

Routing Overview

This chapter describes how routing behaves within the ASA.

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Path determination

Routing protocols use metrics to evaluate what path will be the best for a packet to travel. A metric is a standard of measurement, such as path bandwidth, that is used by routing algorithms to determine the optimal path to a destination. To aid the process of path determination, routing algorithms initialize and maintain routing tables, which include route information. Route information varies depending on the routing algorithm used.

Path determination process

Routing algorithms fill routing tables with a variety of information. Destination or next hop associations tell a router that a particular destination can be reached optimally by sending the packet to a particular router representing the next hop on the way to the final destination. When a router receives an incoming packet, it checks the destination address and attempts to associate this address with a next hop.

Routing tables also can include other information, such as data about the desirability of a path. Routers compare metrics to determine optimal routes, and these metrics differ depending on the design of the routing algorithm used.

Routers communicate with one another and maintain their routing tables through the transmission of a variety of messages. The routing update message is one such message that generally consists of all or a portion of a routing table. By analyzing routing updates from all other routers, a router can build a detailed picture of network topology. A link-state advertisement, another example of a message sent between routers, informs other routers of the state of the sender links. Link information also can be used to build a complete picture of network topology to enable routers to determine optimal routes to network destinations.

Note Asymmetric routing is only supported for Active/Active failover in multiple context mode.

Supported route types

There are several route types that a router can use. The ASA uses the following route types:

- Static Versus Dynamic
- Single-Path Versus Multipath
- Flat Versus Hierarchical
- Link-State Versus Distance Vector

Static versus dynamic routing algorithms

Static routing algorithms are actually table mappings established by the network administrator. These mappings do not change unless the network administrator alters them. Algorithms that use static routes are simple to design and work well in environments where network traffic is relatively predictable and where network design is relatively simple.

Dynamic routing algorithms

Because static routing systems cannot react to network changes, they generally are considered unsuitable for large, constantly changing networks. Most of the dominant routing algorithms are dynamic routing algorithms, which adjust to changing network circumstances by analyzing incoming routing update messages. If the message indicates that a network change has occurred, the routing software recalculates routes and sends out new routing update messages. These messages permeate the network, stimulating routers to rerun their algorithms and change their routing tables accordingly.

Dynamic routing algorithms can be supplemented with static routes where appropriate. A router of last resort (a default route for a router to which all unrouteable packets are sent), for example, can be designated to act as a repository for all unrouteable packets, ensuring that all messages are at least handled in some way.

Single-path versus multipath

Some sophisticated routing protocols support multiple paths to the same destination. Unlike single-path algorithms, these multipath algorithms permit traffic multiplexing over multiple lines. The advantages of multipath algorithms are substantially better throughput and reliability, which is generally called load sharing.

Flat versus hierarchical routing

Some routing algorithms operate in a flat space, while others use routing hierarchies.

In a flat routing system, the routers are peers of all others. In a hierarchical routing system, some routers form what amounts to a routing backbone. Packets from non-backbone routers travel to the backbone routers, where

they are sent through the backbone until they reach the general area of the destination. At this point, they travel from the last backbone router through one or more non-backbone routers to the final destination.

Routing systems often designate logical groups of nodes, called domains, autonomous systems, or areas.

In hierarchical systems, some routers in a domain can communicate with routers in other domains, while others can communicate only with routers within their domain. In very large networks, additional hierarchical levels may exist, with routers at the highest hierarchical level forming the routing backbone.

The primary advantage of hierarchical routing is that it mimics the organization of most companies and therefore supports their traffic patterns well. Most network communication occurs within small company groups (domains). Because intradomain routers need to know only about other routers within their domain, their routing algorithms can be simplified, and, depending on the routing algorithm being used, routing update traffic can be reduced accordingly.

Link-state versus distance vector

Link-state algorithms (also known as shortest path first algorithms) flood routing information to all nodes in the internetwork. Each router, however, sends only the portion of the routing table that describes the state of its own links. In link-state algorithms, each router builds a picture of the entire network in its routing tables.

Distance vector algorithms (also known as Bellman-Ford algorithms) call for each router to send all or some portion of its routing table, but only to its neighbors. In essence, link-state algorithms send small updates everywhere, while distance vector algorithms send larger updates only to neighboring routers. Distance vector algorithms know only about their neighbors. Typically, link-state algorithms are used in conjunction with OSPF routing protocols.

