

Windows Defender Application Control: Initialization

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This work is part of the *Windows Insight* series. This series aims to assist efforts on analysing inner working principles, functionalities, and properties of the Microsoft Windows operating system. For general inquiries contact Aleksandar Milenkoski (amilenkoski@ernw.de) or Dominik Phillips (dphillips@ernw.de). For inquiries on this work contact the corresponding author (\square).

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Required Reading

In addition to referenced work, related work focussing on Device Guard Image Integrity, part of the *Windows Insight* series, are relevant for understanding concepts and terms mentioned in this document.

Technology Domain

The operating system in focus is Windows 10, build 1607, 64-bit, long-term servicing branch (LTSB).

1 Introduction

This section describes the process for initializing Windows Defender Application Control (WDAC) performed by the Windows loader and the kernel when Windows 10 is booted (see Figure 1).

Legend:		
► └▶	transfers execution control to invocation sequence of relevant functions	
	Windows loader	Windows kernel
		➡ MiReloadBootLoadedDrivers
	└ → OslpLoadAllModules	 SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy
	OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock	

Figure 1: WDAC initialization

Windows loader The *OslPrepareTarget* function implemented as part of the Windows loader performs WDAC initialization activities. These activites are performed by the functions: *OslpProcessSIPolicy*, *OslpLoadAllModules*, and *OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock*. These functions are invoked by *OslPrepareTarget*.

The OslpProcessSIPolicy function initializes and loads the WDAC policy in the context of the Windows loader. This involves verifying the integrity of the WDAC policy, if signed. Once OslpProcessSIPolicy is finished executing, the WDAC policy may be used for image verification by the Windows loader. Among other images, the Windows loader verifies the integrity of the *ci.dll* file.

The functions OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock and OslpLoadAllModules populate with WDAC initialization parameters the CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock (see Figure 17) and LoadOrderListHead fields ultimately referenced by the _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK structure ([RSI12], Chapter 13). The _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK structure is ultimately passed to the Windows kernel at execution transfer between the Windows loader and the kernel. Once _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK is populated with WDAC initialization parameters, the Windows loader transfers the execution control to the Windows kernel. To this end, it executes the OslArchTransferToKernel function.

Windows kernel Once the Windows loader has transferred the execution control to the kernel, it uses the populated _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK structure to initialize WDAC in the context of the kernel. The kernel is initialized in two phases: Phase 0 and Phase 1 ([RSI12], Chapter 13). The kernel invokes in Phase 0 the *MiReload-BootLoadedDrivers* function. This function allocates a memory region in the virtual address space assigned to the kernel for the *ci.dll* file. The starting address of this space is referred to as the image base address of *ci.dll*.

Once Phase 0 is finished, the kernel starts Phase 1. In this phase, the kernel continues initializing WDAC. This involves for example, invoking the *SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy* function, which initializes the WDAC policy. Once *SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy* is finished executing, the WDAC policy may be used for image verification by the Windows kernel.

2 Windows Loader: OslpProcessSIPolicy

OslpProcessSIPolicy loads and processes the *SIPolicy.p7b* file, that is, the WDAC policy. If the WDAC policy is signed, *OslpProcessSIPolicy* verifies the integrity of the policy. This section discusses this verification process. The *SIPolicy.p7b* is in the (Public Key Cryptography Standards) PKCS#7 file format.¹ This format allows for specifying file-specific cryptographic data, such as digital signatures. Figure 2 depicts the Abstract Syntax Notation One (ASN.1) format of a digitally signed PKCS#7 file. The *SignedData* data structure contains the overall data content, including related cryptographic data. This section focusses on the *digestAlgorithms, contentInfo, certificates*, and *signerInfos* fields of *SignedData*.

```
SignedData ::= SEQUENCE {
    version: Version,
    digestAlgorithms: DigestAlgorithmIdentifiers,
    contentInfo: ContentInfo,
    certificates:
       [0] ExtendedCertificatesAndCertificates,
       crls:
       [1] CertificateRevocationLists,
       signerInfos: SignerInfos
}
```

Figure 2: ASN.1 format of a PKCS#7 file

contentInfo stores the user-generated file rules and policy rule options in binary format. This work refers to these file rules and policy rule options as WDAC content. *OslpProcessSIPolicy* verifies the integrity of the WDAC content.

