



New York State Information Technology Standard	No: NYS-S15-001
IT Standard: Patch Management	Updated: 09/11/2018
	Issued By: NYS Office of Information Technology Services Owner: Chief Information Security Office

1.0 Purpose and Benefits

Security patch management (patch management) is a practice designed to proactively prevent the exploitation of IT vulnerabilities that exist within an organization. By applying security related software or firmware updates (patches) to applicable IT systems, the expected result is reduced time and money spent dealing with exploits by reducing or eliminating the related vulnerability.

2.0 Authority

Section 103(10) of the State Technology Law provides the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) with the authority to establish statewide technology policies, including technology and security standards. Section 2 of Executive Order No. 117 provides the State Chief Information Officer with the authority to oversee, direct and coordinate the establishment of information technology policies, protocols and standards for State government, including hardware, software, security and business re-engineering. Details regarding this authority can be found in NYS ITS Policy, [NYS-P08-002 Authority to Establish State Enterprise Information Technology \(IT\) Policy, Standards and Guidelines](#).

3.0 Scope

This standard applies to all “State Government” entities as defined in Executive Order 117 or “State Agencies” as defined in Section 101 of the State Technology Law (“State Entities”), their employees, and all others, including third parties (such as local governments, consultants, vendors, and contractors), that use or access any ITS

Information Technology Resource for which ITS has administrative responsibility, including systems managed or hosted by third parties on behalf of the ITS. Where a conflict exists between this standard and a State Entity's standard, the more restrictive standard will take precedence.

This standard is applicable to all systems owned and/or operated by, or on behalf of, NYS.

This standard relates specifically to vulnerabilities that can be addressed by a software or firmware update (patch) and applies to all software used on NYS systems. The [NYS Vulnerability Scanning Standard](#) should be followed for requirements on addressing non-patched vulnerabilities.

4.0 Information Statement

1. State entities (SE) must assign an individual or group within IT operations to be responsible for patch management.
2. If patch management is outsourced, service level agreements must be in place that address the requirements of this standard and outline responsibilities for patching. If patching is the responsibility of the third party, SEs must verify that the patches have been applied.
3. A process must be in place to manage patches. This process must include the following:
 - monitoring security sources ([Appendix A](#)) for vulnerabilities, patch and non-patch remediation, and emerging threats;
 - overseeing patch distribution, including verifying that a change control procedure is being followed;
 - testing for stability and deploying patches; and
 - using an automated centralized patch management distribution tool, whenever technically feasible, which:
 - maintains a database of patches;
 - deploys patches to endpoints; and
 - verifies installation of patches.
4. Appropriate separation of duties must exist so that the individual(s) verifying patch distribution is not the same individual(s) who is distributing the patches.
5. As per the [NYS Information Security Policy](#), all SEs must maintain an inventory of hardware and software assets. Patch management must incorporate all of the SEs installed IT assets.

6. Patch management must be prioritized based on the severity of the vulnerability the patch addresses. In most cases, severity ratings are based on the Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS). A CVSS score of 7-10 is considered a high impact vulnerability, a CVSS score of 4-6.9 is considered a moderate impact vulnerability and a CVSS of 0-3.9 is considered a low impact vulnerability.
7. Vulnerability advisories from the NYS ITS Chief Information Security Office (CISO) Cyber Security Operations Center (CSOC) are based on a NYS specific analysis of impact and must be considered high impact vulnerabilities, regardless of CVSS score.
8. To the extent possible, the patching process must follow the timeline contained in the table below:

Impact/Severity	Patch Initiated	Patch Completed
High	Within 24 hours of patch release	Within 1 week of patch release
Medium	Within 1 week of patch release	Within 1 month of patch release
Low	Within 1 month of patch release	Within 2 months of patch release, unless ISO determines this to be an insignificant risk to the environment

9. If patching cannot be completed in the timeframe listed in the table above, compensating controls must be put in place within the timeframes above and the [exception process](#) must be followed.
10. If a patch requires a reboot for installation, the reboot must occur within the timeframes outlined above.

5.0 Compliance

This standard shall take effect upon publication. Compliance is expected with all enterprise policies and standards. ITS may amend its policies and standards at any time; compliance with amended policies and standards is expected.

If compliance with this standard is not feasible or technically possible, or if deviation from this policy is necessary to support a business function, State Entities shall request an exception through the Chief Information Security Office [exception process](#).

6.0 Definitions of Key Terms

Except for terms defined in this policy, all terms shall have the meanings found in <http://www.its.ny.gov/glossary>.

7.0 Contact Information

Submit all inquiries and requests for future enhancements to the policy owner at:

Chief Information Security Office
Reference: NYS-S15-001
NYS Office of Information Technology Services
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 5
Albany, NY 12242
Telephone: (518) 242-5200
Email: EISO@its.ny.gov

Statewide technology policies, standards, and guidelines may be found at the following website: <http://www.its.ny.gov/tables/technologypolicyindex>

8.0 Revision History

This standard shall be subject to periodic review to ensure relevancy.

Date	Description of Change	Reviewer
01/16/2015	Original Standard Release	Deborah A. Snyder, Deputy Chief Information Security Officer
02/25/2017	Update to Scope, contact information and rebranding	Deborah A. Snyder, Deputy Chief Information Security Officer
09/11/2018	Scheduled review – minor changes to Authority, Scope, and title of office	Deborah A. Snyder, Chief Information Security Officer

9.0 Related Documents

[National Institute of Standards and Technology, Special Publication 800-40, Guide to Enterprise Patch Management Technologies](#)

[Common Vulnerability Scoring System](#)

[National Vulnerability Database Vulnerability Severity Rankings](#)

[NYS Vulnerability Scanning Standard](#)

Appendix A: SAMPLE SECURITY SOURCES FOR VULNERABILITY/PATCH/THREAT INFORMATION

- NYS Cyber Security Operations Center (includes feeds from US-CERT, NCCIC, and MS-ISAC)
- Vendor websites/notification lists
- [BugTraq](#)
- Vulnerability Scanners
- Penetration Tests
- [National Vulnerability Database](#)