

Setting Up Microsoft Patch Approval Groups

<https://campus.barracuda.com/doc/90440349/>

An Microsoft patch approval group is a container for devices against which you either manually or automatically approve updates. There are two default approval groups for Microsoft patches:

- **All Computers** Contains every managed device reporting into Microsoft patch management.
- **Unassigned Computers** Contains every managed device belonging to the **All Computers** Microsoft patch approval group and no others. Devices are automatically put in this group when a **Windows Update Agent Policy** is first applied. They will remain there until they are moved to another approval group.

A device can only belong to one Microsoft patch approval group in addition to the All Computers approval group.

Why Use a Microsoft patch Approval Group?

Use Microsoft patch approval groups for testing patches, restricting installation of patches and controlling the installation of patches.

Approval groups can also be used to set up automatic approval. See [Automatically Approving Microsoft Patches for an Approval Group](#).

Although creating your own approval groups is optional, they ease management because you work with greater numbers of similar devices at one time. It also simplifies keeping a standard update level across your client base so technicians are always working on similarly updated operating systems and applications.

What You Can Do

You can

- create a Microsoft patch approval group to apply patches to a subset of **All Computers**
- move devices between approval groups
- set up automatic approval for specific approval groups
- apply different Microsoft patch approval settings for each approval group
- delete an approval group you no longer use

Don't use automatic approval for higher risk devices. The time it takes to manage patches is minimal when using approval groups, so it isn't worth the risk.

Example 1

For example, you can create a Microsoft patch approval group called **Critical Servers** and another one called **Workstations**.

New Microsoft OS and application patches for the **Critical Servers** approval group can be set to **Not Approved** until you have tested them on non-production devices and confirmed their quality.

New Microsoft OS and application patches for the **Workstations** approval group can be set to Install.

Example 2

If you have an approval group that contains a server running Windows Server 2012, a server running Windows 2016 with Exchange 2016 and a Windows 10 desktop and you approve an Exchange 2016 patch, only the system that needs the patch will install the patch.

Example 3

If you have a site where Internet Explorer 11 is installed and you don't want to patch it, you can create an approval group called "Do not approve IE11" and move the patch managed devices affected into this approval group and never approve IE11 for that approval group.

Example 4

You can use approval groups to control the installation of **.NET** patches. Devices sometimes have problems after installing **.NET** updates. When you want to install **.NET** patches, you can move selected devices into a **.NET** Microsoft Patch approval group. When the installation is complete, you can verify that the devices have no problems and then move the devices out of the **.NET** approval group.

Creating a Microsoft Patch Approval Group

1. In Service Center, click **Patch Management > Settings > Approval Groups**.
2. Click **Add**.
3. Type a name for the new approval group.

Note: Approval group names cannot contain special characters
(" ~ ! @ # \$ % ^ & * () = + [] { } | ; ' , " < > /).

4. Click **Add**.

This approval group is empty. Next, you must move devices into this approval group.

Moving Devices into a Microsoft Patch Approval Group

Devices can only belong to the **All Computers** Microsoft patch approval group and one other Microsoft patch approval group.

What If...	Then...
A device is moved into an approval group	The computer will end up with all the approved updates for that group. If they are installed, they won't be re-installed. If they are needed, they will be installed.
A device is moved into an approval group that does not allow installs for a patch it already has	It will not remove any updates that are already installed.

1. In Service Center, click **Patch Management > Settings > Approval Groups**.
2. From the **Approval Group** list, select the approval group that contains the devices you want to move.
3. Do one of the following:
 - To select one device at a time, select the check box that corresponds with each device you want to add to the approval group.
 - To select all the check boxes at once, select the check box at the top of the column.
4. Click **Move selected devices**.
5. From the drop-down list, select the approval group to which you want to move the devices.
6. Click **OK**.
The devices now belong to the **All Computers** Microsoft patch approval group and this approval group.

Deleting a Microsoft Patch Approval Group

When you delete a Microsoft patch approval group, all devices that were members of the group are automatically moved into the Unassigned Computers approval group.

You cannot delete the **All Computers** or the **Unassigned Computers** approval groups.

1. In Service Center, click **Patch Management > Settings > Approval Groups**.
2. From the **Approval Group** list, select the approval group that you want to delete.
3. Click **Delete**.

© Barracuda Networks Inc., 2021 The information contained within this document is confidential and proprietary to Barracuda Networks Inc. No portion of this document may be copied, distributed, publicized or used for other than internal documentary purposes without the written consent of an official representative of Barracuda Networks Inc. All specifications are subject to change without notice. Barracuda Networks Inc. assumes no responsibility for any inaccuracies in this document. Barracuda Networks Inc. reserves the right to change, modify, transfer, or otherwise revise this publication without notice.