Supported internet protocols for routing

The ASA supports several internet protocols for routing. Each protocol is briefly described in this section.

The device supports these internet routing protocols:

- **Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing Protocol (EIGRP)**

  EIGRP is a Cisco proprietary protocol that provides compatibility and seamless interoperation with IGRP routers. An automatic-redistribution mechanism allows IGRP routes to be imported into Enhanced IGRP, and vice versa, so it is possible to add Enhanced IGRP gradually into an existing IGRP network.

- **Open Shortest Path First (OSPF)**

  OSPF is a routing protocol developed for Internet Protocol (IP) networks by the interior gateway protocol (IGP) working group of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). OSPF uses a link-state algorithm to build and calculate the shortest path to all known destinations. Each router in an OSPF area includes an identical link-state database, which is a list of each of the router usable interfaces and reachable neighbors.

- **Routing Information Protocol (RIP)**

  RIP is a distance-vector protocol that uses hop count as its metric. RIP is widely used for routing traffic in the global Internet and is an interior gateway protocol (IGP), which means that it performs routing within a single autonomous system.

- **Border Gateway Protocol (BGP)**

BGP is an interautonomous system routing protocol. BGP is used to exchange routing information for the Internet and is the protocol used between Internet service providers (ISP). Customers connect to ISPs, and ISPs use BGP to exchange customer and ISP routes. When BGP is used between autonomous systems (AS), the protocol is referred to as External BGP (EBGP). If a service provider is using BGP to exchange routes within an AS, then the protocol is referred to as Interior BGP (IBGP).

- **Intermediate System to Intermediate System (IS-IS)**

  IS-IS is a link state Interior Gateway Protocol (IGP). Link-state protocols are characterized by the propagation of the information required to build a complete network connectivity map on each participating router. That map is then used to calculate the shortest path to destinations.

Routing GRE traffic

In ASA, Generic Routing Encapsulation (GRE) traffic is managed using bi-directional flows. This means that each GRE session is represented by a single flow entry that handles both inbound and outbound traffic between endpoints. With bi-directional flows, only one route lookup is performed and both directions are mapped to the same interface. As a result, the system cannot make independent routing decisions for each direction, which may lead to sub-optimal routing in some scenarios.

Routing tables

The ASA uses separate routing tables for data traffic (through-the-device) and for management traffic (from-the-device). This section describes how the routing tables work. For information about the management routing table, see also Routing table for management traffic, on page 10.

How the routing table is populated

The ASA routing table can be populated by statically defined routes, directly connected routes, and routes discovered by the dynamic routing protocols. Because the ASA device can run multiple routing protocols in addition to having static and connected routes in the routing table, it is possible that the same route is discovered or entered in more than one manner.

Route selection criteria

When two routes to the same destination are put into the routing table, the one that remains in the routing table is determined as follows:

- If the two routes have different network prefix lengths (network masks), then both routes are considered unique and are entered into the routing table. The packet forwarding logic then determines which of the two to use.

  For example, if the RIP and OSPF processes discovered the following routes:

  - RIP: 192.168.32.0/24
  - OSPF: 192.168.32.0/19

  Even though OSPF routes have the better administrative distance, both routes are installed in the routing table because each of these routes has a different prefix length (subnet mask). They are considered different destinations and the packet forwarding logic determines which route to use.

- If the ASA device learns about multiple paths to the same destination from a single routing protocol, such as RIP, the route with the better metric (as determined by the routing protocol) is entered into the routing table.

  Metrics are values associated with specific routes, ranking them from most preferred to least preferred. The parameters used to determine the metrics differ for different routing protocols. The path with the lowest metric is selected as the optimal path and installed in the routing table. If there are multiple paths to the same destination with equal metrics, load balancing is done on these equal cost paths.

- If the ASA device learns about a destination from more than one routing protocol, the administrative distances of the routes are compared, and the routes with lower administrative distance are entered into the routing table.

Administrative Distances for Routes

You can change the administrative distances for routes discovered by or redistributed into a routing protocol. If two routes from two different routing protocols have the same administrative distance, then the route with the lower *default* administrative distance is entered into the routing table. In the case of EIGRP and OSPF routes, if the EIGRP route and the OSPF route have the same administrative distance, then the EIGRP route is chosen by default.