¹https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2315 [Retrieved: 13/9/2018]

certificates stores the certificate chain used to sign WDAC content. The certificates are stored in the X.509 format.

signerInfos stores values that describe the certificate of the signer of the WDAC content, the hash value of the WDAC content, and the signed hash of the WDAC content. Some fields referenced by signerInfos are:

- issuerAndSerialNumber, which stores the issuer and the serial number of the signing certificate;
- encryptedDigest, which stores the signed hash of the WDAC content;
- *digestAlgorithm*, which stores the hash algorithm used to calculate the hash value of the WDAC content; and
- *authenticatedAttributes*, which stores, among other things, the hash value of the WDAC content.

Figure 3 depicts a portion of a signed WDAC policy as viewed with the *openssl* utility.



Figure 3: Portion of a signed WDAC policy

OslpProcessSIPolicy first invokes the BlSIPolicyCheckPolicyOnDevice function, which invokes BlSIPolicyReadPolicies. BlSIPolicyReadPolicies loads SIPolicy.p7b and returns the size and ASN.1 formatted WDAC policy. The former is stored at offset 0x30, and the latter at 0x28 of the rsp register (see Figure 4).

WDAC is considered disabled if no WDAC policy is returned by *BlSIPolicyReadPolicies*. If a WDAC policy is returned, WDAC is considered enabled. Only users with administrative privileges can delete a WDAC policy and therefore, disable WDAC. When *BlSIPolicyReadPolicies* is finished executing, *BlSIPolicyCheckPolicyOnDevice* invokes *BlSIPolicyParsePolicyData*. This function processes the loaded WDAC policy.

Before *BlSIPolicyParsePolicyData* processes the WDAC policy, it verifies its integrity. The *MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode DataLMode* function initiates the verification of the WDAC policy. *MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode* receives as parameters the size of the WDAC policy and the ASN.1 formatted WDAC policy. Figure 5 depicts the invocation of *MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode*. The integrity verification of the WDAC policy can be structured into two phases. In the first phase, the certificate of the signer of the WDAC policy is verified. In the second phase, the integrity of the WDAC policy itself is verified.

MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode first invokes the *MinCryptVerifyCertificateWithRootInfo* function. *MinCryptVerifyCertificateWithRootInfo* verifies the certificate of the signer of the WDAC policy signer certificate against its root certificate. The verified certificate is stored in the certificates field of the *SignedData* structure. *MinCryptVerifyCertificateWithRootInfo* uses the root certificates embedded in the Windows loader, in the *RootTable* structure. The fact that certificates embedded in the Windows loader are used for verifying the certificate used to sign the WDAC policy shows that the root of trust for verifying the integrity of the WDAC policy is the Windows loader itself.

000000000`001a6dc8	3 00	000	903													
kd> db poi(poi(@	rsp +	0x	28)) L!	903											
fffff802`26b7fee0	30	82	08	ff	06	09	2a	86-48	86	f7	0d	01	07	02	aΘ	0*.H
fffff802`26b7fef6	82	08	fØ	30	82	08	ec	02-01	01	31	0f	30	0d	06	09	01.
fffff802`26b7ff00	60	86	48	01	65	03	04	02-01	05	00	30	82	01	67	06	`.H.e
fffff802`26b7ff10	09	2b	06	01	04	01	82	37-4f	01	a0	82	01	58	04	82	.+70
[]																
fffff802`26b80070	00	00	03	00	00	00	a0	82-05	84	30	82	05	80	30	82	
fffff802`26b80080	04	68	a0	03	02	01	02	02-13	17	00	00	00	02	ae	2b	.h
fffff802`26b80090	61	ea	eØ	67	96	ea	00	00-00	00	00	02	30	0d	06	09	ag
fffff802`26b800a0) 2a	86	48	86	f7	0d	01	01-0b	05	00	30	52	31	18	30	*.H
fffff802`26b800b0	9 16	06	0a	09	92	26	89	93-f2	2c	64	01	19	16	08	69	&,d.
fffff802`26b800c0) 6e	74	65	72	6e	61	6c	31-14	30	12	06	θa	09	92	26	nternal1.0.
fffff802`26b800d0	89	93	f2	2c	64	01	19	16-04	74	65	73	74	31	20	30	,dtes
fffff802`26b800e0) 1e	06	03	55	04	03	13	17-74	65	73	74	2d	57	49	4e	Utest
fffff802`26b800f0	2 d	39	37	56	4f	45	35	41-34	4f	38	4c	2d	43	41	30	-97V0E5A408L
fffff802`26b80100) le	17	0d	31	38	30	38	30-33	31	34	30	36	32	37	5a	180803140
fffff802`26b80110	9 17	0d	31	39	30	38	30	33-31	34	30	36	32	37	5a	30	1908031406
fffff802`26b80120) 1c	31	1a	30	18	06	03	55-04	03	13	11	74	65	73	74	.1.0U
fffff802`26b80130	44	47	53	69	67	6e	69	6e-67	43	65	72	74	30	82	01	DGSigningCer
[]																

