trusted root CA. In that case, the server cannot determine in advance which trust anchors the client has. To address this, the client MAY include the Trusted CA Indication extension [RFC6066] in its ClientHello to signal the set of trust anchors it supports, allowing the server to select an appropriate certificate chain.

Whether to utilize any of the above extensions or a combination of them depends on the anticipated deployment environment, the availability of code, and the constraints imposed by already deployed infrastructure (e.g., CA infrastructure, tool support).

## 20. Ciphersuites

According to Section 4.5.3 of [RFC9147], the use of AES-CCM with 8-octet authentication tags (CCM\_8) is considered unsuitable for general use with DTLS. This is because it has low integrity limits (i.e., high sensitivity to forgeries) which makes endpoints that negotiate ciphersuites based on such AEAD vulnerable to a trivial DoS attack. See also Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of [I-D.irtf-cfrg-aead-limits] for further discussion on this topic, as well as references to the analysis supporting these conclusions.

Specifically, [RFC9147] warns that:

```
> TLS_AES_128_CCM_8_SHA256 MUST NOT be used in DTLS without additional
> safeguards against forgery. Implementations MUST set usage limits for
> AEAD_AES_128_CCM_8 based on an understanding of any additional forgery
> protections that are used.
```

Since all the ciphersuites required by [RFC7925] and [CoAP] rely on CCM\_8, there is no alternate ciphersuite available for applications that aim to eliminate the security and availability threats related to CCM\_8 while retaining interoperability with the larger ecosystem.

In order to ameliorate the situation, it is RECOMMENDED that implementations support the following two ciphersuites for TLS 1.3:

```
* TLS_AES_128_GCM_SHA256
* TLS_AES_128_CCM
```

and offer them as their first choice. These ciphersuites provide confidentiality and integrity limits that are considered acceptable in the most general settings. For the details on the exact bounds of

both ciphersuites see Section 4.5.3 of [RFC9147]. Note that the GCM-based ciphersuite offers superior interoperability with cloud services at the cost of a slight increase in the wire and peak RAM footprints.

When the GCM-based ciphersuite is used with TLS 1.2, the recommendations in Section 7.2.1 of [RFC9325] related to deterministic nonce generation apply. In addition, the integrity limits on key usage detailed in Section 4.4 of [RFC9325] also apply.

Table 1 summarizes the recommendations regarding ciphersuites:

Ciphersuite	MTI Requirement
TLS_AES_128_CCM_8_SHA256	MUST-
TLS_AES_128_CCM	SHOULD+
TLS_AES_128_GCM_SHA256	SHOULD+

Table 1: TLS 1.3 Ciphersuite Requirements

## 21. Fault Attacks on Deterministic Signature Schemes

A number of passive side-channel attacks as well as active fault-injection attacks (e.g., [Ambrose2017]) have been demonstrated to be successful in allowing a malicious third party to gain information about the signing key if a fully deterministic signature scheme (e.g., ECDSA [RFC6979] or EdDSA [RFC8032]) is used.

Most of these attacks assume physical access to the device and are therefore especially relevant to smart cards as well as IoT deployments with poor or non-existent physical security.

In this security model, it is recommended to combine both randomness and determinism, for example, as described in [I-D.irtf-cfrg-det-sigs-with-noise].

## 22. Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) Considerations

The recommendations and ciphersuites in this profile are based on classical cryptography and are not quantum-resistant.

As detailed in [I-D.ietf-pquip-pqc-engineers], the IETF is actively working to address the challenges of adopting PQC in various protocols, including TLS. The document highlights key aspects

engineers must consider, such as algorithm selection, performance impacts, and deployment strategies. It emphasizes the importance of gradual integration of PQC to ensure secure communication while accounting for the increased computational, memory, and bandwidth requirements of PQC algorithms. These challenges are especially relevant in the context of IoT, where device constraints limit the adoption of larger key sizes and more complex cryptographic operations [PQC-PERF]. Besides, any choice need to carefully evaluate the associated energy requirements [PQC-ENERGY].

The work of incorporating PQC into TLS [I-D.ietf-uta-pqc-app] [I-D.ietf-pquip-pqc-hsm-constrained] is still ongoing, with key exchange message sizes increasing due to larger public keys. These larger keys demand more flash storage and higher RAM usage, presenting significant obstacles for resource-constrained IoT devices. The transition from classical cryptographic algorithms to PQC will be a significant challenge for constrained IoT devices, requiring careful planning to select hardware suitable for the task considering the lifetime of an IoT product.

### 23. Privacy Considerations

The privacy considerations in Section 22 of [RFC7925] largely continue to apply. However, compared to TLS 1.2 and DTLS 1.2, TLS 1.3 and DTLS 1.3 encrypt a larger portion of the handshake, which reduces the amount of identity and credential metadata observable on the wire by passive attackers. Extensions, such as the encrypted ClientHello, further increase privacy protection.

Certificate fields can expose stable device identifiers and other metadata. In particular, IDevIDs and LDevIDs may reveal manufacturer identity, device serial numbers, or other information to peers. Protection against passive observers is, however, substantially improved since certificates are not transmitted in the clear in TLS 1.3 and DTLS 1.3.

Where privacy is a deployment requirement, implementations and PKI profiles should include only the minimum identity information needed for authorization and interoperability.

When Connection IDs are used with DTLS 1.3, CID negotiation in post-handshake messages is encrypted and integrity protected. In addition, record sequence numbers are encrypted. Compared to DTLS 1.2 CID, this makes tracking by on-path adversaries more difficult and improves privacy in multi-home and mobile deployments (Section 11 of [RFC9147]).

## 24. Security Considerations

This entire document is about security.

## 25. IANA Considerations

This document makes no requests to IANA.

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