Administrative distance is a route parameter that the ASA uses to select the best path when there are two or more different routes to the same destination from two different routing protocols. Because the routing protocols have metrics based on algorithms that are different from the other protocols, it is not always possible to determine the best path for two routes to the same destination that were generated by different routing protocols.

Each routing protocol is prioritized using an administrative distance value. The following table shows the default administrative distance values for the routing protocols supported by the ASA.

Table 1: Default Administrative Distance for Supported Routing Protocols

Route Source	Default Administrative Distance
Connected interface	0
VPN route	1
Static route	1
EIGRP Summary Route	5
External BGP	20
Internal EIGRP	90
OSPF	110
IS-IS	115
RIP	120
EIGRP external route	170
Internal and local BGP	200
Unknown	255

The smaller the administrative distance value, the more preference is given to the protocol. For example, if the ASA receives a route to a certain network from both an OSPF routing process (default administrative distance - 110) and a RIP routing process (default administrative distance - 120), the ASA chooses the OSPF route because OSPF has a higher preference. In this case, the router adds the OSPF version of the route to the routing table.

A VPN advertised route (V-Route/RRI)) is equivalent to a static route with the default administrative distance 1. But it has a higher preference as with the network mask 255.255.255.255.

In this example, if the source of the OSPF-derived route was lost (for example, due to a power shutdown), the ASA would then use the RIP-derived route until the OSPF-derived route reappears.

The administrative distance is a local setting. For example, if you change the administrative distance of routes obtained through OSPF, that change would only affect the routing table for the ASA on which the command was entered. The administrative distance is not advertised in routing updates.

Administrative distance does not affect the routing process. The routing processes only advertise the routes that have been discovered by the routing process or redistributed into the routing process. For example, the RIP routing process advertises RIP routes, even if routes discovered by the OSPF routing process are used in the routing table.

Backup Dynamic and Floating Static Routes

A backup route is registered when the initial attempt to install the route in the routing table fails because another route was installed instead. If the route that was installed in the routing table fails, the routing table maintenance process calls each routing protocol process that has registered a backup route and requests them to reinstall the route in the routing table. If there are multiple protocols with registered backup routes for the failed route, the preferred route is chosen based on administrative distance.

Because of this process, you can create floating static routes that are installed in the routing table when the route discovered by a dynamic routing protocol fails. A floating static route is simply a static route configured with a greater administrative distance than the dynamic routing protocols running on the ASA. When the corresponding route discovered by a dynamic routing process fails, the static route is installed in the routing table.

How forwarding decisions are made

A forwarding decision is a network routing process that

- determines the appropriate interface for packet transmission based on destination address matching in the routing table
- prioritizes routes with longer network prefix lengths when multiple matches exist, and
- directs packets through default routes when no specific routing table entries match the destination.

Forwarding decision process

Forwarding decisions are made as follows:

- If the destination does not match an entry in the routing table, the packet is forwarded through the interface specified for the default route. If a default route has not been configured, the packet is discarded.
- If the destination matches a single entry in the routing table, the packet is forwarded through the interface associated with that route.

- If the destination matches more than one entry in the routing table, then the packet is forwarded out of the interface associated with the route that has the longer network prefix length.

Note When a route change occurs, the ASA re-evaluates the forwarding decision of established connections the next time a packet is seen on the flow.

The resulting behavior is determined by your configuration:

Configuration	Behavior	Outcome
Default (timeout floating-conn 0, no ECMP zone)	Retains the original egress path initially.	If that path can no longer resolve the destination, the flow is torn down after the conn-holddown period (default 15s) rather than waiting for an idle timeout.
Floating-Connection (timeout floating-conn configured)	Identifies a new optimal path on a different interface (outside the same ECMP zone).	The flow is torn down after the floating-conn timeout to allow for a fresh connection. Note: May trigger %ASA-6-110003 syslog messages.
ECMP Zone (Both interfaces in the same ECMP zone)	Dynamically updates the flow's egress interface.	The flow is switched to the new path atomically and non-disruptively.

Longest prefix match example

For example, a packet destined for 192.168.32.1 arrives on an interface with these routes in the routing table:

- 192.168.32.0/24 gateway 10.1.1.2
- 192.168.32.0/19 gateway 10.1.1.3

In this case, a packet destined to 192.168.32.1 is directed toward 10.1.1.2, because 192.168.32.1 falls within the 192.168.32.0/24 network. It also falls within the other route in the routing table, but 192.168.32.0/24 has the longest prefix within the routing table (24 bits verses 19 bits). Longer prefixes are always preferred over shorter ones when forwarding a packet.