Figure 4: Loaded SIPolicy.p7b



Figure 5: Invocation of MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode

It is important to emphasize that in the scenario, where the WDAC policy is signed with a certificate that cannot be verified against a root certificate stored in *RootTable*, the certificate is considered valid without verification against an alternative root certificate.

Once *MinCryptVerifyCertificateWithRootInfo* is finished executing, the WDAC policy, that is, the WDAC content, is verified. To this end, *MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode* first invokes the *MinCryptHashMemory* function. *Min-CryptHashMemory* computes the hash value of the WDAC content, which stored in the *contentInfo* field of the *SignedData* structure. The algorithm used to calculate the hash value of the WDAC content is stored in *digestAl-gorithms*.

MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode then invokes the *I_MinCryptVerifySignerAuthenticatedAttributes* function. This function verifies the computed hash value against the hash value stored in *authenticatedAttributes*. Finally, *MinCryptVerifySignedDataLMode* invokes *MinCryptVerifySignedHash* in order to verify the signed hash of the WDAC content stored in *encryptedDigest*. To this end, it uses the previously verified signer certificate and the verified computed hash value. Only if the verifications performed by *I_MinCryptVerifySignedHash* are successful, the WDAC content is considered authentic.

3 Windows Loader: OslpLoadAllModules

OslpLoadAllModules performs image loading and integrity verification activities. OslpLoadAllModules invokes OslLoadDrivers for loading driver executables, and OslLoadImage for loading any other type of image. The Windows loader loads the *ci.dll* library file in the LoadImports function, invoked by OslLoadImage. All of the previously mentioned functions ultimately invoke BlImgLoadPEImageEx, which performs image loading and integrity verification. Figure 6 depicts the BlImgLoadPEImageEx function loading *ci.dll* and its image base address (*fffff803'99b1e000*).

winload!BlImg	LoadPEImageEx:
00000000°007e	b9e4 488bc4 mov rax,rsp
kd> r	
[]	
r8=fffff80397	feebf0 r9=0000000001a6810 r10=0000000000000000
[]	
kd> du @r8	
fffff803`97fe	ebf0 "\Windows\system32\CI.dll"
kd> dps 00000	000001a6810 L1
00000000`001a	6810 fffff803`99b1e000
kd> !dh -e ff	fff803`99b1e000
IMAGE_EXPORT	_DIRECTORY fffff80399ba3000 (size: 00000130)
Name: CI.dll	
Characteristi	cs: 00000000 Ordinal base: 1.
Number of Fur	ctions: 11. Number of names: 8. EAT: fffff80399ba3028.
ordinal hi	nt target name
4	0 FFFFF80399B41650 CiCheckSignedFile
5	1 FFFFF80399B41700 CiFindPageHashesInCatalog
6	2 FFFFF80399B41780 C1FindPageHashesInSignedFile
7	3 FFFFF80399B41790 CiFreePolicyInfo
8	4 FFFFF80399B41520 CiGetPEInformation
9	5 FFFFF80399B40110 CiInitialize
10	6 FFFFF80399B4C3D0 CiValidateFileObject
11	7 FFFFF80399B415D0 CiVerifyHashInCatalog
1	FFFFF80399B4C9E0 [NONAME]
2	FFFFF80399B51AA0 [NONAME]
3	FFFFF80399B51C80 [NONAME]

Figure 6: The image base address of ci.dll

Once *ci.dll* is loaded, its image base address is stored in a linked list referenced by the *LoadOrderListHead* variable. This variable is stored in the *LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK* structure. Figure 7 depicts a portion of *__LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK* and the *LoadOrderListHead* variable referencing the image base address of *ci.dll*.

kd> dps poi(winloa []	d!OslLoaderBlock)	
fffff801`ec894fd0	fffff801`ec94a6b0	
[]		
kd> dl fffff801`ec	94a6b0	
[]		
fffff801`ec897a70	00000000`00000000	0000000`0000000
fffff801`ec898a60	fffff801`ec899a40	fffff801`ec897a60
fffff801`ec898a70	00000000,00000000	00000000,00000000
[]		
kd> dps fffff801`e	c899a40 + 0x30 L1	
fffff801`ec899a70	fffff803`99b1e000	

Figure 7: A portion of _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK and LoadOrderListHead

Once the Windows loader has transferred execution control to the kernel, it uses the populated *LoadOrderList-Head* variable to pass the image base address of *ci.dll* (*fffff803'99b1e000*) to the Windows kernel for allocation of *ci.dll* in kernel's context.

4 Windows Loader: OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock

OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock first populates the *LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION* structure with WDAC initialization parameters. These parameters are used by the kernel to further initialize WDAC. A reference to

_LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION and its size are stored in the _LOADER_PARAMETER_EXTENSION structure, in the CodeIntegrityLoaderBlockSize and the CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock, respectively (see Figure 8). The _LOADER_PARAMETER_EXTENSION structure is referenced by the Extension variable. This variable is stored in _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK, at offset 0xF0 (see Figure 8).

typedef struct _LOADER_PARAMETER_BL	.OCK {		
[]			
PLOADER PARAMETER EXTENSION	Extension;	11	0xF0
[]			
} LOADER PARAMETER BLOCK, * PLOADER	PARAMETER BLOCK		
typedef struct _LOADER_PARAMETER_EX	TENSION {		
[]			
PLOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION	CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock;	- 77	0x9D8
ULONG32	CodeIntegrityLoaderBlockSize;	- 77	0×9E0
[]			
<pre>} LOADER_PARAMETER_EXTENSION, * PLC</pre>	DADER_PARAMETER_EXTENSION;		
typedef struct _LOADER_PARAMETER_CI	_EXTENSION {		
1]			
UINT8 Cod	leIntegrityPolicyHash[32];	- / /	0x0020
ULONG32 Cod	leIntegrityPolicyType	- 77	0x1338
ULONG32 Cod	leIntegrityPolicySize	- 77	0x133c
UINT8 Cod	<pre>leIntegrityPolicy[CodeIntegrityPolicySize]</pre>	- 77	0x1340
[]			
<pre>} LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION, *</pre>	PLOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION;		

Figure 8: Relevant _LOADER_PARAMETER_* structures

The *OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock* function populates *_LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION* with WDAC initialization parameters, such as:

- CodeIntegrityPolicyHash: This parameter stores the hash value of the WDAC content. This hash is calculated in the OslpCalculateCodeIntegrityPolicyHash function, invoked by OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock;
- CodeIntegrityPolicySize: This parameter stores the size of the WDAC content; and
- CodeIntegrityPolicy: This parameter stores the WDAC content extracted from contentInfo.

After OslBuildCodeIntegrityLoaderBlock has finished executing, the Windows loader transfers the execution control to the kernel. The kernel uses the populated _LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION structure, ultimately referenced by _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK to further initialize WDAC.

5 Windows Kernel: MiReloadBootLoadedDrivers

After execution control has been transferred to the kernel, it invokes the *InitBootProcessor* function. This function is responsible for conducting relevant tasks, for example, initializing memory management functionalities. *InitBootProcessor* ultimately invokes the memory management routine *MmInitSystem*. This routine, in turn, invokes *MiReloadBootLoadedDrivers*. This function allocates *ci.dll* in the context of the kernel based on the image base address of *ci.dll* (see, for example, *ffff803'99b1e000* in Figure 6), passed by the Windows loader.

MiReloadBootLoadedDrivers invokes the *MiUpdateThunks* function, which allocates *ci.dll* in the context of the kernel. Figure 9 depicts the invocation of *MiUpdateThunks*. The second parameter of *MiUpdateThunks* (*rdx* in Figure 9) is the image base address of *ci.dll* passed by the Windows loader, whereas the third (*r8* and *ffff808*'c5fd0000 in Figure 9) is an address in the context of the kernel, where *ci.dll* is to be allocated.