Dynamic routing and Failover

Dynamic routes are synchronized on the standby unit when the routing table changes on the active unit. This means that all additions, deletions, or changes on the active unit are immediately propagated to the standby unit. If the standby unit becomes active in an active/standby ready Failover pair, it will already have an identical routing table as that of the former active unit because routes are synchronized as a part of the Failover bulk synchronization and continuous replication processes.

Dynamic Routing and Clustering

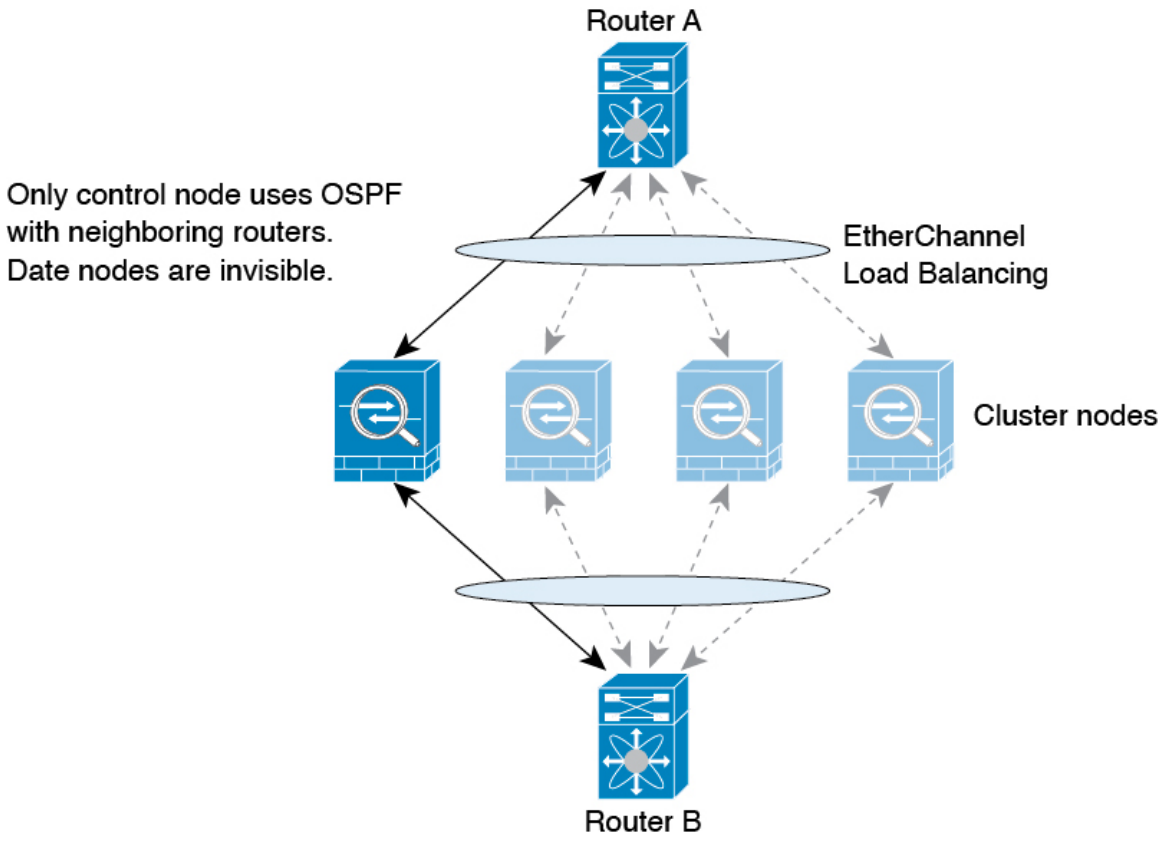
This section describes how to use dynamic routing with clustering.

Dynamic routing in Spanned EtherChannel Mode

Note IS-IS is not supported in Spanned EtherChannel mode.

The routing process only runs on the control node, and routes are learned through the control node and replicated to data nodes. If a routing packet arrives at a data node, it is redirected to the control node.

Figure 1: Dynamic Routing in Spanned EtherChannel Mode



After the data node learn the routes from the control node, each node makes forwarding decisions independently.

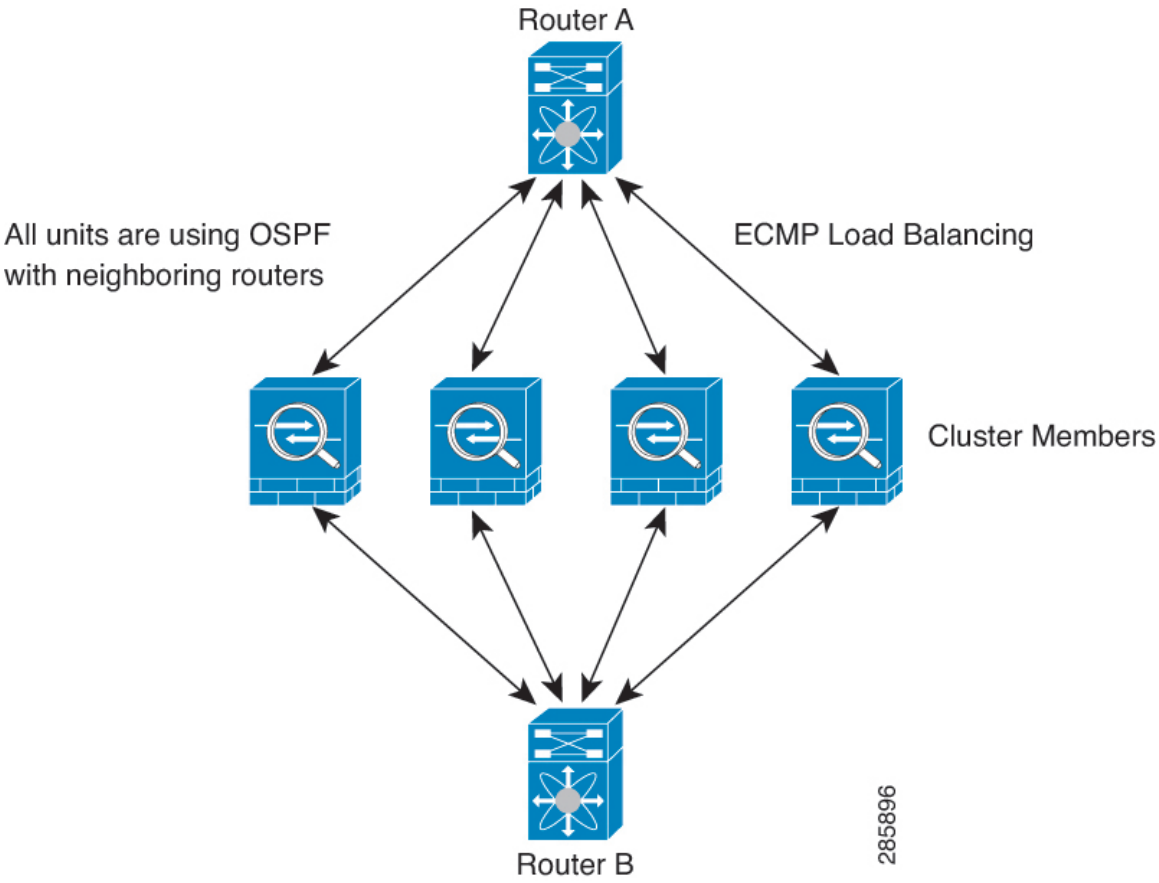
The OSPF LSA database is not synchronized from the control node to data nodes. If there is a control node switchover, the neighboring router will detect a restart; the switchover is not transparent. The OSPF process picks an IP address as its router ID. Although not required, you can assign a static router ID to ensure a consistent router ID is used across the cluster. See the OSPF Non-Stop Forwarding feature to address the interruption.

Dynamic routing in individual interface mode

Learn how dynamic routing functions in individual interface mode, where each cluster node operates as a standalone router. Understand how to configure unique router IDs and manage traffic zones to ensure effective load balancing and prevent asymmetric routing in your network environment.

In Individual interface mode, each node runs the routing protocol as a standalone router, and routes are learned by each node independently.

Figure 2: Dynamic Routing in Individual Interface Mode



In the above diagram, Router A learns that there are 4 equal-cost paths to Router B, each through a node. ECMP is used to load balance traffic between the 4 paths. Each node picks a different router ID when talking to external routers.