Once *ci.dll* is allocated in the kernel's context, the kernel invokes the *SepInitializeCodeIntegrity* function. This function initializes the interface exposed by *ci.dll*, after which the kernel can use code integrity functionalities.

It is important to emphasize that the integrity of *ci.dll* is verified by the Windows loader. This shows that the root of trust for verifying the integrity of *ci.dll* is the Windows loader.

```
nt!MiUpdateThunks:
fffff803`9961e8c0 48895c2408
                                         qword ptr [rsp+8],rbx
                                 mov
kd> r
rdx=fffff80399b1e000 rsi=fffff80399b1e000 rdi=00000000000
 r8=fffff808c5fd0000 r9=00000000000000 r10=00000000000000000
kd> lm v m CI
                                      module name
start
                  end
fffff808`c5fd0000 fffff808`c6070000 CI
                                                 (deferred)
   Image path: CI.dll
   Image name: CI.dll
   Timestamp:
                      Tue Mar 6 06:25:49 2018 (5A9E265D)
   CheckSum:
                      0009D5DB
   ImageSize:
                      0000000
                      10.0.14393.2155
   File version:
                      10.0.14393.2155
   Product version:
                     0 (Mask 3F)
   File flags:
                      40004 NT Win32
   File OS:
                     3.7 Driver
   File type:
   File date:
                             0.000
    Translations:
                     0409.04b0
    Information from resource tables:
       CompanyName:
                         Microsoft Corporation
       ProductName:
                         Microsoft® Windows® Operating System
       InternalName:
                          ci.dll
       OriginalFilename: ci.dll
       ProductVersion: 10.0.14393.2155
                          10.0.14393.2155 (rs1_release_1.180305-1842)
       FileVersion:
       FileDescription:
                         Code Integrity Module
       LegalCopyright: © Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
```

Figure 9: Relocated ci.dll file

6 Windows Kernel: SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy

After *ci.dll* has been allocated in the kernel's context and the interface exposed by it is available to the kernel, the kernel initializes the WDAC policy. The *SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy* function initializes the WDAC policy. This involves storage of the WDAC policy in the context of the kernel.

SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy receives as parameter the _LOADER_PARAMETER_BLOCK structure, populated and passed by the Windows loader (*KeLoaderBlock* in Figure 10). This structure ultimately references_LOADER_-PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION (CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock in Figure 10), which, among other things, stores CodeIntegrityPolicy and CodeIntegrityPolicyHash. CodeIntegrityPolicy stores the WDAC content itself.

SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy(KeLoaderBlock) [...] Extension = *(LOADER PARAMETER EXTENSION *)(KeLoaderBlock + 0xF0); [...] CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock = *(_LOADER_PARAMETER_CI_EXTENSION *)(Extension + 0x9D8) [...] if (CiInitializePolicy) { CiInitializePolicy(CodeIntegrityLoaderBlock, [...]); [...] [...] 3



SeCodeIntegrityInitializePolicy invokes the CiInitializePolicy function. This function receives the _LOADER_PA-RAMETER_CI_EXTENSION structure as parameter. CiInitializePolicy populates the ci.dll variables g_SiPolicyHandles and g_SiPolicyHash with the values stored in the CodeIntegrityPolicy and CodeIntegrityPolicyHash variables, respectively. An analysis of the WDAC initialization functionalities showed that the hash value stored in CodeIntegrityPolicyHash is not used for verifying the integrity of the WDAC content stored in CodeIntegrityPolicy.

Figure 11 depicts a portion of a populated *g_SiPolicyHandles* variable. Once *g_SiPolicyHandles* is populated, the Windows kernel can use the WDAC content stored in *g_SiPolicyHandles* for verification purposes. The description of each of the fields of *g_SiPolicyHandles* is out of the scope of this work.

It is important to emphasize that the integrity of the WDAC content is verified by the Windows loader. This shows that the root of trust for verifying the integrity of the WDAC content is the Windows loader.

: nt! GUID
: nt!_GUID
: Uint4B
: Int4B
: Ptr64 Void

Figure 11: g_SiPolicyHandles

References

[RSI12] Mark E. Russinovich, David A. Solomon, and Alex Ionescu. *Windows Internals, Part 2*. 2012. Microsoft Press.