You must configure a cluster pool for the router ID so that each node has a separate router ID.

EIGRP does not form neighbor relationships with cluster peers in individual interface mode.

Note If the cluster has multiple adjacencies to the same router for redundancy purposes, asymmetric routing can lead to unacceptable traffic loss. To avoid asymmetric routing, group all of these node interfaces into the same traffic zone. See Configure a Traffic Zone.

Dynamic Routing in Multiple Context Mode

In multiple context mode, each context maintains a separate routing table and routing protocol databases. This enables you to configure OSPFv2 and EIGRP independently in each context. You can configure EIGRP in some contexts and OSPFv2 in the same or different contexts. In mixed context mode, you can enable any of the dynamic routing protocols in contexts that are in routed mode. RIP and OSPFv3 are not supported in multiple context mode.

The following table lists the attributes for EIGRP, OSPFv2, route maps used for distributing routes into OSPFv2 and EIGRP processes, and prefix lists used in OSPFv2 to filter the routing updates entering or leaving an area when they are used in multiple context mode:

EIGRP	OSPFv2	Route Maps and Prefix Lists
One instance is supported per context.	Two instances are supported per context.	N/A
It is disabled in the system context.		N/A
Two contexts may use the same or different autonomous system numbers.	Two contexts may use the same or different area IDs.	N/A
Shared interfaces in two contexts may have multiple EIGRP instances running on them.	Shared interfaces in two contexts may have multiple OSPF instances running on them.	N/A
The interaction of EIGRP instances across shared interfaces is supported.	The interaction of OSPFv2 instances across shared interfaces is supported.	N/A
All CLIs that are available in single mode are also available in multiple context mode.		
Each CLI has an effect only in the context in which it is used.		

Route Resource Management

A resource class called *routes* specifies the maximum number of routing table entries that can exist in a context. This resolves the problem of one context affecting the available routing table entries in another context and also allows you greater control over the maximum route entries per context.

Because there is no definitive system limit, you can only specify an absolute value for this resource limit; you may not use a percentage limit. Also, there are no minimum and maximum limits per context, so the default class does not change. If you add a new route for any of the static or dynamic routing protocols (connected, static, OSPF, EIGRP, and RIP) in a context and the resource limit for that context is exhausted, then the route addition fails and a syslog message is generated.

Routing table for management traffic

As a standard security practice, it is often necessary to segregate and isolate management (from-the-device) traffic from data traffic. To achieve this isolation, the ASA device uses a separate routing table for

management-only traffic vs. data traffic. Separate routing tables means that you can create separate default routes for data and management as well.

Types of Traffic for Each Routing Table

Through-the-device traffic always uses the data routing table.

From-the-device traffic, depending on the type, uses either the management-only routing table or the data routing table by default. If a match is not found in the default routing table, it checks the other routing table.

- Management-only table from-the-device traffic includes features that open a remote file using HTTP, SCP, TFTP, the **copy** command, Smart Licensing, Smart Call Home, **trustpoint**, **trustpool**, and so on.
- Data table from-the-device traffic includes all other features like ping, DNS, DHCP, and so on.

Interfaces Included in the Management-Only Routing Table

Management-only interfaces include any the Management x/x interfaces as well as any interfaces that you have configured to be management-only.

Fallback to the Other Routing Table

If a match is not found in the default routing table, it checks the other routing table.

Using the Non-Default Routing Table

If you need from-the-box traffic to go out an interface that isn't in its default routing table, then you might need to specify that interface when you configure it, rather than relying on the fall back to the other table. The ASA will only check routes for the specified interface. For example, if you need a ping to go out a management-only interface, then specify the interface in the ping function. Otherwise, if there is a default route in the data routing table, then it will match the default route and never fall back to the management routing table.

Dynamic Routing

The management-only routing table supports dynamic routing separate from the data interface routing table. A given dynamic routing process must run on either the management-only interface or the data interface; you cannot mix both types. When upgrading from an earlier release without the separate management routing table, if you have a mix of data and management interfaces using the same dynamic routing process, management interfaces will be dropped.

Management-Access Feature for VPN Requirements

If you configure the management-access feature that allows management access to an interface other than the one from which you entered the ASA when using VPN, then due to routing considerations with the separate management and data routing tables, the VPN termination interface and the management access interface need to be the same type: both need to be management-only interfaces or regular data interfaces.

Management Interface Identification

An interface configured with management-only is considered a management interface.

In the following configuration, both the interfaces GigabitEthernet0/0 and Management0/0 are considered as management interfaces.

```
a/admin(config-if)# show running-config int g0/0
!
interface GigabitEthernet0/0
 management-only
 nameif inside
```

```
 security-level 100
 ip address 10.10.10.123 255.255.255.0
 ipv6 address 123::123/64
a/admin(config-if)# show running-config int m0/0
!
interface Management0/0
 management-only
 nameif mgmt
 security-level 0
 ip address 10.106.167.118 255.255.255.0
a/admin(config-if)#
```

Equal-cost multi-path routing

The ASA supports Equal-Cost Multi-Path (ECMP) routing.

ECMP routing implementation

You can have up to 8 equal cost static or dynamic routes per interface. For example, you can configure multiple default routes on the outside interface that specify different gateways.

```
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside to 10.1.1.2
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside to 10.1.1.3
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside to 10.1.1.4
```

In this case, traffic is load-balanced on the outside interface between 10.1.1.2, 10.1.1.3, and 10.1.1.4. Traffic is distributed among the specified gateways based on an algorithm that hashes the source and destination IP addresses, incoming interface, protocol, source and destination ports.

ECMP Across Multiple Interfaces Using Traffic Zones

If you configure traffic zones to contain a group of interfaces, you can have up to 8 equal cost static or dynamic routes across up to 8 interfaces within each zone. For example, you can configure multiple default routes across three interfaces in the zone:

```
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside1 to 10.1.1.2
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside2 to 10.2.1.2
route for 0.0.0.0 0.0.0.0 through outside3 to 10.3.1.2
```

Similarly, your dynamic routing protocol can automatically configure equal cost routes. The ASA load-balances traffic across the interfaces with a more robust load balancing mechanism.

When a route is lost, the device seamlessly moves the flow to a different route.

Disable Proxy ARP Requests

When a host sends IP traffic to another device on the same Ethernet network, the host needs to know the MAC address of the device. ARP is a Layer 2 protocol that resolves an IP address to a MAC address. A host sends an ARP request asking “Who is this IP address?” The device owning the IP address replies, “I own that IP address; here is my MAC address.”

Proxy ARP is used when a device responds to an ARP request with its own MAC address, even though the device does not own the IP address. The ASA uses proxy ARP when you configure NAT and specify a mapped

address that is on the same network as the ASA interface. The only way traffic can reach the hosts is if the ASA uses proxy ARP to claim that the MAC address is assigned to destination mapped addresses.

Under rare circumstances, you might want to disable proxy ARP for NAT addresses.

If you have a VPN client address pool that overlaps with an existing network, the ASA by default sends proxy ARP requests on all interfaces. If you have another interface that is on the same Layer 2 domain, it will see the ARP requests and will answer with the MAC address of its interface. The result of this is that the return traffic of the VPN clients towards the internal hosts will go to the wrong interface and will get dropped. In this case, you need to disable proxy ARP requests for the interface on which you do not want them.

Procedure

Step 1 Choose **Configuration** > **Device Setup** > **Routing** > **Proxy ARP/Neighbor Discovery**.

The Interface field lists the interface names. The Enabled field shows whether or not proxy ARP/Neighbor Discovery is enabled (Yes) or disabled (No) for NAT global addresses.

Step 2 To enable proxy ARP/Neighbor Discovery for the selected interface, click **Enable**. By default, proxy ARP/Neighbor discovery is enabled for all interfaces.

Step 3 To disable proxy ARP/Neighbor Discovery for the selected interface, click **Disable**.

Step 4 Click **Apply** to save your settings to the running configuration.

Display the Routing Table

To show all routes in ASDM that are in the routing table, choose **Monitoring** > **Routing** > **Routes**. Each row represents one route.

History for Route Overview

Table 2: History for Route Overview

Feature Name	Platform Releases	Feature Information
Routing Table for Management Interface	9.5(1)	To segregate and isolate, management traffic from data traffic, a sepa table is added for management traffic. Separate routing tables, for ma data respectively, are created for both IPv4 and IPv6, for each contex Further, for each context of the ASA, two extra routing tables are add RIB and FIB. We updated the following screens: