

IT Security

Windows Server Hardening Guide (English Version)

August 2022

Education Bureau

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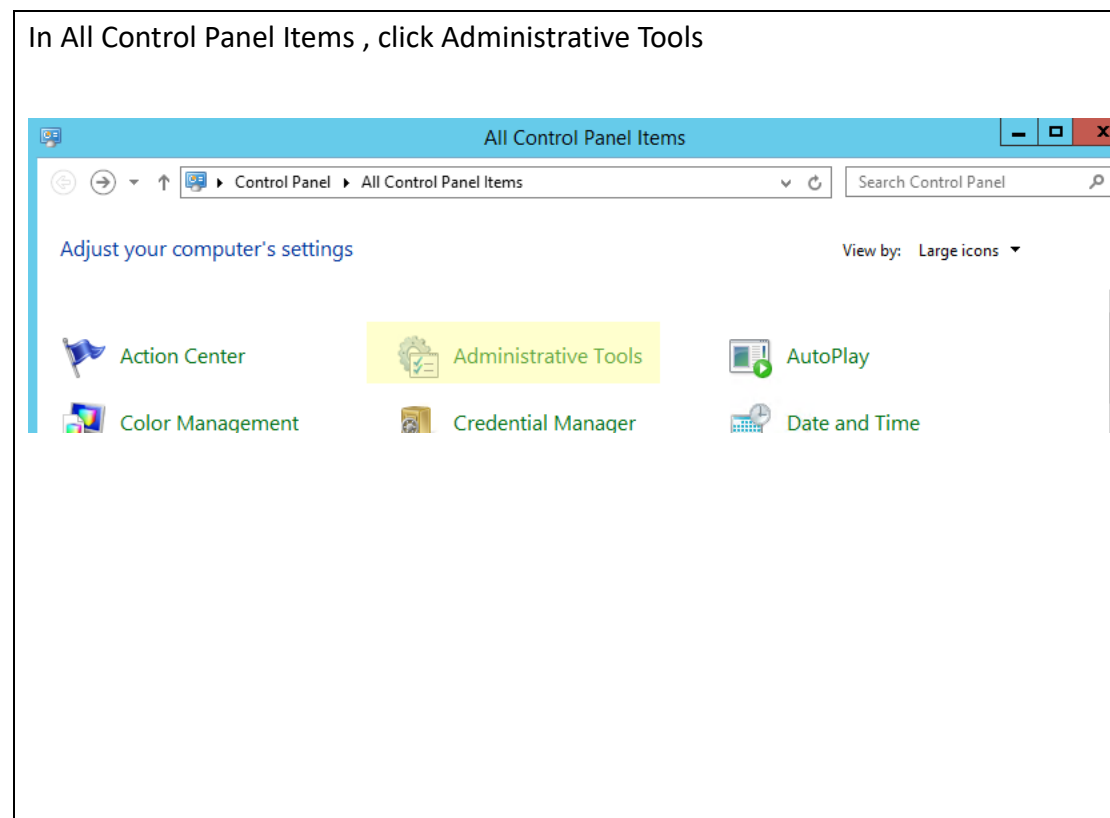
1. Windows Installation

- ✓ Disable any unneeded services included in the default installation
- ✓ Remove unnecessary Windows Server roles and features
- ✓ Consider to use EFS with NTFS file system or BitLocker encryption for restricted data
- ✓ Assign a static IP for server
- ✓ Run Windows update to install all security updates or patches
- ✓ Run Antivirus update to install the latest antivirus definition
- ✓ Enable automatic notification of patch availability and make sure that all appropriate patches, hotfixes and service packs are reviewed, tested and applied in a timely manner
- ✓ It is not recommended to install client-side software, such as Chrome, Adobe Flash, pdf viewers etc. on server

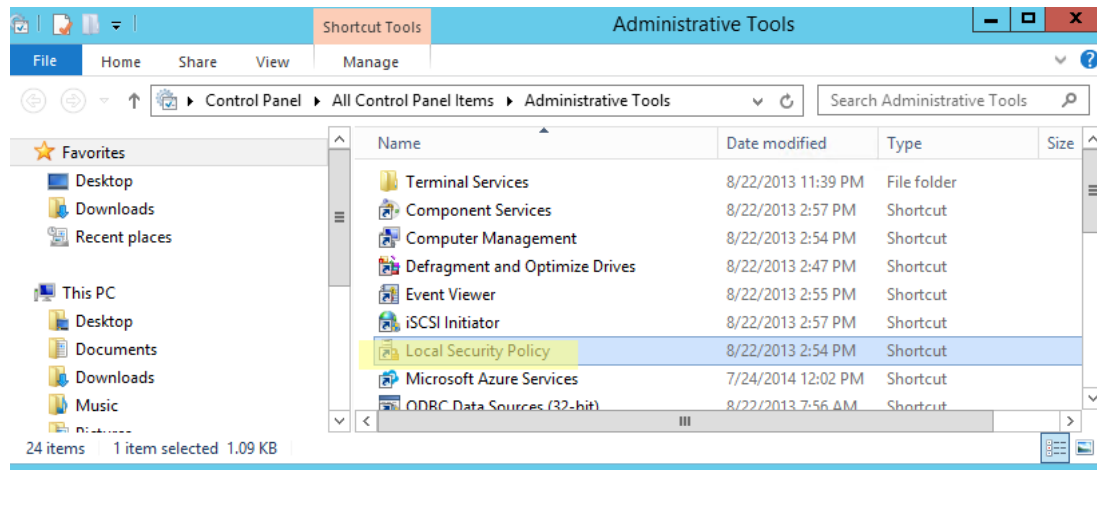
2. Security Configuration

2.1 Network Security and Access Management

In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools

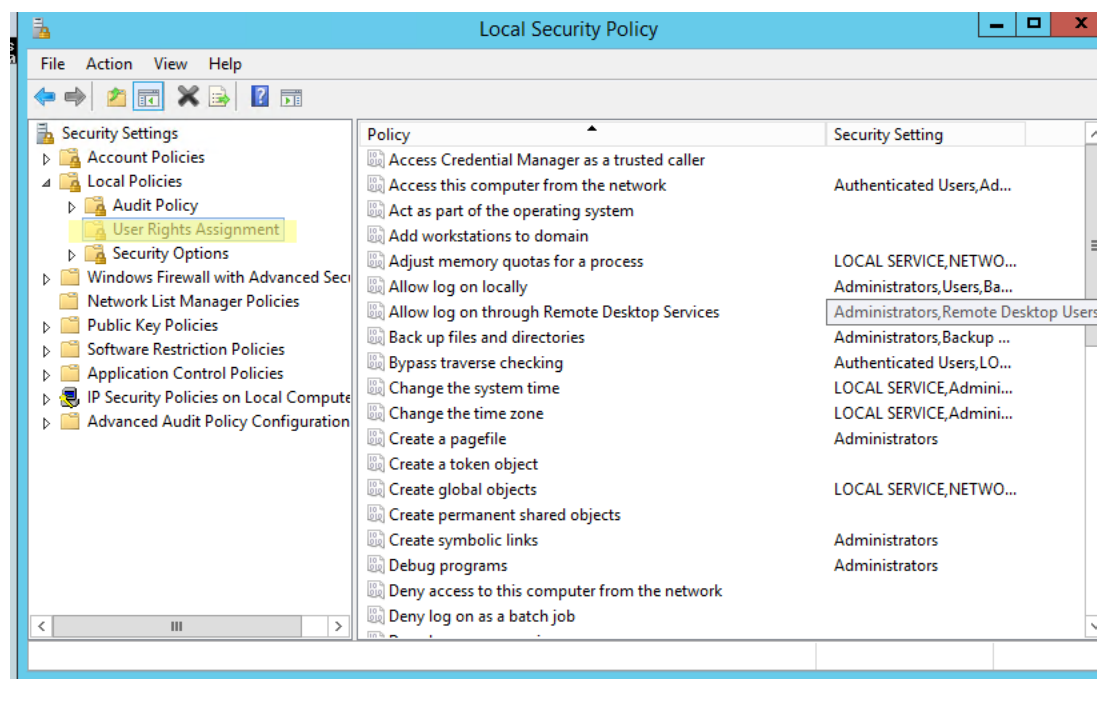


Click Local Security Policy



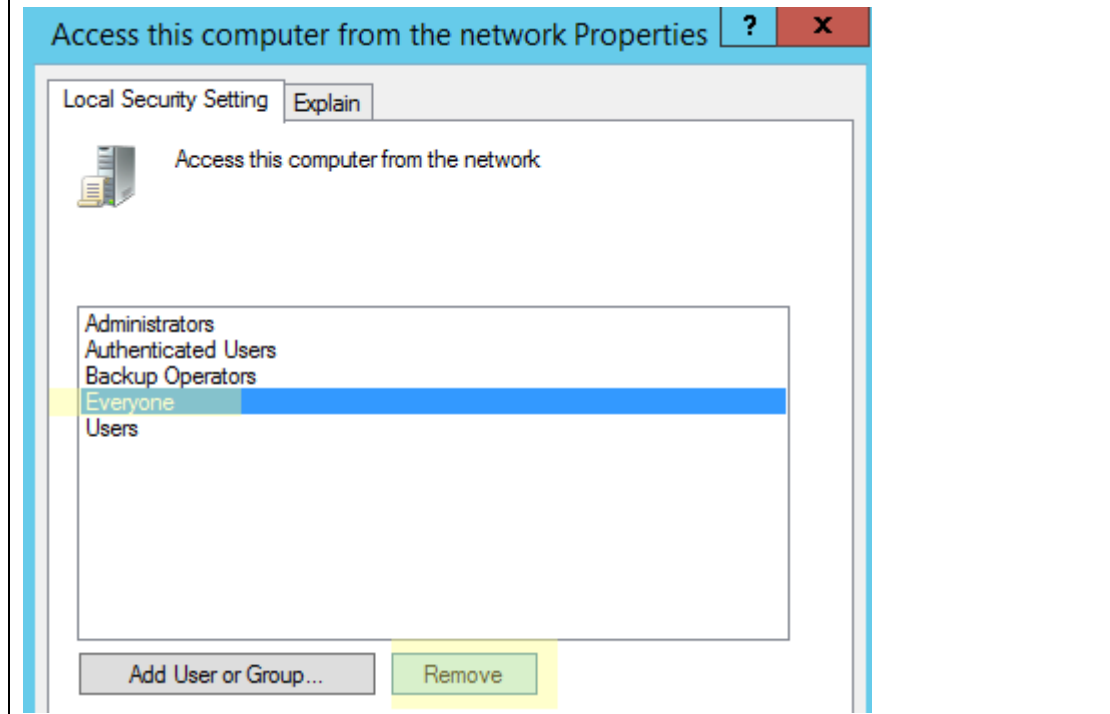
Navigate to

Security Settings – Local Policies – User Rights Assignment



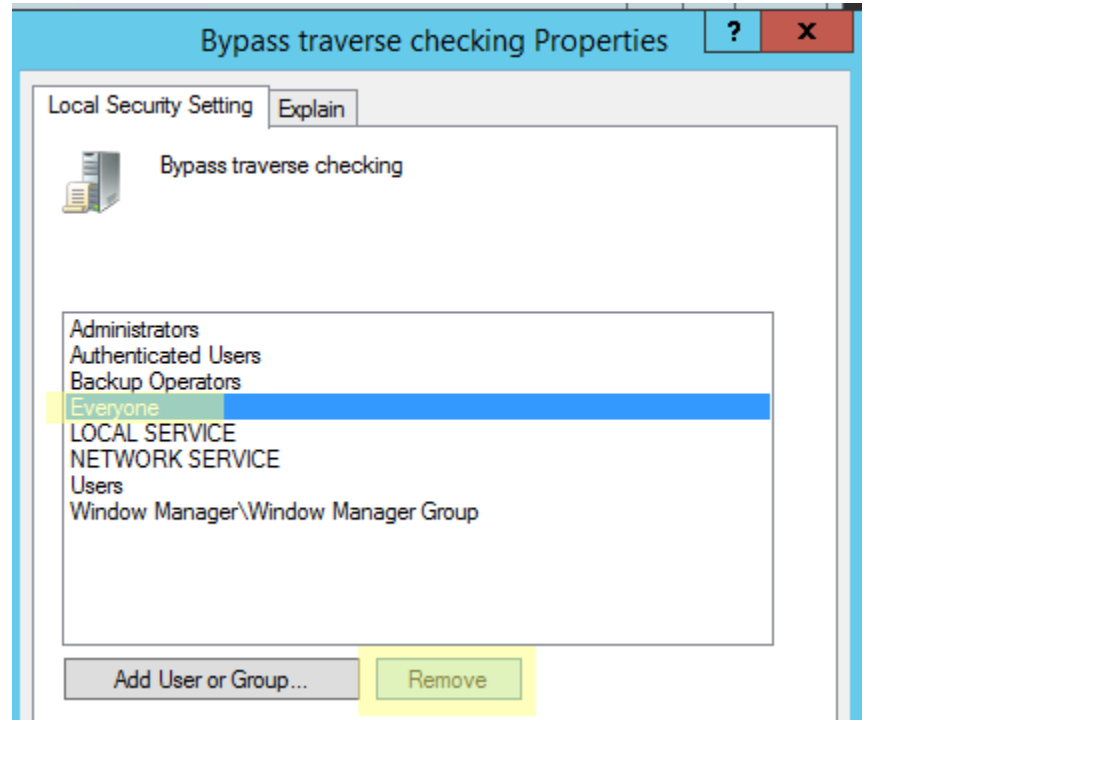
Click Access this computer from the network

Remove Everyone



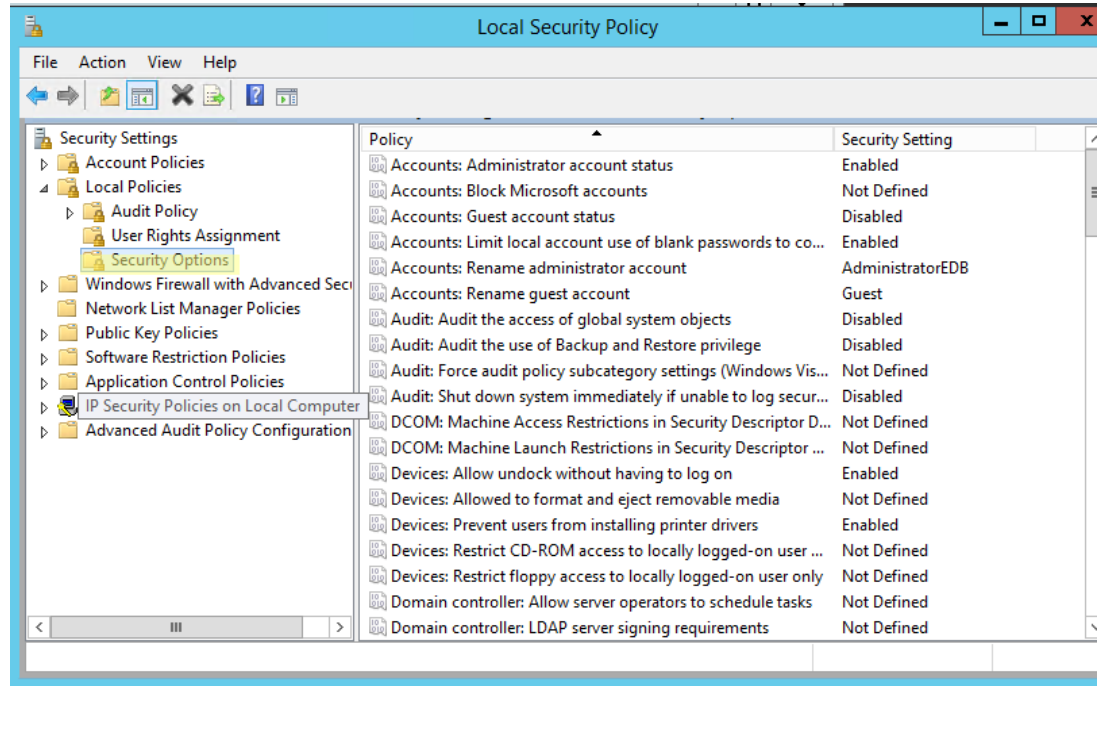
Click Bypass traverse checking

Remove Everyone



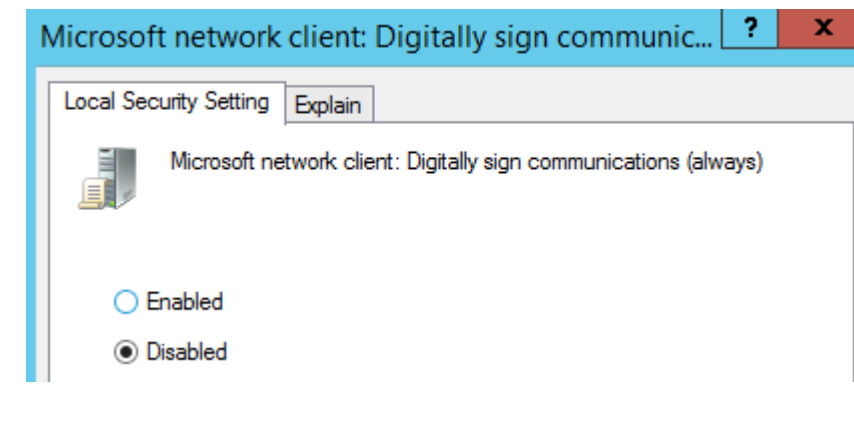
Navigate to

Security Settings – Local Policies – Security Options



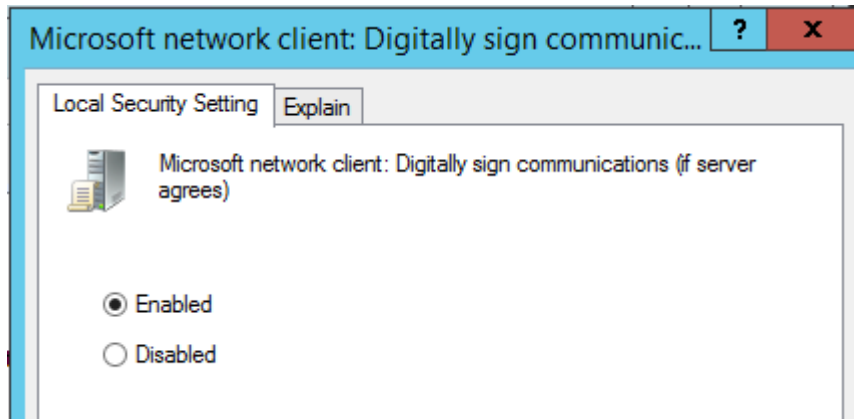
Click Microsoft network client : Digitally sign communications (always)

Select Disabled



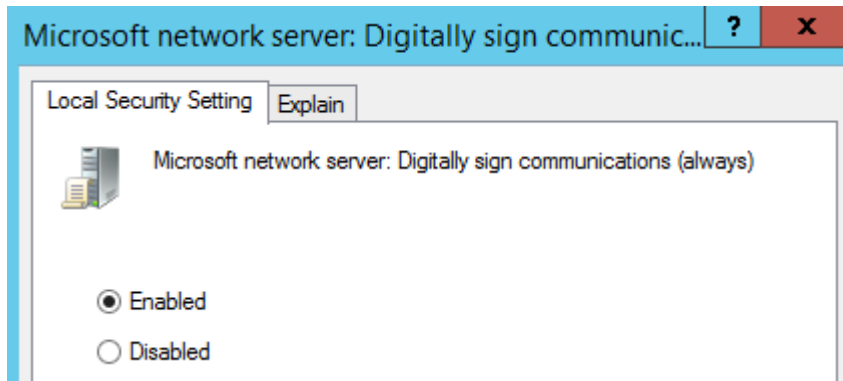
Click Microsoft network client : Digitally sign communications (if server agrees)

Select Enabled



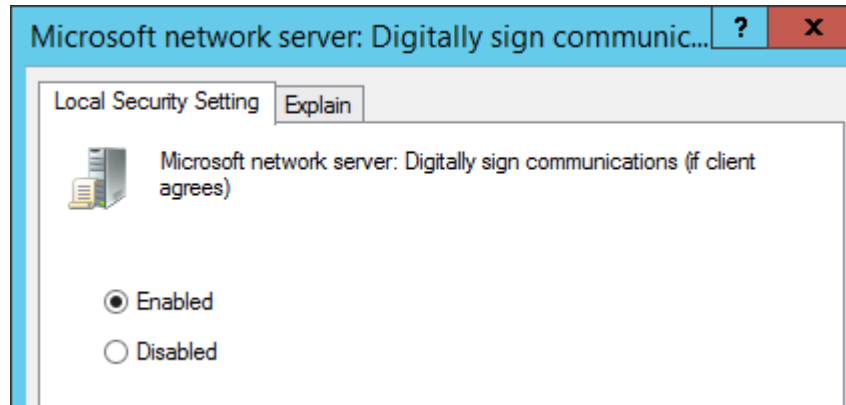
Click Microsoft network server : Digitally sign communications (always)

Select Enabled



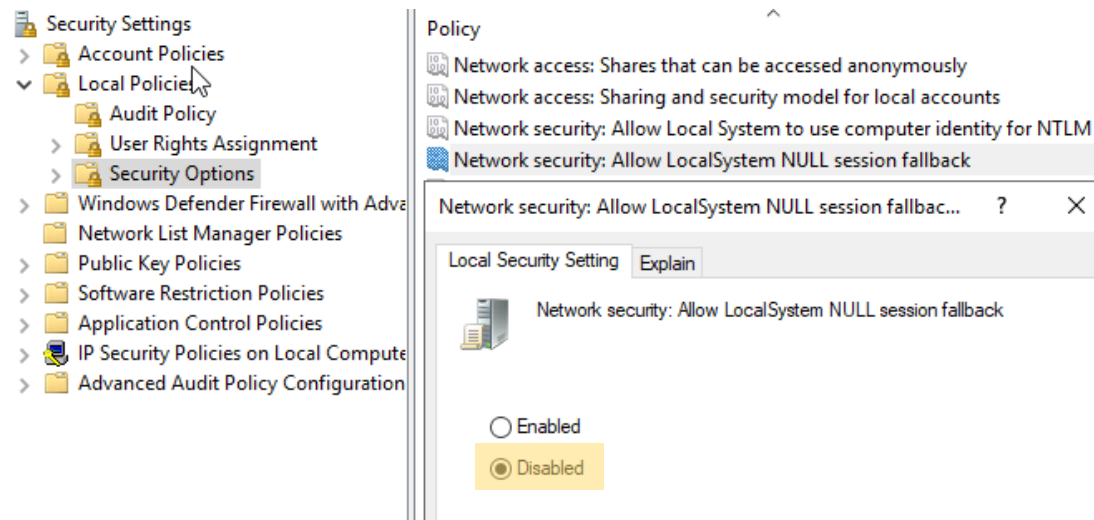
Click Microsoft network server : Digitally sign communications (if client agrees)

Select Enabled



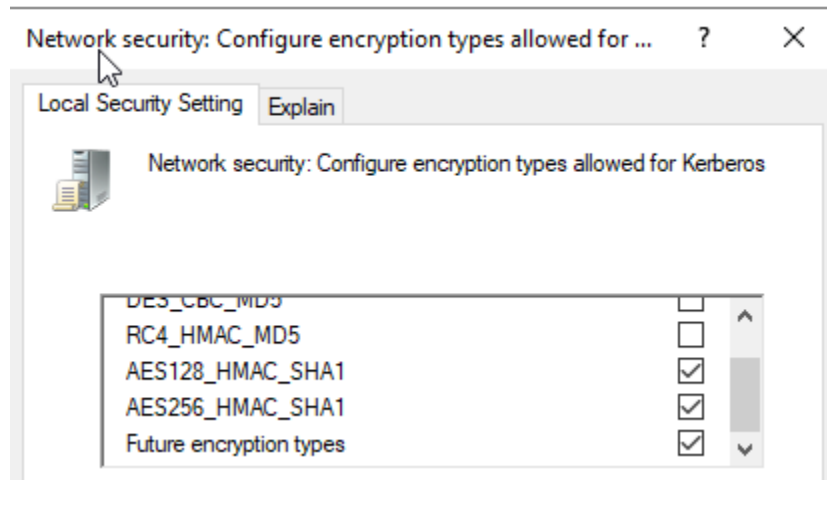
Click network security : Allow LocalSystem NULL session fallback

Select Disabled

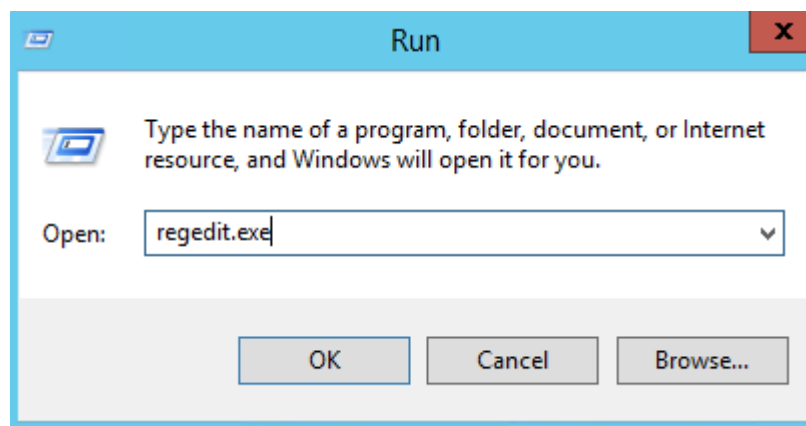
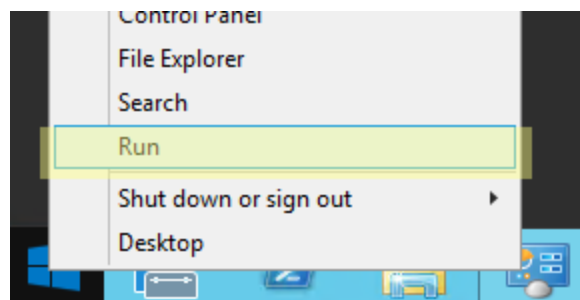


Click Network security: Configure encryption types allowed for Kerberos

Select AES128_HMAC_SHA1, AES256_HMAC_SHA1 and Future encryption types



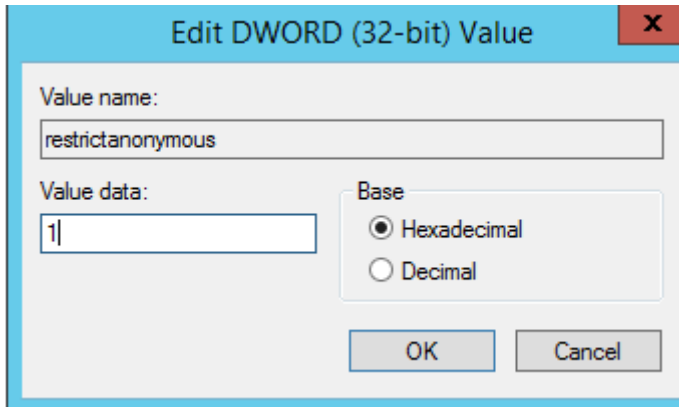
Run regedit.exe (registry editor)



Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \SYSTEM\ CurrentControlSet\ Control\Lsa

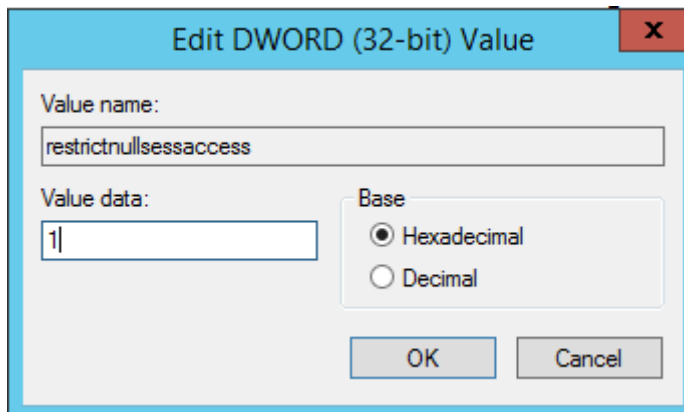
Set restrictanonymus=1



Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\
SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\LanmanServer\Parameters

Set restrictnullsessaccess=1

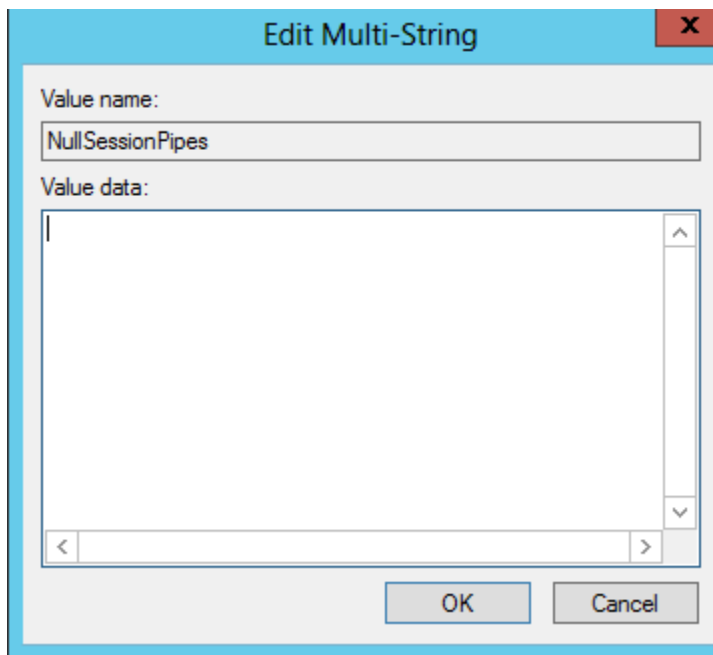


Navigate to

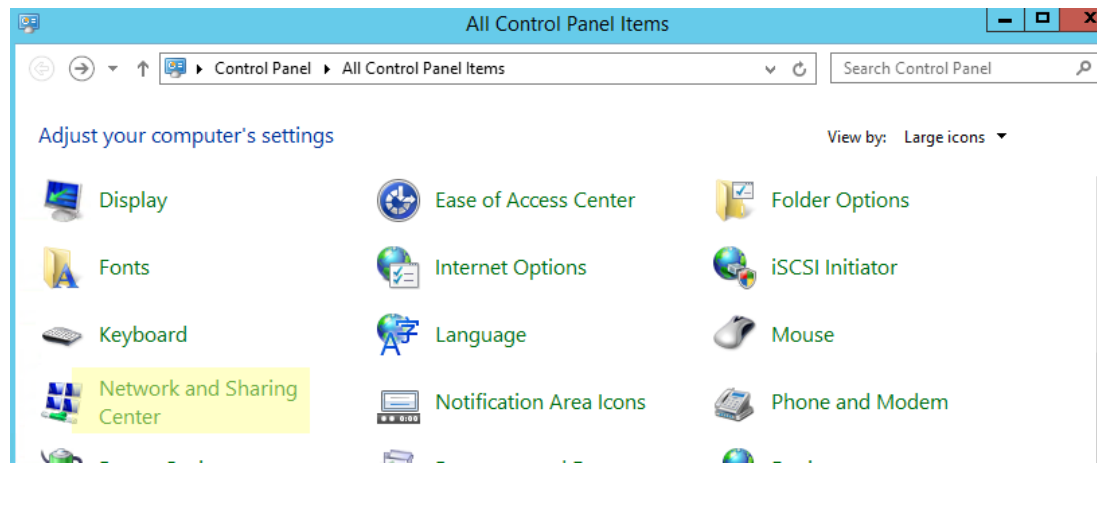
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\LanmanServer\Parameters

NullSessionPipes

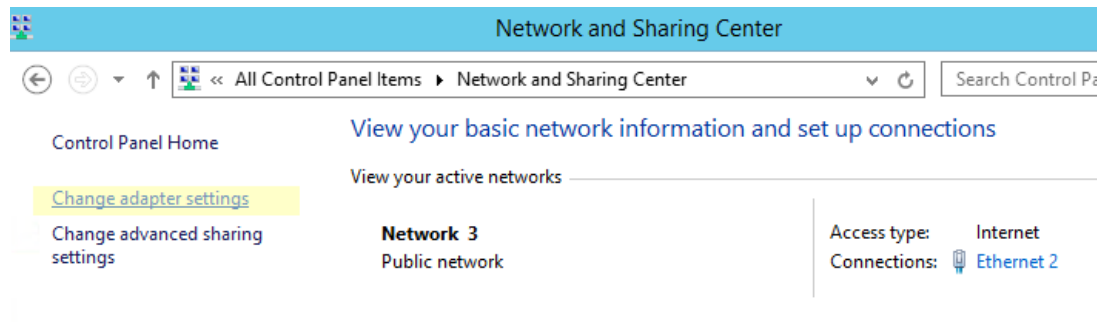
Remove BROWSER if have



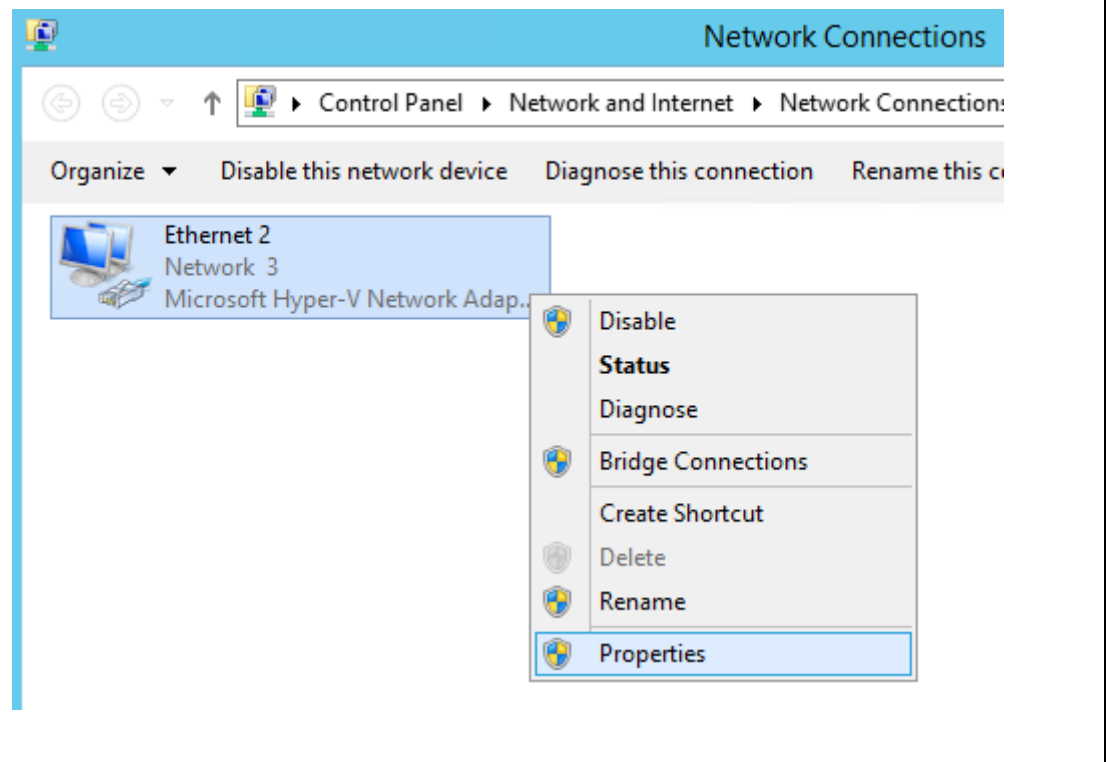
In All Control Panel Items, click Network and Sharing Center



Click Change adapter settings

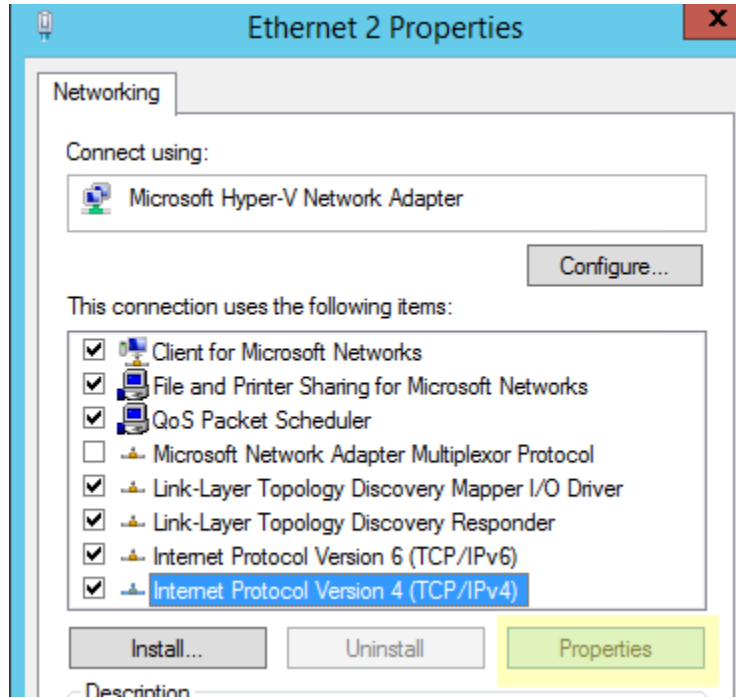


Right click the Ethernet and click properties



Select Internet Protocol Version 4(TCP/IPv4)

Click Properties

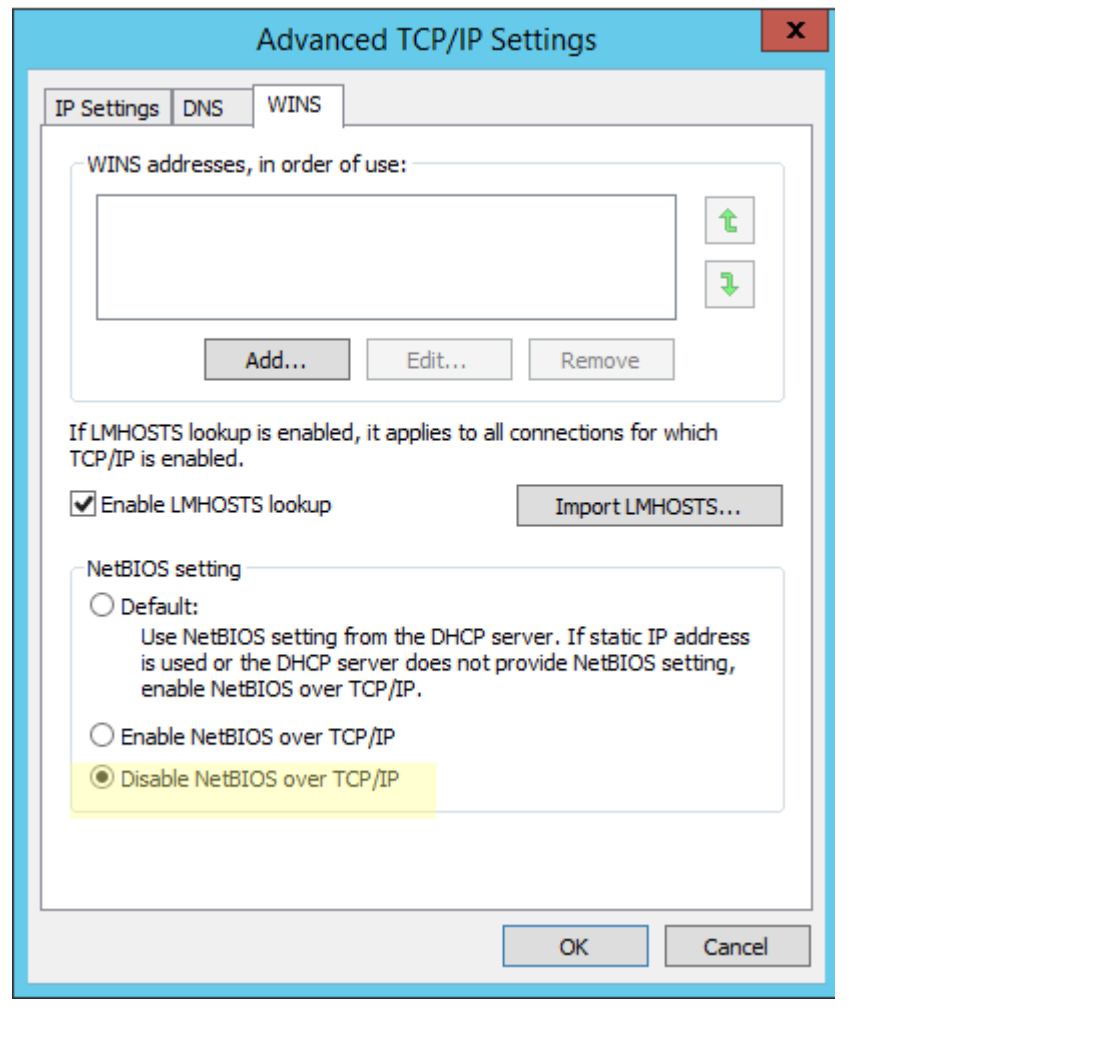


Click Advanced

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Internet Protocol Version 4 (TCP/IPv4) Properties' dialog box. The title bar is blue with a red close button. The 'General' tab is selected. The dialog contains the following elements:

- General** (tab)
- Text: "You can get IP settings assigned automatically if your network supports this capability. Otherwise, you need to ask your network administrator for the appropriate IP settings."
- Radio button: Obtain an IP address automatically
- Radio button: Use the following IP address:
 - IP address: [. . .]
 - Subnet mask: [. . .]
 - Default gateway: [. . .]
- Radio button: Obtain DNS server address automatically
- Radio button: Use the following DNS server addresses:
 - Preferred DNS server: [. . .]
 - Alternate DNS server: [. . .]
- Checkbox: Validate settings upon exit
- Buttons: **Advanced...** (highlighted in yellow), **OK**, **Cancel**

Select Disable NetBIOS over TCP/IP



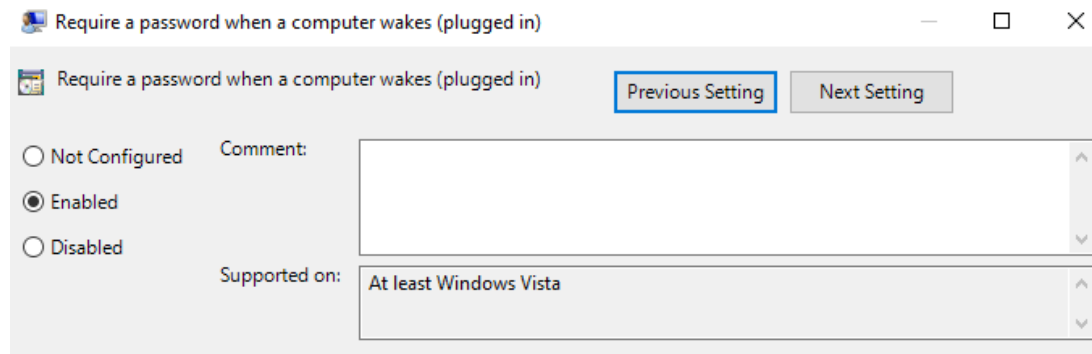
Run gpedit.msc

Navigate to

Computer Configuration – Administrative Templates – System – Power Management – Sleep Settings

Click Require a password when a computer wakes (plugged in)

Select Enabled

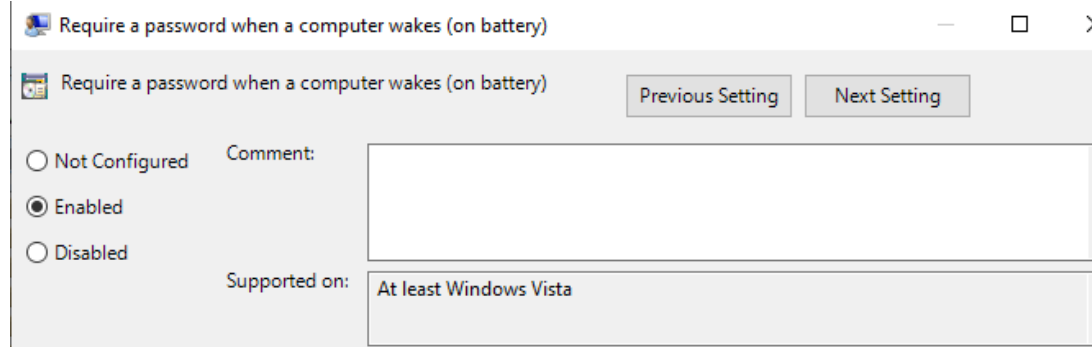


Navigate to

Computer Configuration – Administrative Templates – System – Power Management – Sleep Settings

Click Require a password when a computer wakes (on battery)

Select Enabled



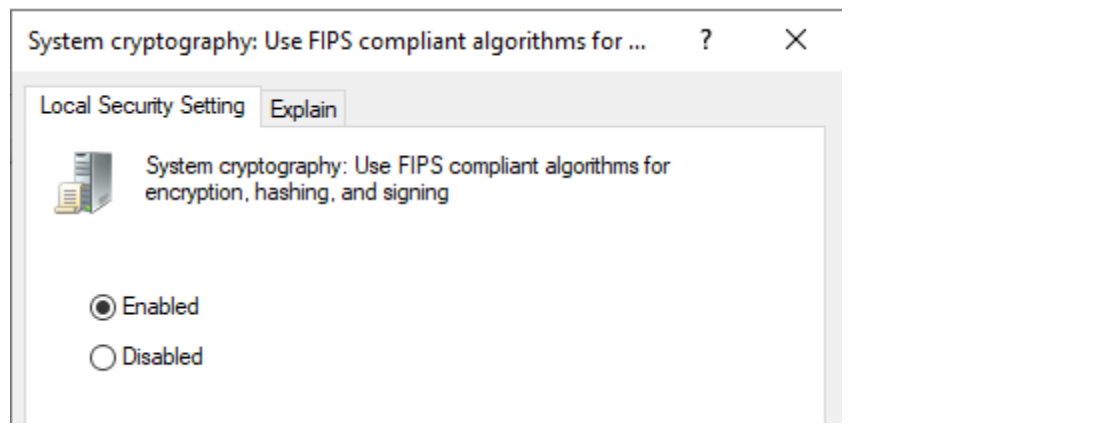
Run gpedit.msc

Navigate to

Computer Configuration – Windows Settings – Security Settings – Local Policy – Security Options

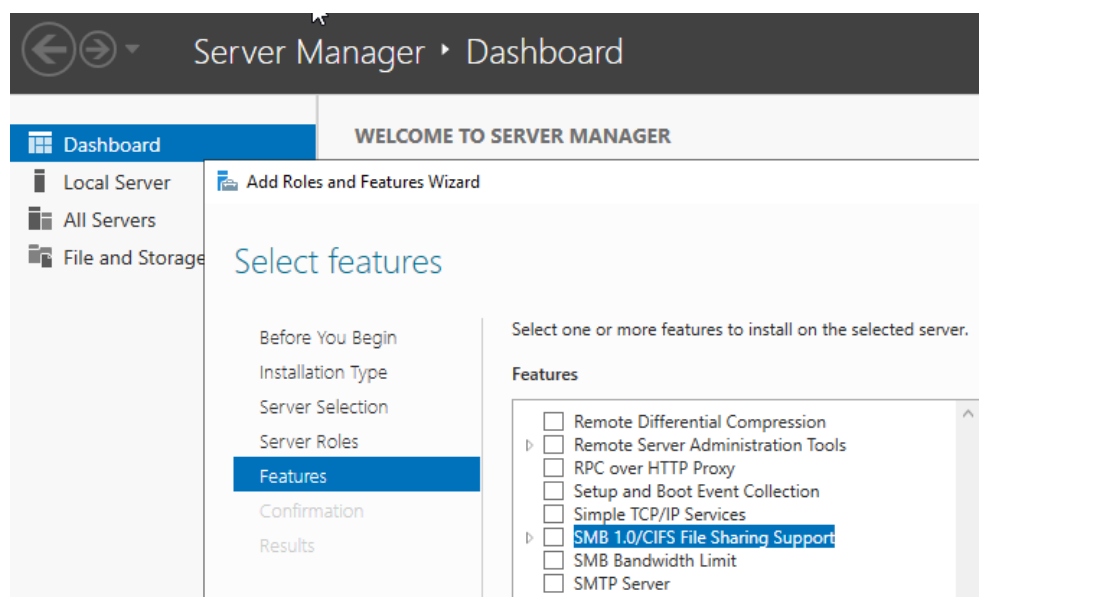
Click System cryptography: Use FIPS compliant algorithms for encryption, hashing, and signing

Select Enabled



Go to Server Manager Dashboard

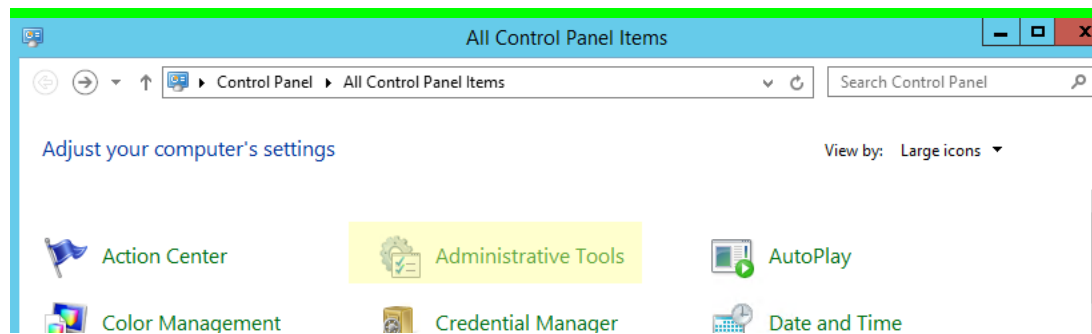
Deselect the SMB 1.0/CIFS File Sharing Support option



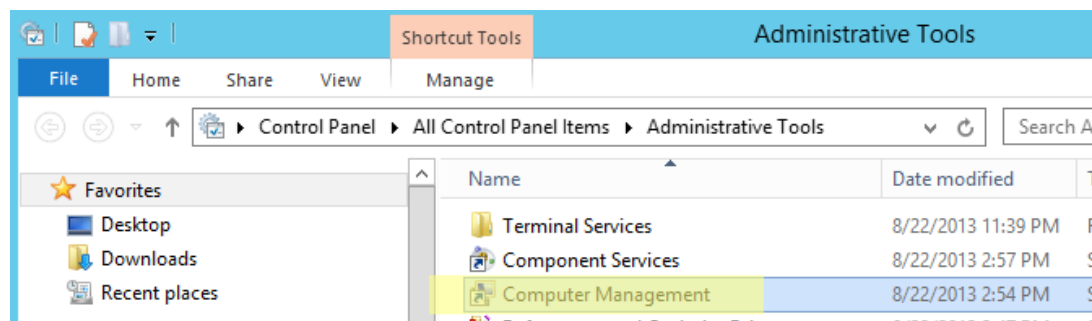
2.2 Account Security

2.2.1 User Account and Rights

In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools



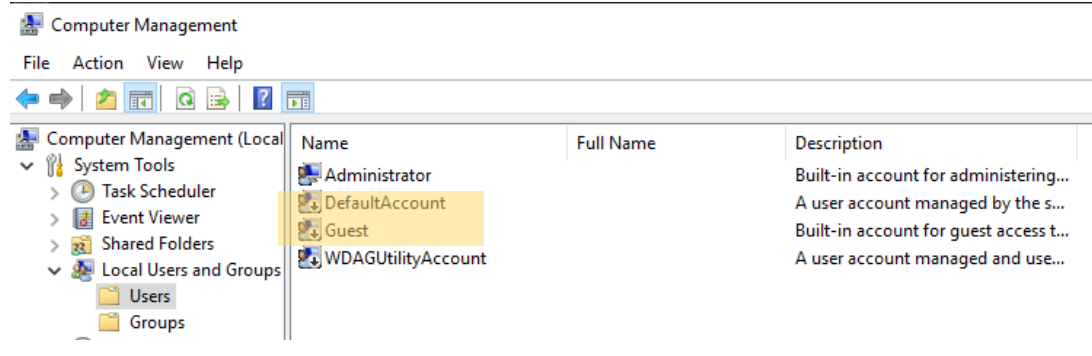
Click Computer Management



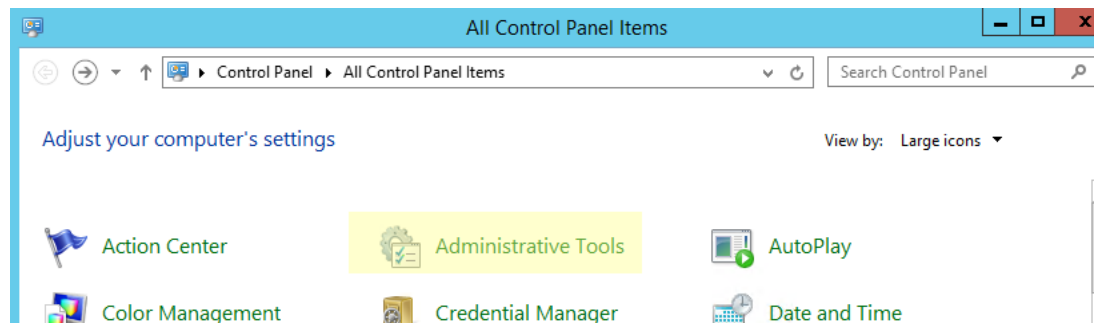
Click Local Users and Groups and Users

Disable or remove any unused accounts, such as DefaultAccount and Guest etc.

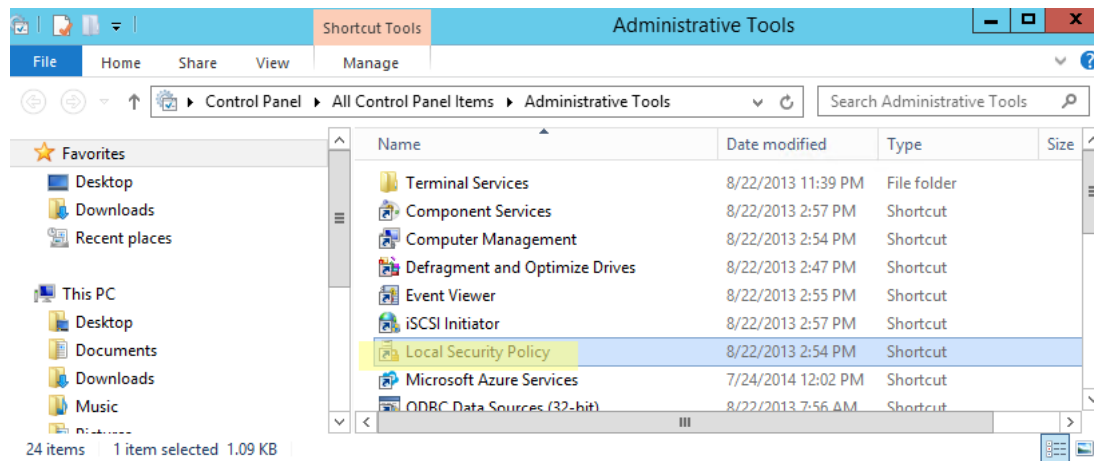
It is not recommended to use a default administrator account name, such as “administrator” or “admin”. You may either rename the default administrator account or create an account and set it as an administrative account.



In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools

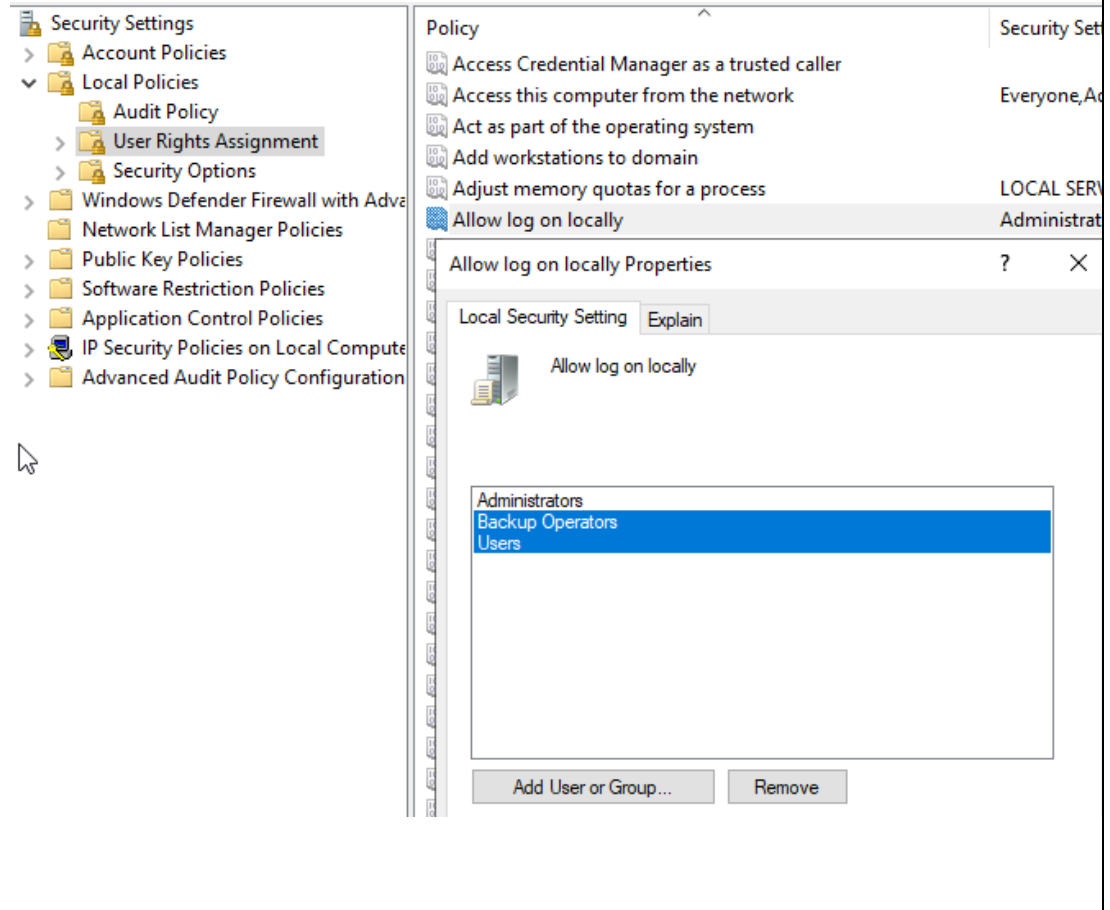


Click Local Security Policy



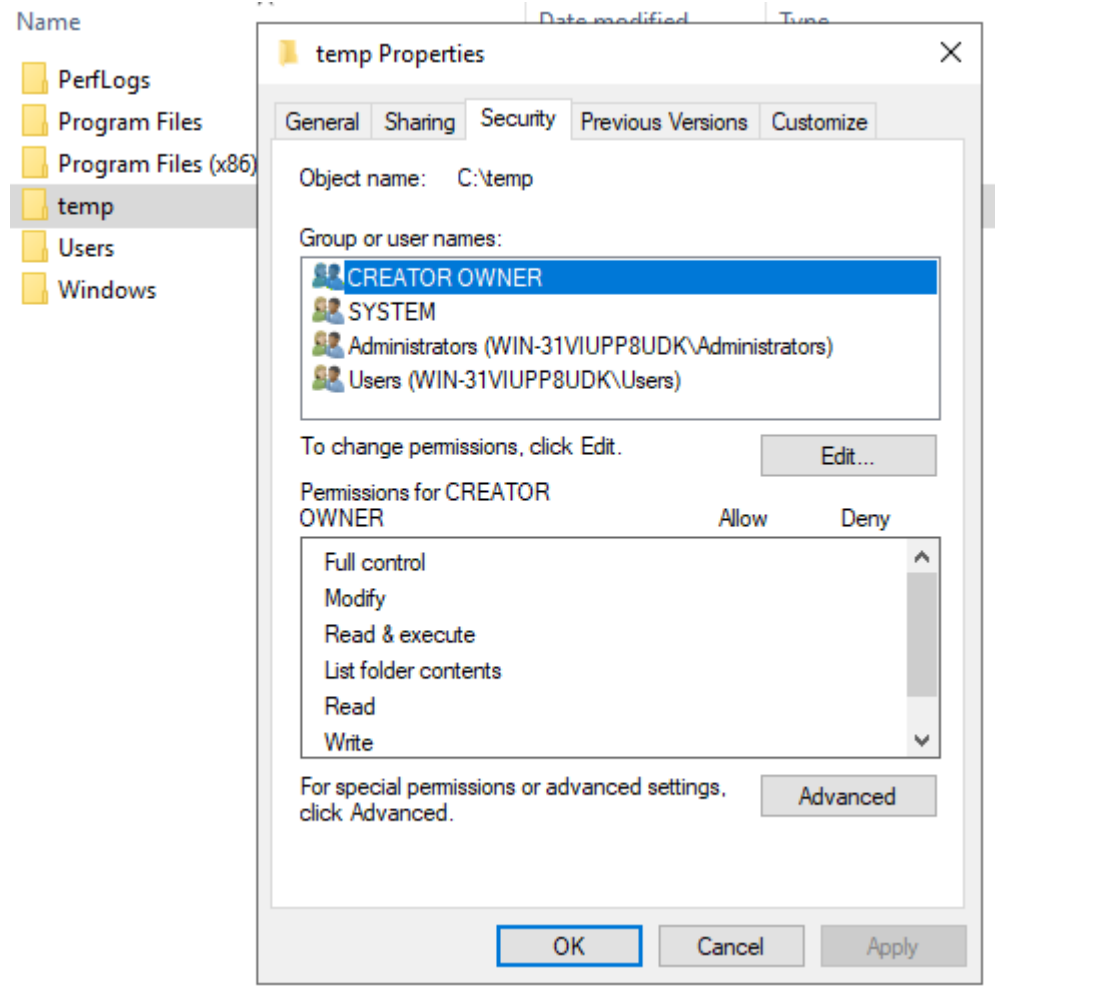
Navigate to
Local Policies-User Rights Assignment

Click Allow log on locally, remove all groups except Administrators, you may add your administrative account(s) to this group.



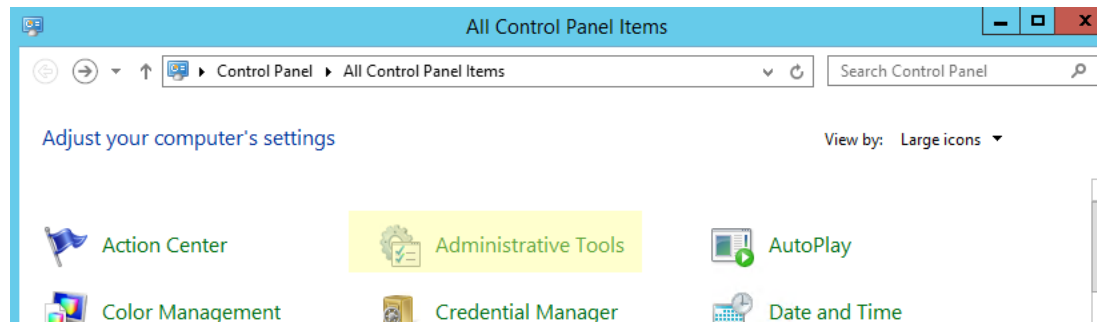
Reminders:

- ✓ Full permissions should NOT be granted to everyone or guest group in the configuration of file or folder.
- ✓ Sharing should NOT be allowed for anonymous access.
- ✓ The principle of least privilege (POLP) should always be strictly executed.

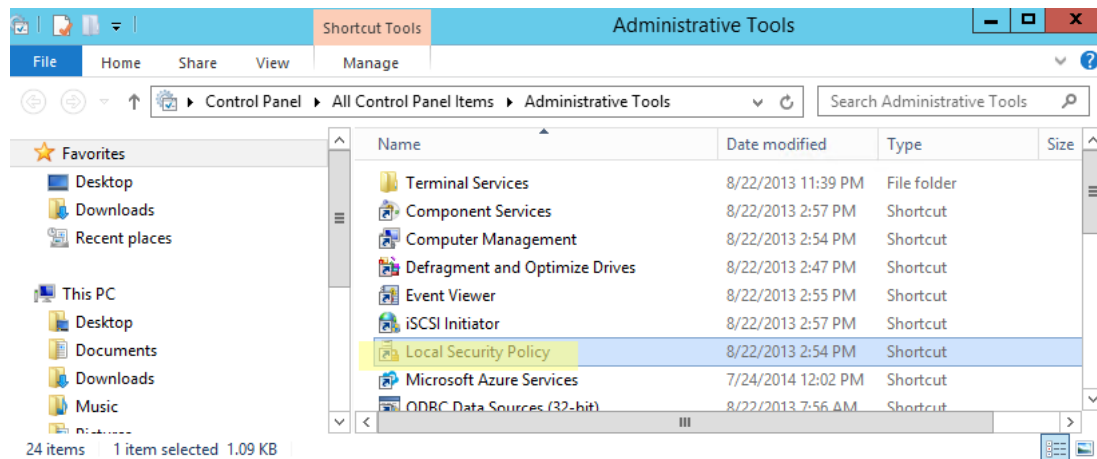


2.2.2 Password Policy

In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools



Click Local Security Policy



Navigate to

Security Settings – Account Policies – Password Policy

Policy	Security Setting
Enforce password history	8 passwords remembered
Maximum password age	180 days
Minimum password age	3 days
Minimum password length	8 characters
Password must meet complexity requirements	Enabled
Store passwords using reversible encryption	Disabled

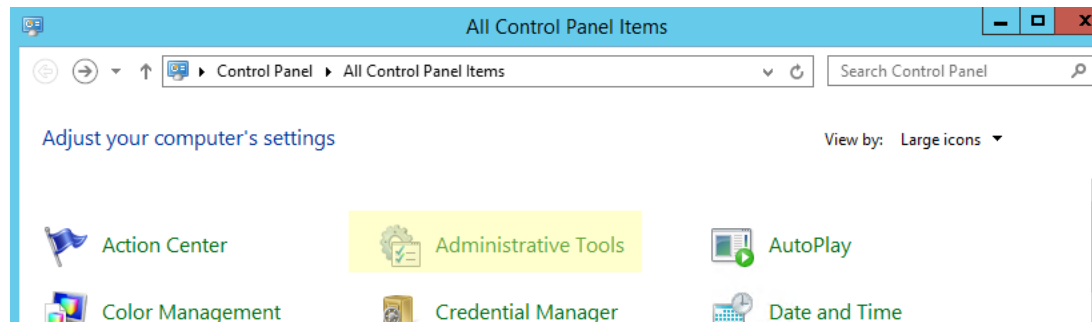
Result is

The screenshot shows the 'Local Security Policy' window. The left-hand pane displays a tree view of 'Security Settings' with 'Account Policies' expanded to show 'Password Policy'. The right-hand pane displays a list of policies and their corresponding security settings:

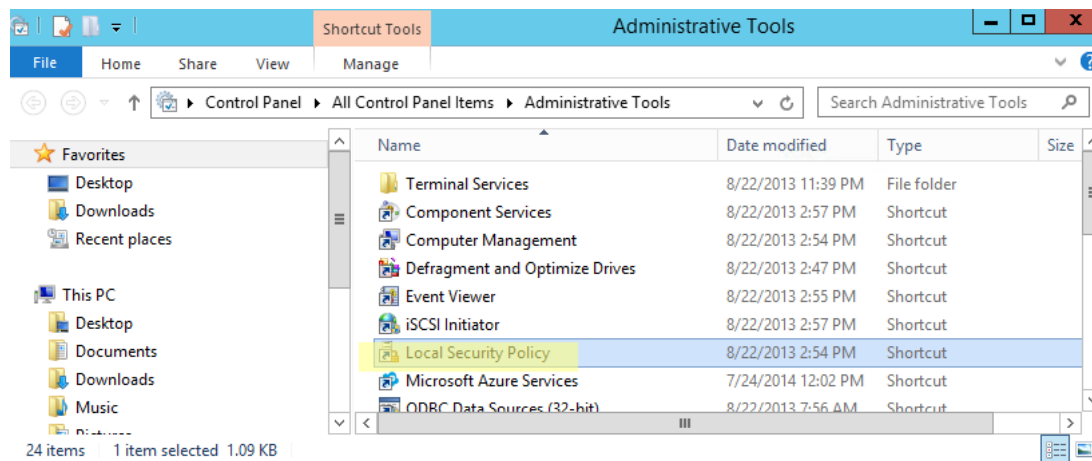
Policy	Security Setting
Enforce password history	8 passwords remembered
Maximum password age	180 days
Minimum password age	3 days
Minimum password length	8 characters
Password must meet complexity requirements	Enabled
Store passwords using reversible encryption	Disabled

2.2.3 Account Lockout Policy

In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools



Click Local Security Policy

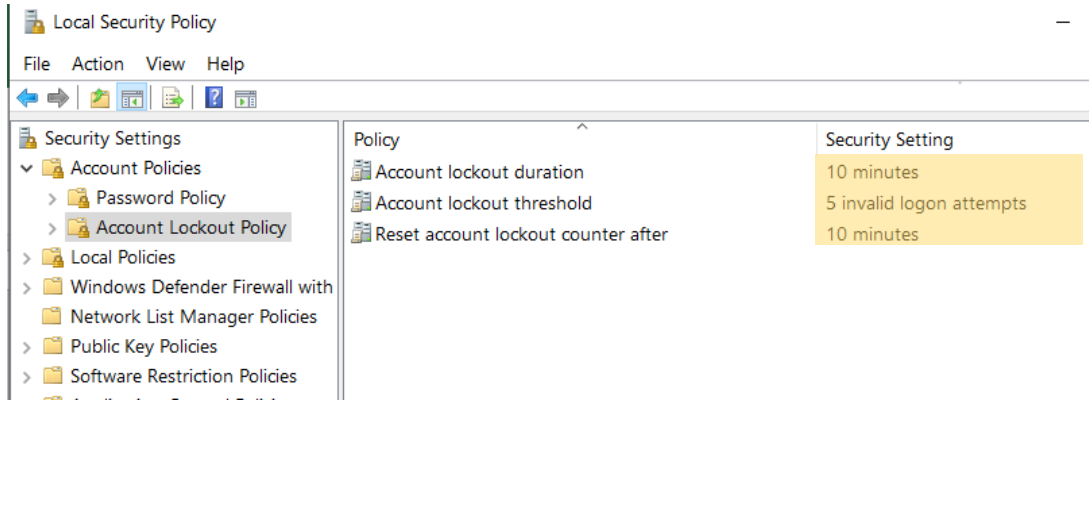


Navigate to

Security Settings – Account Policies – Account Lockout Policy

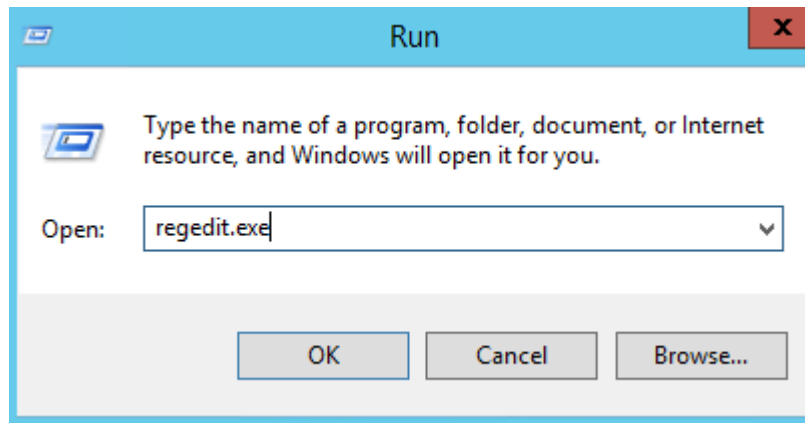
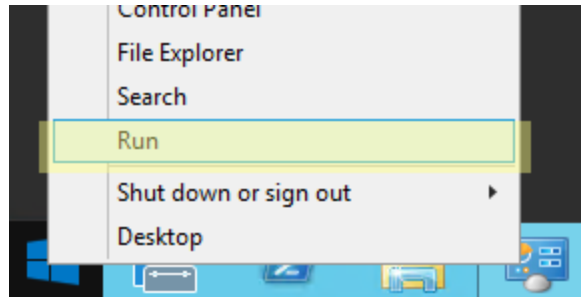
Policy	Security Setting
Account lockout duration	10 minutes
Account lockout threshold	5 invalid logon attempts
Reset account lockout counter after	10 minutes

Result is



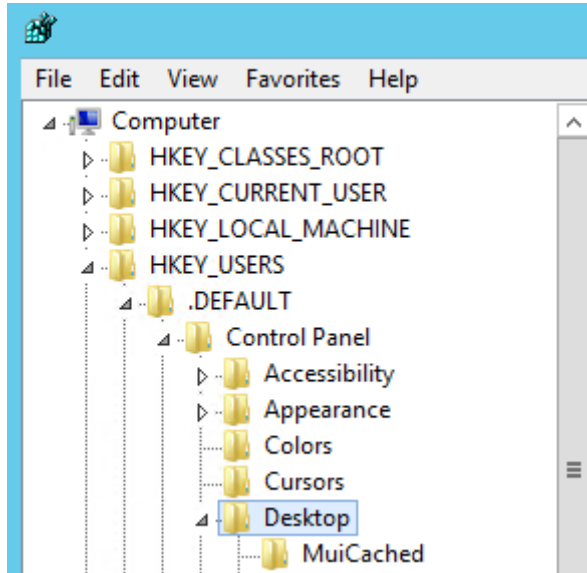
2.2.4 Screen Saver

Run regedit.exe (registry editor)

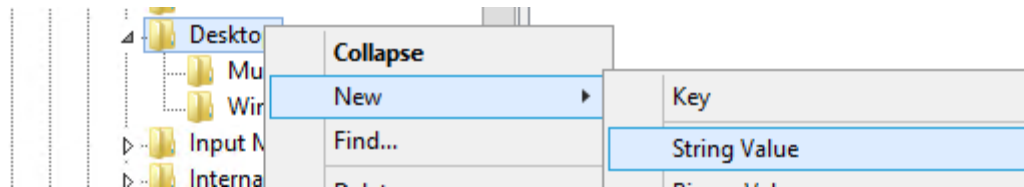


Navigate to

HKEY_USERS – .DEFAULT – Control Panel – Desktop

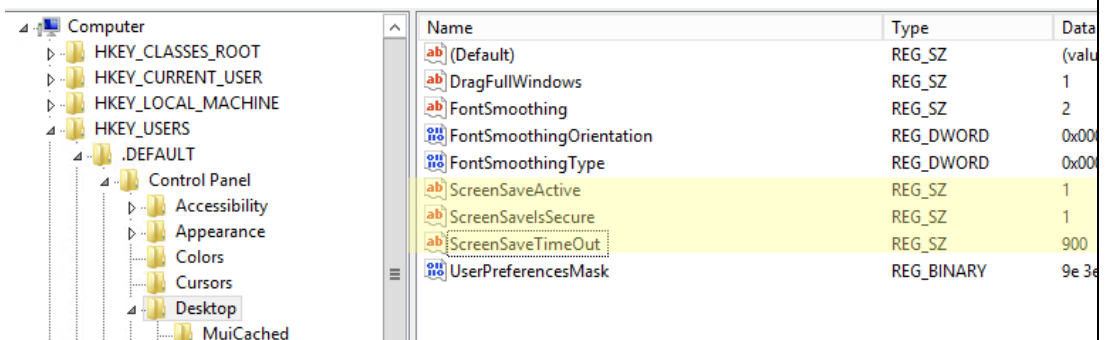


Right click to add new String Value as



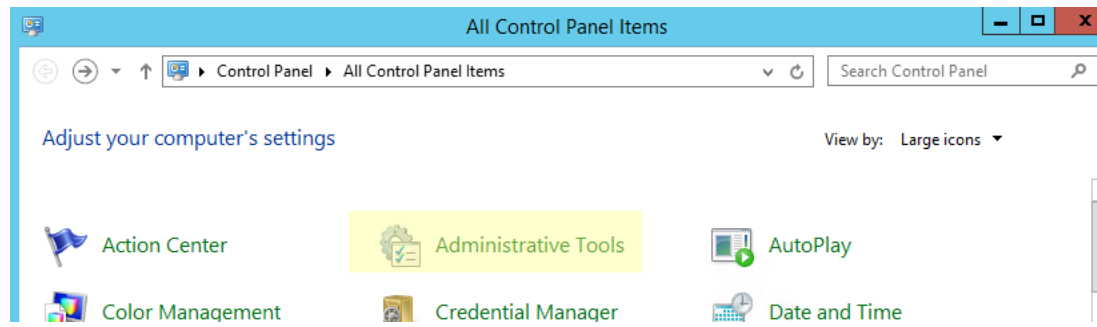
ScreenSaveActive	1
ScreenSavelsSecure	1
ScreenSaveTimeOut	900

Result is

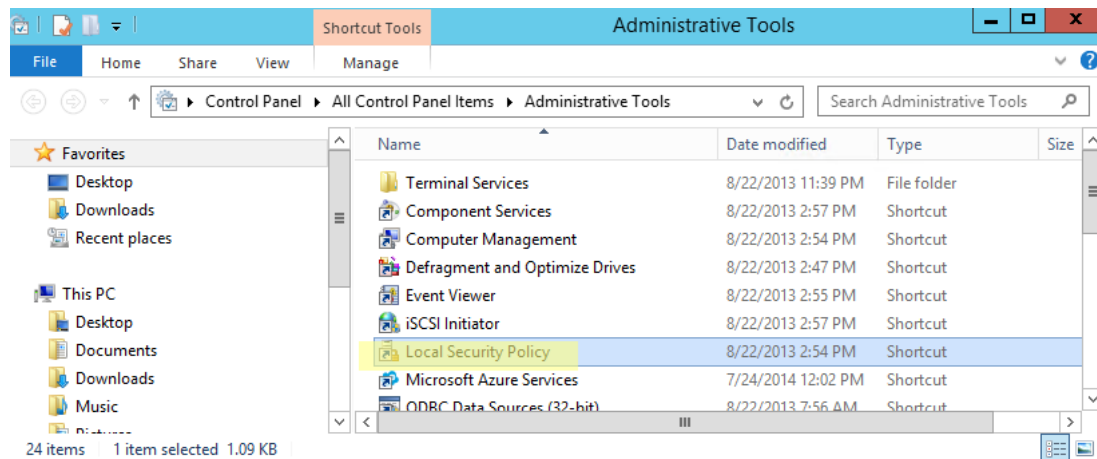


2.3 Local Security Policy

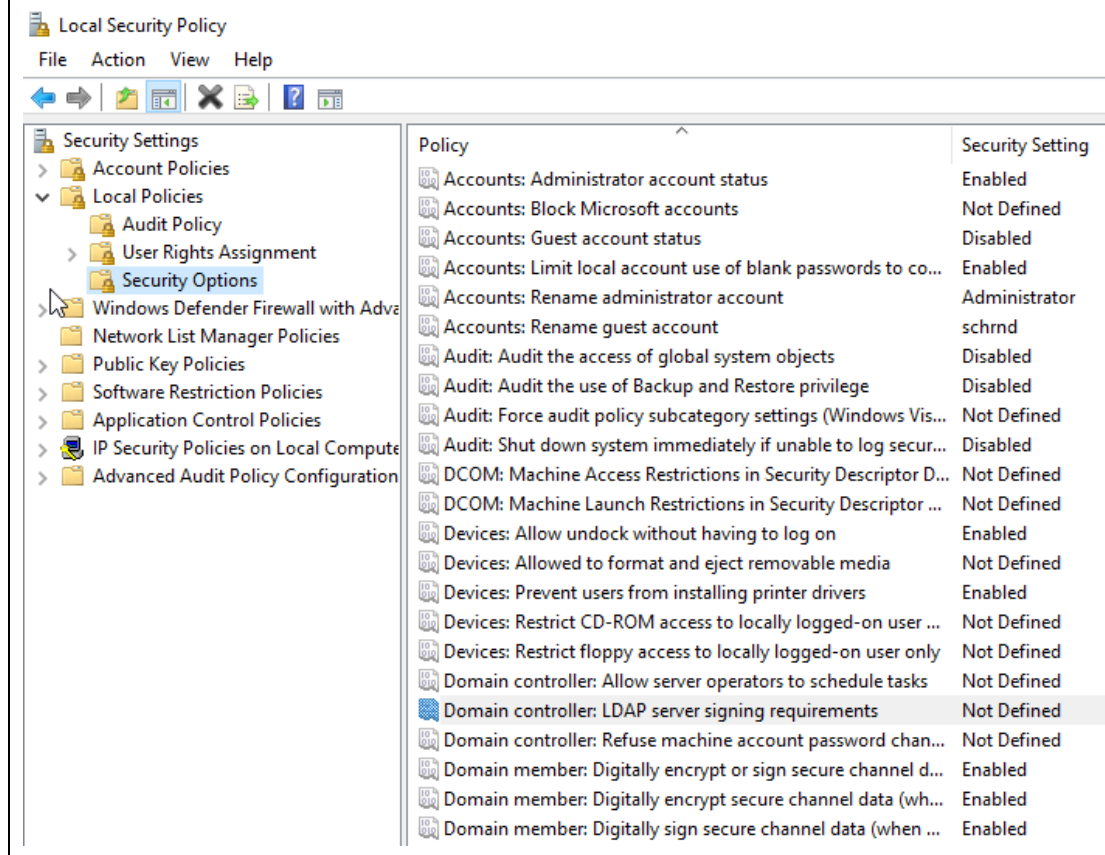
In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools



Click Local Security Policy



Navigate to Local Policies-Security Options



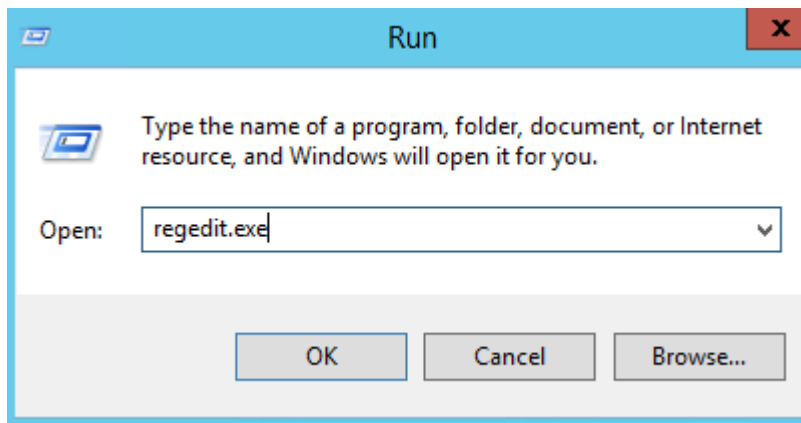
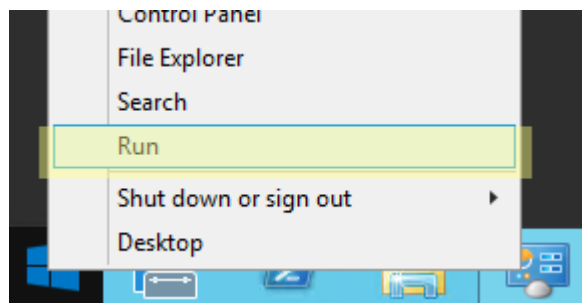
Set the additional Security Options by referring below table.

Policy	Security Setting
Accounts: Guest account status	Disabled
Accounts: Rename guest account	Assign any name other than the default name such as schrnd
Audit: Shut down system immediately if unable to log security audits	Disabled
Domain member: Digitally encrypt or sign secure channel data (always)	Enabled
Domain member: Digitally encrypt secure channel data (when possible)	Enabled
Domain member: Digitally sign secure channel data (When possible)	Enabled
Interactive logon: Do not display username at sign-in	Enabled
Interactive logon: Message text for	"Authenticated User Only"

users attempting to log on	
Interactive logon: Message title for users attempting to log on	"Authenticated User Only"
Interactive logon: Number of previous logons to cache (in case domain controller is not available)	0 logons
Interactive logon: Prompt user to change password before expiration	5 days
Recovery console: Allow automatic administrative logon	Disabled
Recovery console: Allow floppy copy and access to all drives and all folders	Disabled

2.4 Registry Security Configuration

1. Run regedit.exe (registry editor)



2. Navigate to
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session
Manager\Memory Management]

3. Configure the following Dwords
If Hyper-Threading enabled

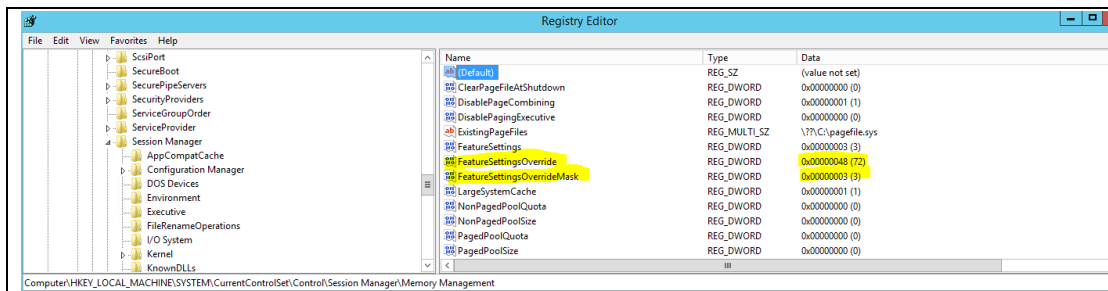
"FeatureSettingsOverride"=dword:00000048

"FeatureSettingsOverrideMask"=dword:00000003

If Hyper-Threading disabled

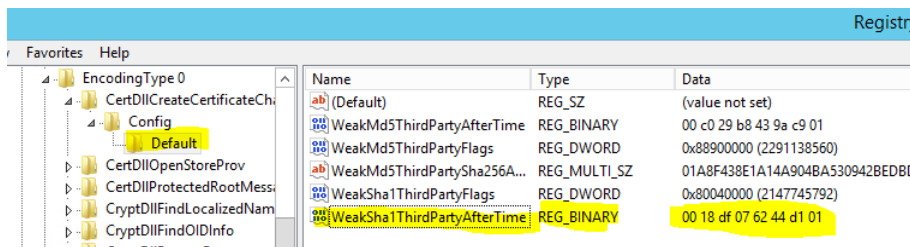
"FeatureSettingsOverride"=dword:00002048

"FeatureSettingsOverrideMask"=dword:00000003



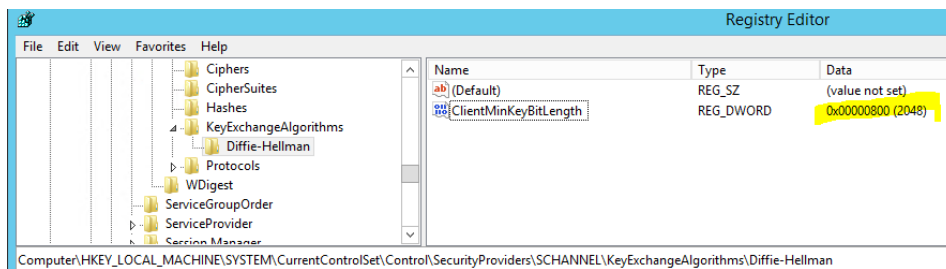
4. Navigate to
 [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Cryptography\OID\EncodingType 0\CertDllCreateCertificateChainEngine\Config\default]

5. Configure the following binary value
 "WeakSha1ThirdPartyAfterTime"=0018df076244d101

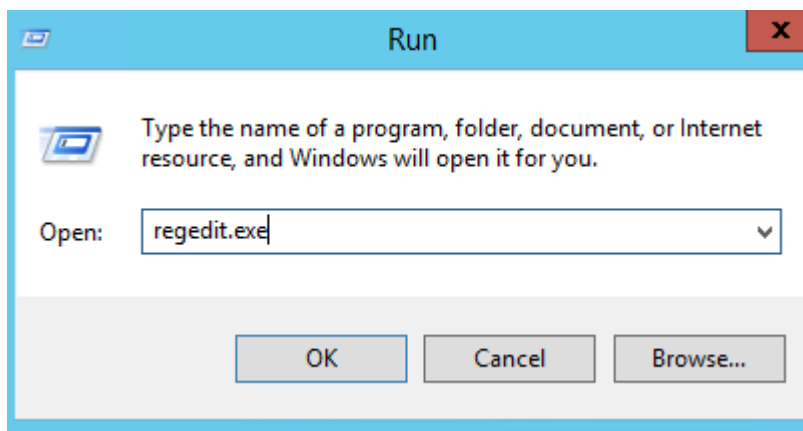
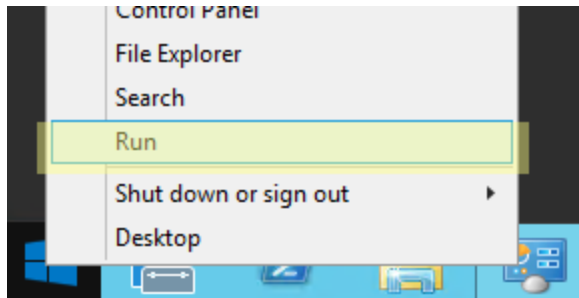


6. Navigate to
 [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\SecurityProviders\SCHANNEL\KeyExchangeAlgorithms\Diffie-Hellman]

7. Configure the following Dword
 "ClientMinKeyBitLength"=dword: 00000800



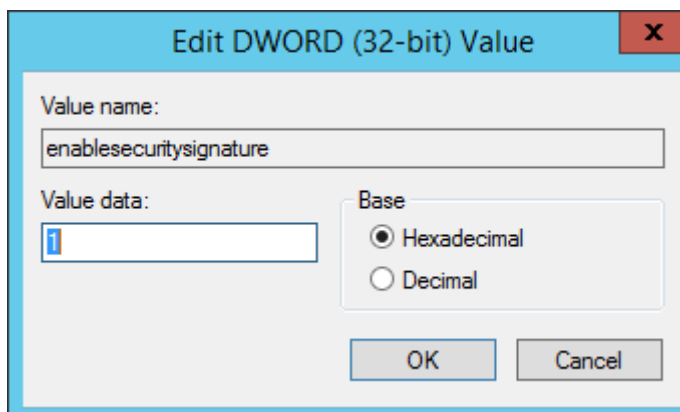
Run regedit.exe (registry editor)



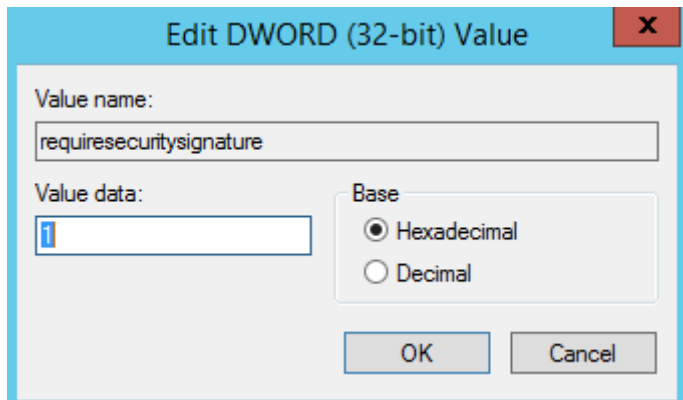
Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\LanmanServer\
Parameters

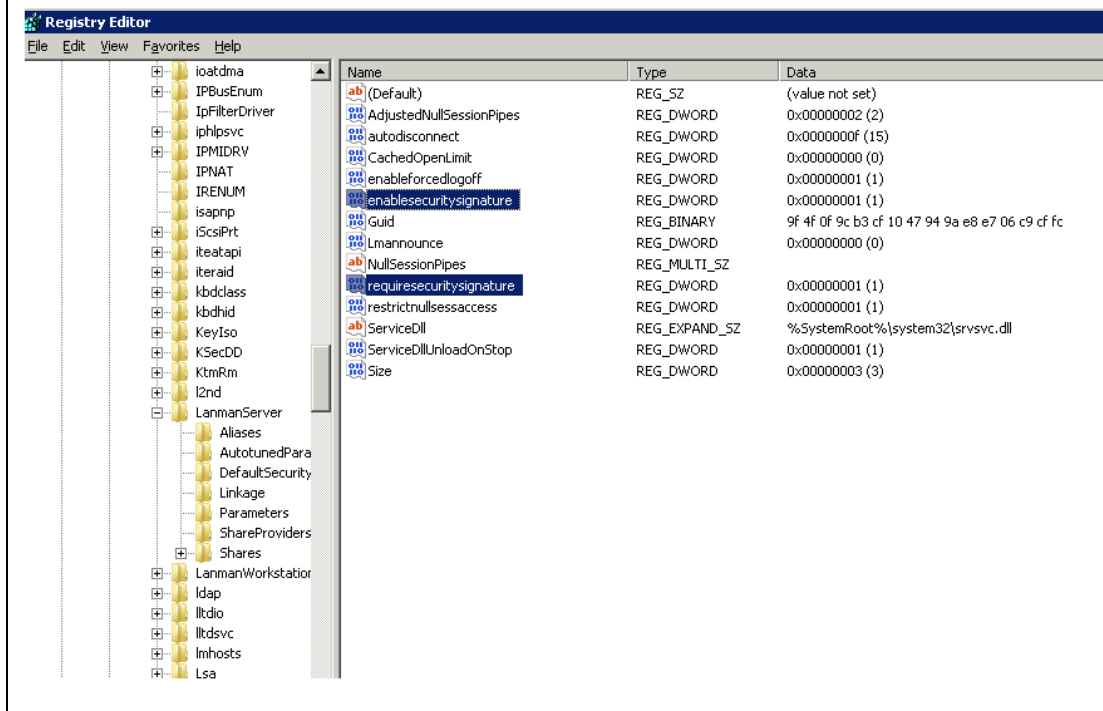
Change enablesecuritysignature to 1



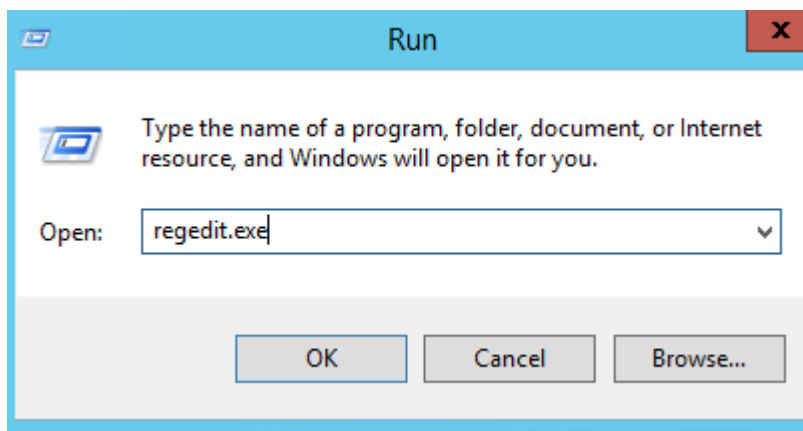
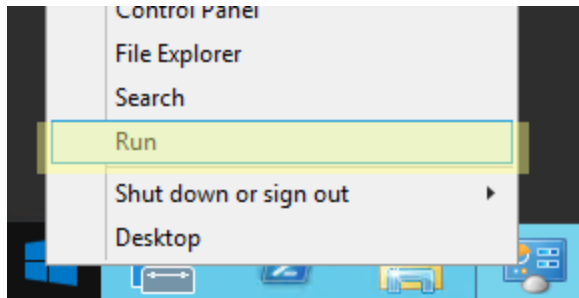
Change requiresecuritysignature to 1



Result is



Run regedit.exe (registry editor)



Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\SecurityProviders\
SCHANNEL\Ciphers

Set 0 to

NULL

DES 56/56

RC2 40/128

RC2 56/128

RC2 128/128

RC4 40/128

RC4 56/128

RC4 64/128

RC4 128/128

Triple DES 168

Take DES 56/56 as example

The screenshot shows the Windows Registry Editor with the following structure:

- ProductOptions
 - SafeBoot
 - SecureEvents
 - SecurePort
 - SecureBoot
 - SecurePipeServers
 - SecurityProviders
 - SaslProfiles
 - SCHANNEL
 - Ciphers
 - AES 128/128
 - AES 256/256
 - DES 56/56
 - NULL
 - RC2 128/128
 - RC2 40/128

The 'Edit DWORD (32-bit) Value' dialog box is open, showing the following details:

- Value name: Enabled
- Value data: 1
- Base: Hexadecimal (selected)
- Decimal (unselected)

Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\SecurityProviders
\SCHANNEL\Protocols

Set key as below

SSL 2.0

Key: Client DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Client DWORD: Enabled (0)

Key: Server DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Server DWORD: Enabled (0)

SSL 3.0

Key: Client DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Client DWORD: Enabled (0)

Key: Server DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Server DWORD: Enabled (0)

TLS 1.0 *

Key: Client DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Client DWORD: Enabled (0)

Key: Server DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Server DWORD: Enabled (0)

TLS 1.1

Key: Client DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Client DWORD: Enabled (0)

Key: Server DWORD: DisabledByDefault (1)

Key: Server DWORD: Enabled (0)

TLS 1.2

Key: Client DWORD: DisabledByDefault (0)

Key: Client DWORD: Enabled (1)

Key: Server DWORD: DisabledByDefault (0)

Key: Server DWORD: Enabled (1)

Result is

SSL 2.0

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

SSL 3.0

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

TLS 1.0

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0xffffffff (4294967295)

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

TLS1.1

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)

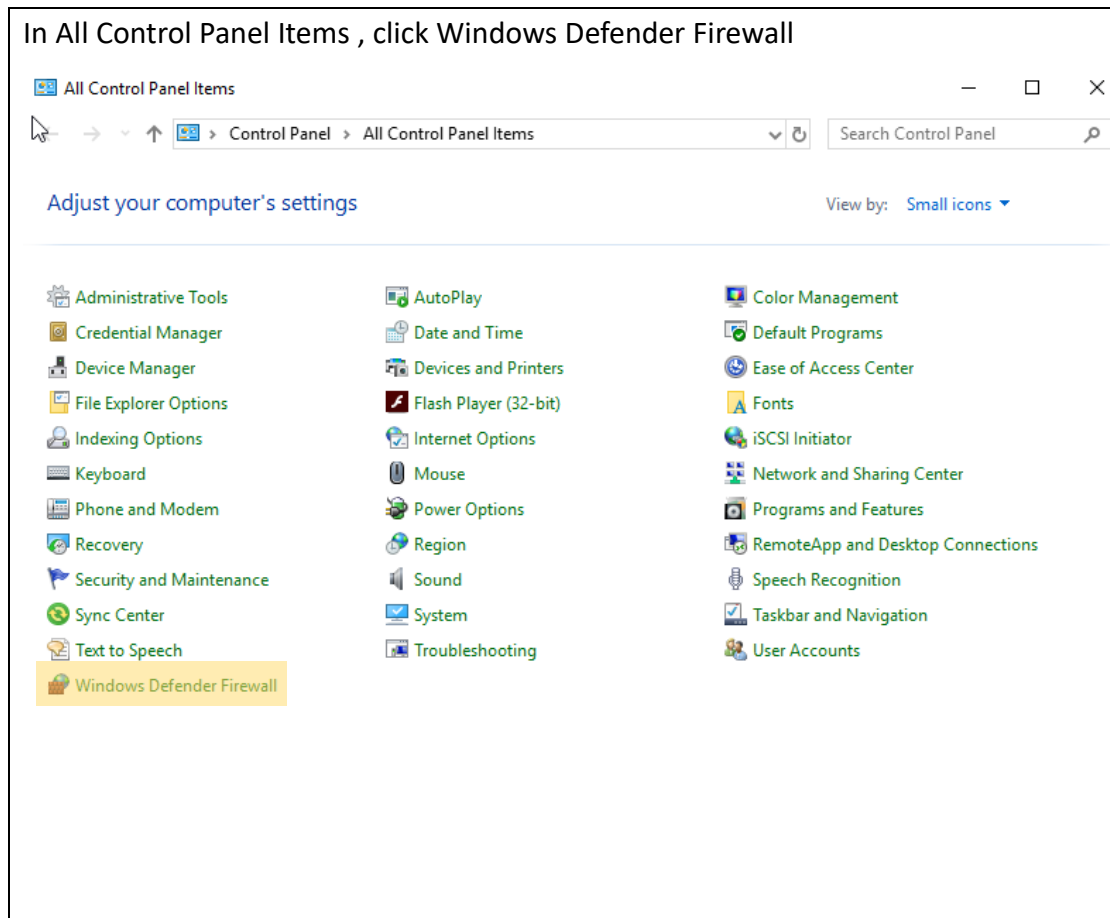
TLS1.2

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)

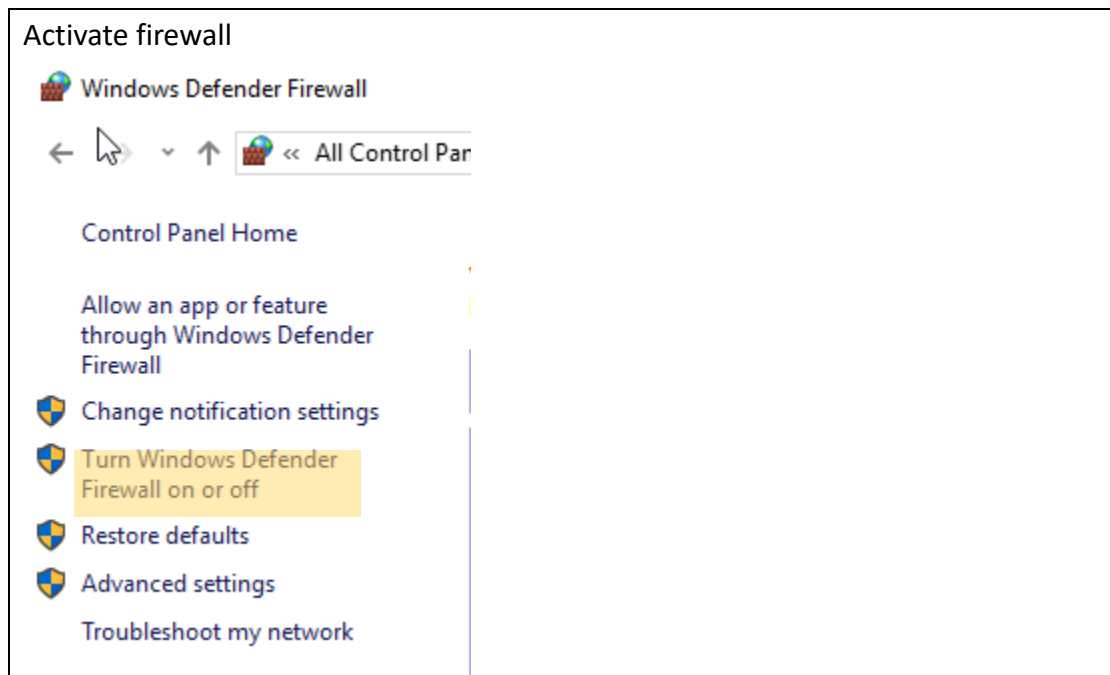
Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisabledByDefault	REG_DWORD	0x00000000 (0)
Enabled	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)

2.5 Firewall

In All Control Panel Items , click Windows Defender Firewall



Activate firewall



Customize settings for each type of network

You can modify the firewall settings for each type of network that you use.

Private network settings

- Turn on Windows Defender Firewall
- Block all incoming connections, including those in the list of allowed apps
 - Notify me when Windows Defender Firewall blocks a new app
- Turn off Windows Defender Firewall (not recommended)

Public network settings

- Turn on Windows Defender Firewall
- Block all incoming connections, including those in the list of allowed apps
 - Notify me when Windows Defender Firewall blocks a new app
- Turn off Windows Defender Firewall (not recommended)

Result is

Control Panel Home

Windows Defender Firewall

Help protect your PC with Windows Defender Firewall

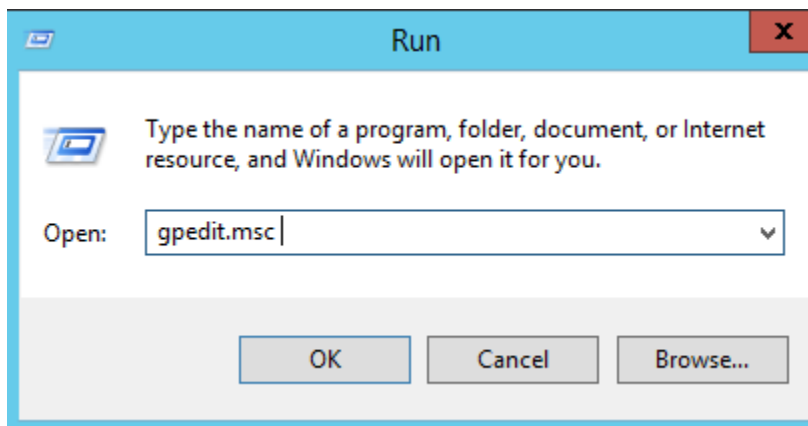
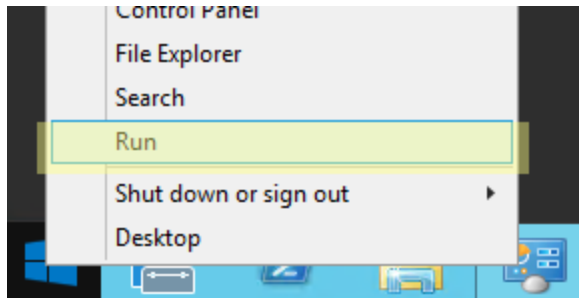
Windows Defender Firewall can help prevent hackers or malicious software from gaining access to your PC through the Internet or a network.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private networks	Not connected
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guest or public networks	Connected

Networks in public places such as airports or coffee shops

Windows Defender Firewall state:	On
Incoming connections:	Block all connections to apps that are not on the list of allowed apps
Active public networks:	Network
Notification state:	Do not notify me when Windows Defender Firewall blocks a new app

Run gpedit.msc

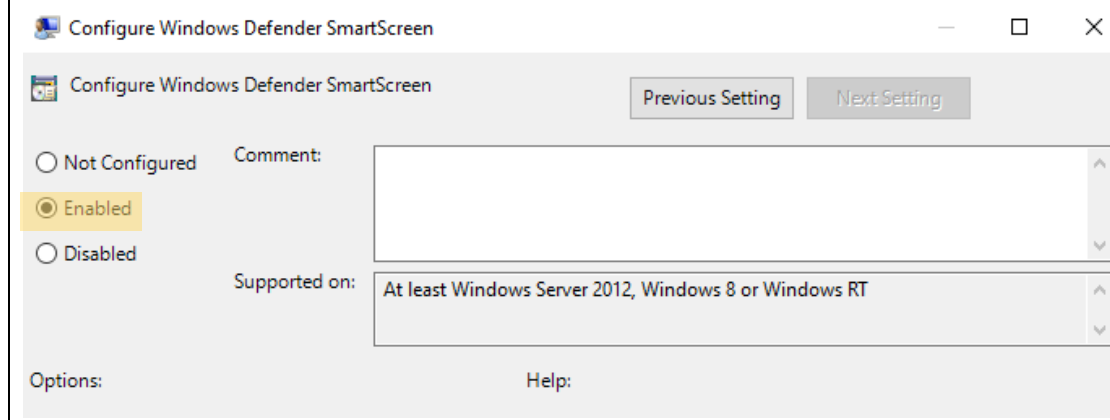


Navigate to

Computer Configuration – Administrative Template – Windows Components –
Windows Defender SmartScreen – Explorer

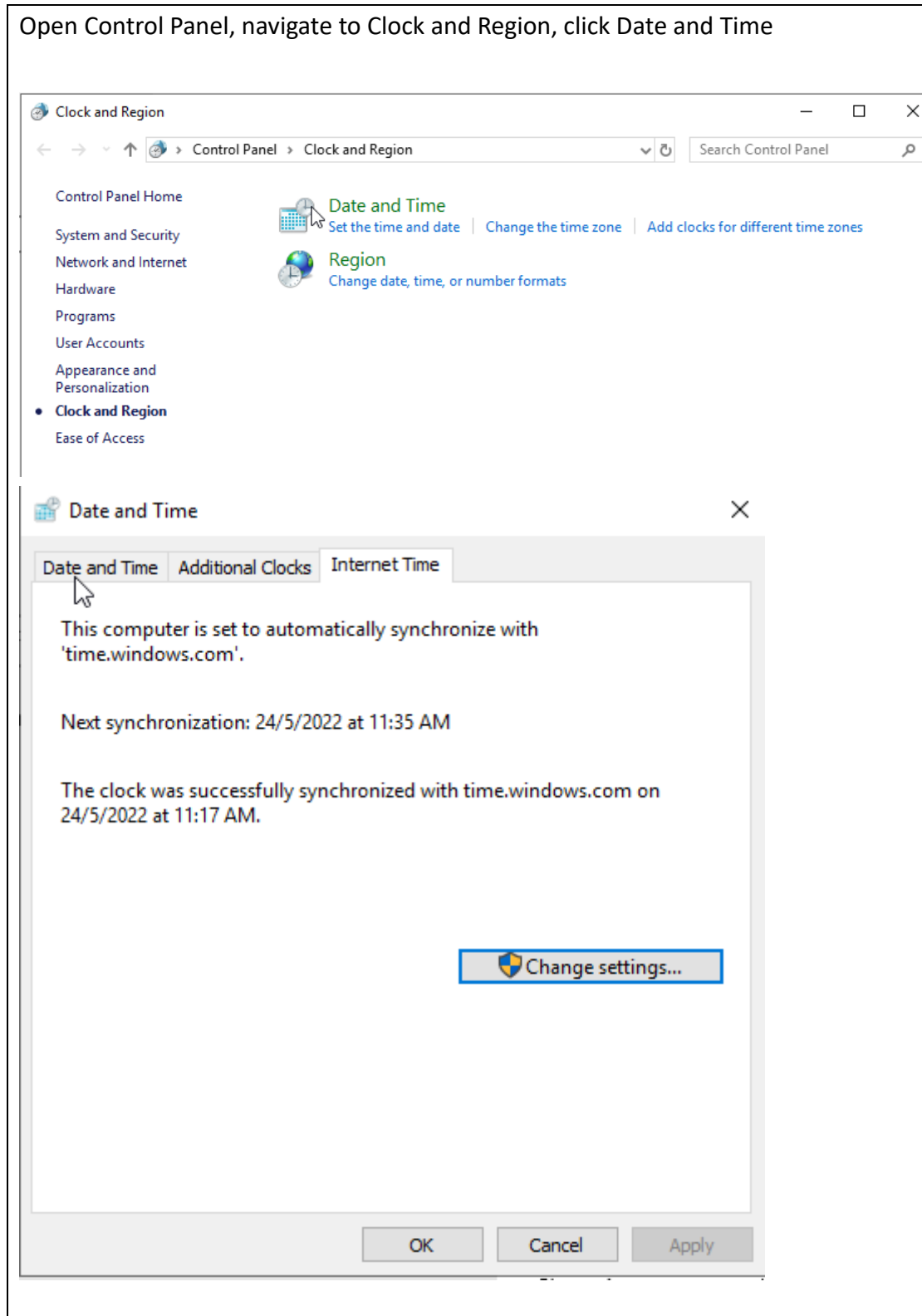
Click Configure Windows Defender SmartScreen

Select Enabled



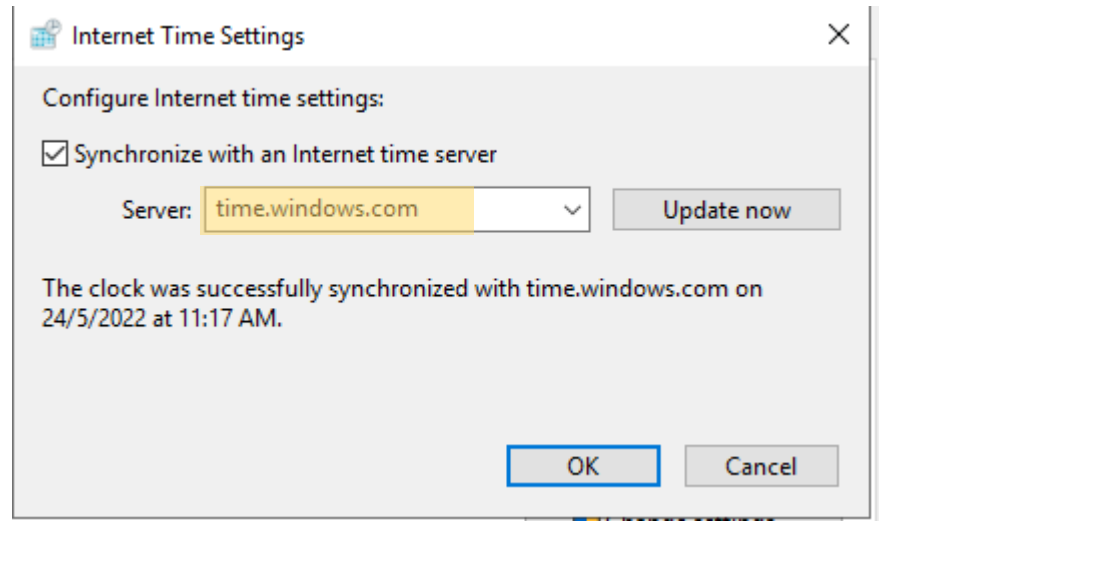
2.6 NTP (Time Synchronization)

Open Control Panel, navigate to Clock and Region, click Date and Time



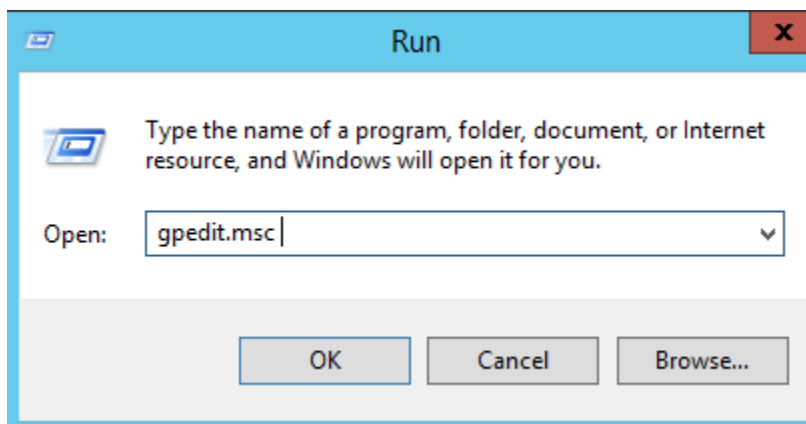
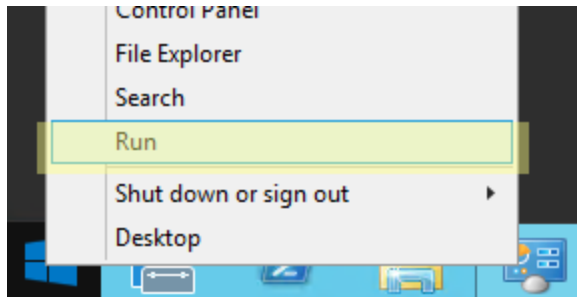
Click Change settings

Set your preferred time source, such as your internal domain server or internet time server.



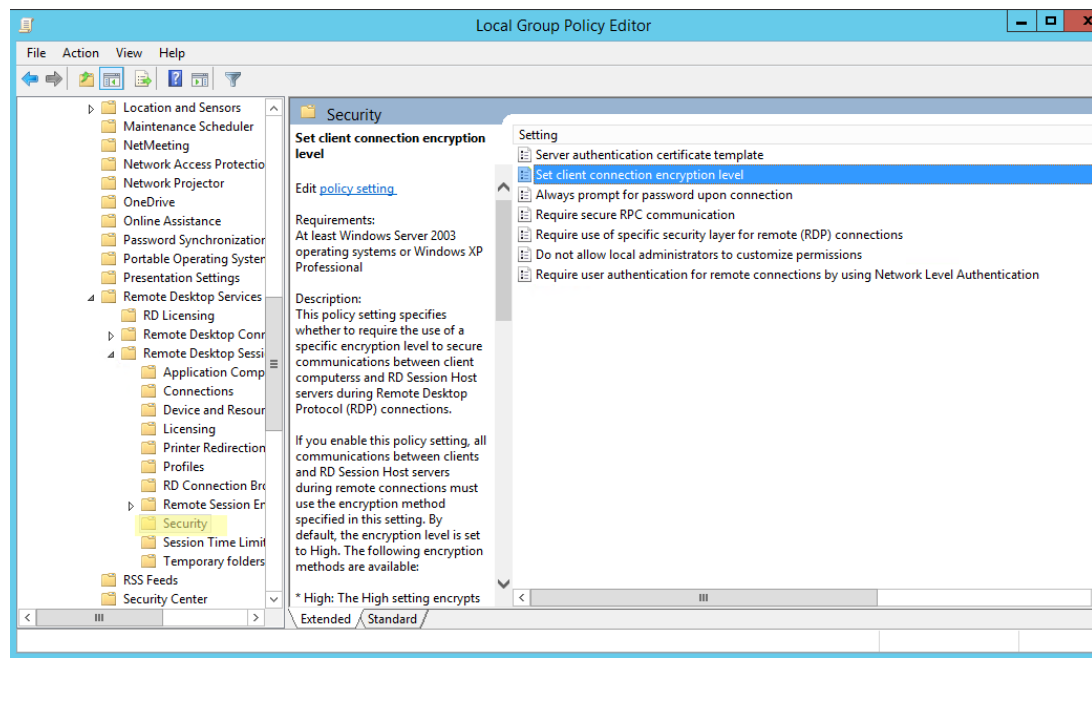
2.7 Remote Desktop Configuration

Run gpedit.msc

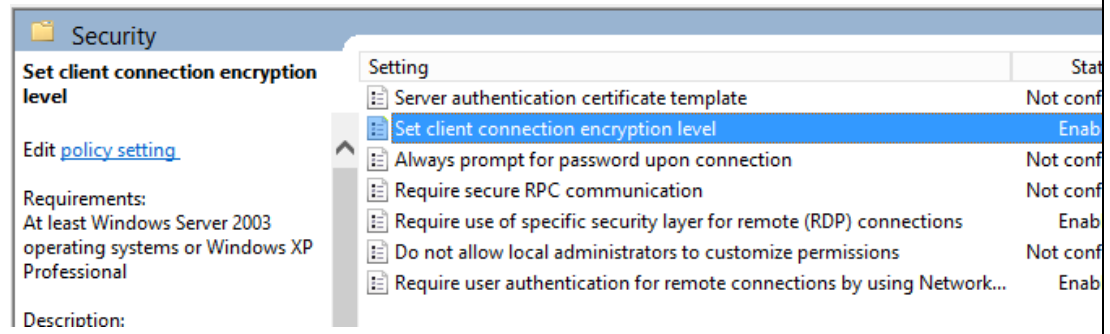


Navigate to

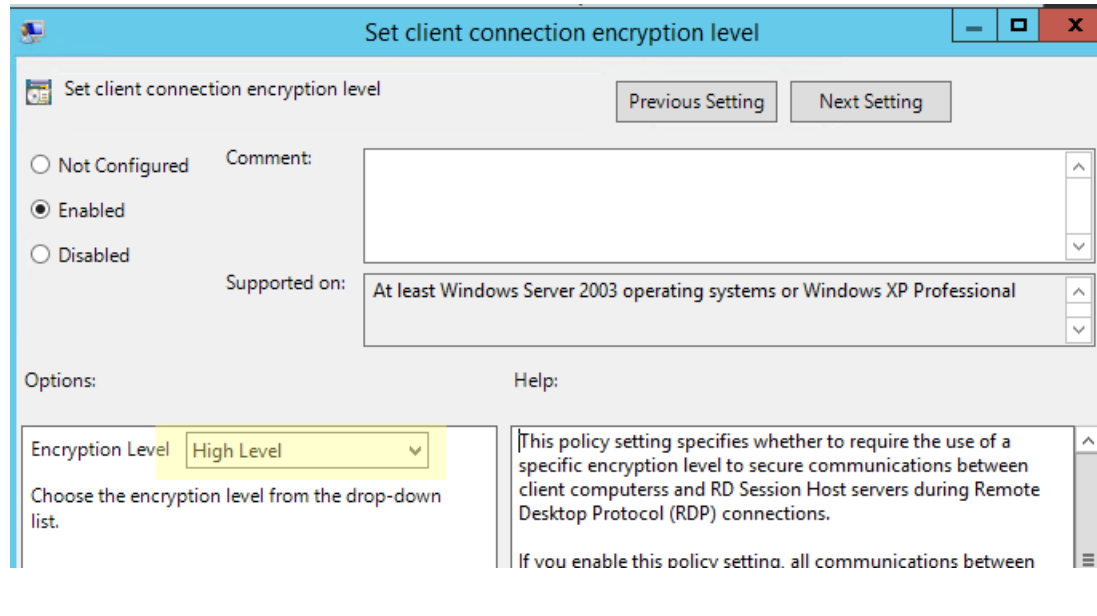
Computer Configuration - Administrative Templates - Windows Components - Remote Desktop Services - Remote Desktop Session Host - Security



Click Set client connection encryption level



Select High Level



Click Require use of specific security layer for remote (RDP) connections

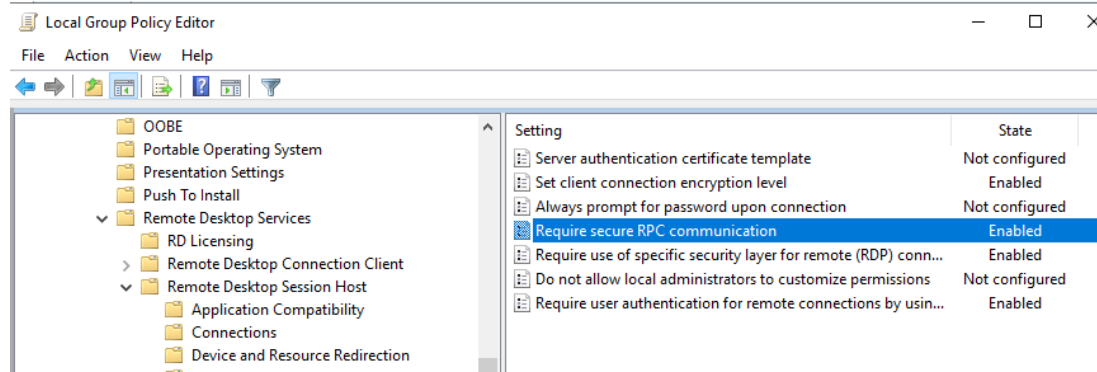
The screenshot shows the Windows Security settings interface. On the left, the 'Security' folder is expanded to show the policy 'Require use of specific security layer for remote (RDP) connections'. Below the policy name are links for 'Edit policy setting', 'Requirements: At least Windows Vista', and a 'Description: This policy setting specifies whether to require the use of a specific security layer to secure'. On the right, a table lists several settings:

Setting	State
Server authentication certificate template	Not configured
Set client connection encryption level	Enabled
Always prompt for password upon connection	Not configured
Require secure RPC communication	Not configured
Require use of specific security layer for remote (RDP) conn...	Enabled
Do not allow local administrators to customize permissions	Not configured
Require user authentication for remote connections by usin...	Enabled

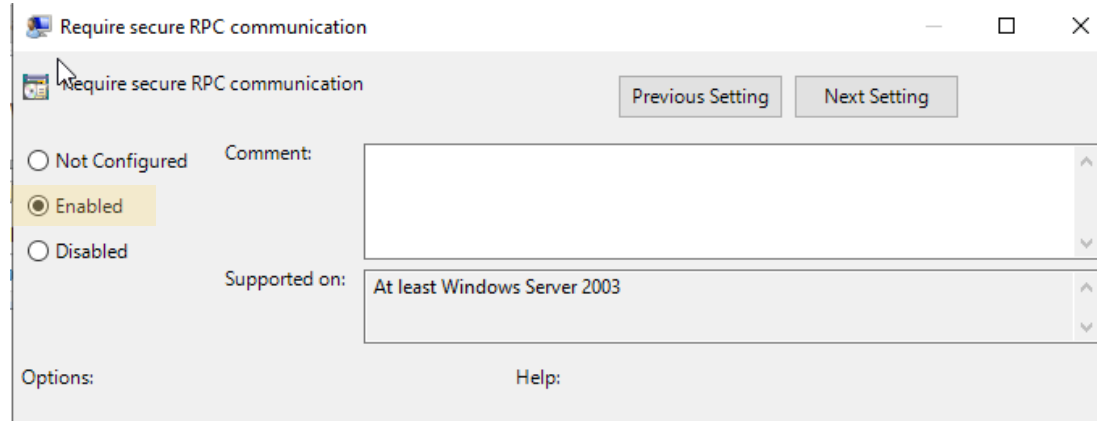
Select SSL

The screenshot shows the configuration dialog for the 'Require use of specific security layer for remote (RDP) connections' policy. The dialog has a title bar with the policy name and standard window controls. Below the title bar are 'Previous Setting' and 'Next Setting' buttons. The main area contains three radio buttons: 'Not Configured', 'Enabled' (which is selected), and 'Disabled'. To the right of these is a 'Comment:' text area. Below the radio buttons is a 'Supported on:' field containing 'At least Windows Vista'. At the bottom, there are two sections: 'Options:' and 'Help:'. The 'Options:' section has a 'Security Layer' dropdown menu currently set to 'SSL' and a note: 'Choose the security layer from the drop-down list.' The 'Help:' section contains a text box with the following text: 'This policy setting specifies whether to require the use of a specific security layer to secure communications between clients and RD Session Host servers during Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) connections.'

Click Require secure RPC communication



Select Enabled



Click Require user authentication for remote connections by using Network Level Authentication

The screenshot shows the Windows Security settings window. On the left, the 'Security' folder is expanded to show 'Require user authentication for remote connections by using Network Level Authentication'. Below this, there are links for 'Edit policy setting', 'Requirements: At least Windows Vista', and a 'Description: This policy setting allows you to'. On the right, a table lists various settings and their states.

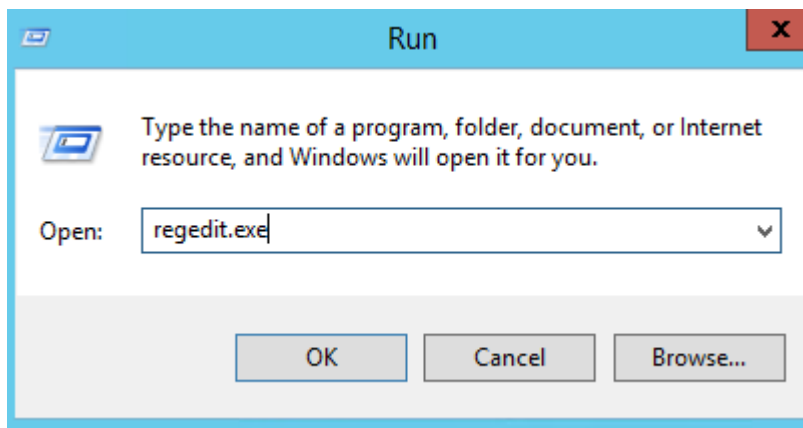
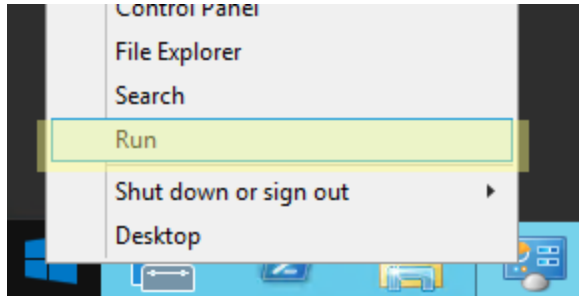
Setting	State
Server authentication certificate template	Not configured
Set client connection encryption level	Enabled
Always prompt for password upon connection	Not configured
Require secure RPC communication	Not configured
Require use of specific security layer for remote (RDP) connections	Enabled
Do not allow local administrators to customize permissions	Not configured
Require user authentication for remote connections by using Network...	Enabled

Select Enabled

The screenshot shows the detailed settings dialog for 'Require user authentication for remote connections by using Network Level Authentication'. The dialog has a title bar with the window name and standard minimize, maximize, and close buttons. Below the title bar, there are 'Previous Setting' and 'Next Setting' buttons. The main area contains three radio button options: 'Not Configured', 'Enabled' (which is selected and highlighted in yellow), and 'Disabled'. To the right of these options is a 'Comment:' text area with up and down arrows. Below the radio buttons is a 'Supported on:' section with a dropdown menu showing 'At least Windows Vista'. At the bottom, there are 'Options:' and 'Help:' sections. The 'Help:' section contains a text box with the text: 'This policy setting allows you to specify whether to require user authentication for remote connections to the RD Session Host'.

2.8 Unquoted Service Path

Run regedit.exe (registry editor)



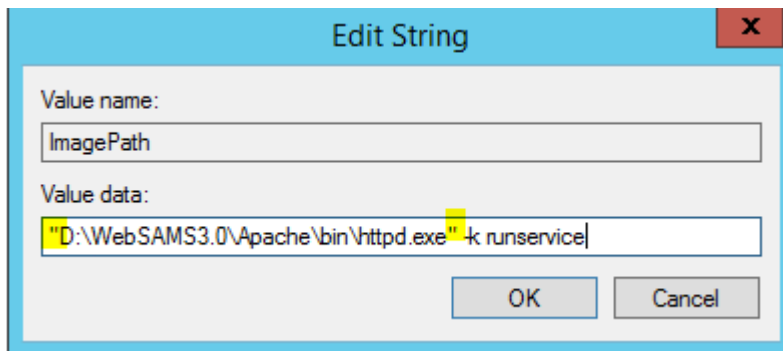
Navigate to

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services

For each key (service), check if the path to the executable file in the ImagePath is double quoted.

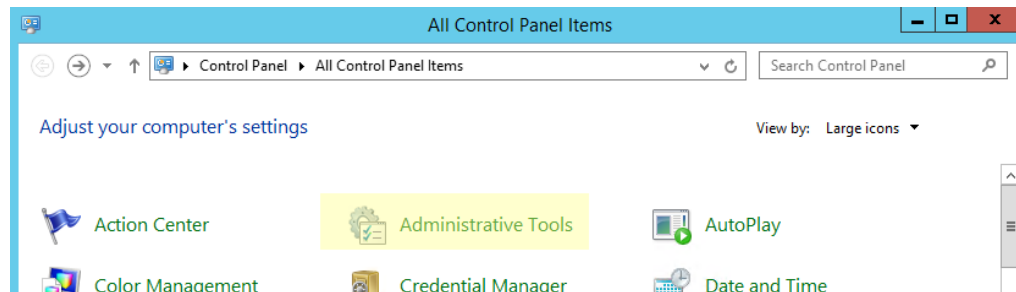
Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DependOnService	REG_MULTI_SZ	Tcpip Afd
Description	REG_SZ	Apache/2.4.33 (Win64) OpenSSL/1.1.0h mod_jk/1.2...
DisplayName	REG_SZ	Apache2.4
ErrorControl	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
ImagePath	REG_EXPAND_SZ	"D:\WebSAMS3.0\Apache\bin\httpd.exe"-k runser...
ObjectName	REG_SZ	LocalSystem
Start	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)
Type	REG_DWORD	0x00000010 (16)

If there is any service executable not double quoted, double click on ImagePath and edit the value data to double quote it.

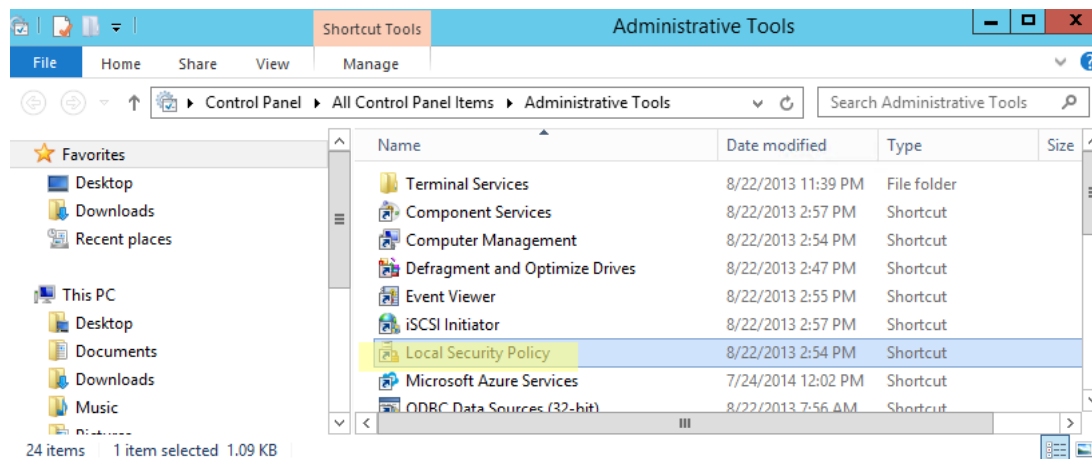


2.9 Event Log Setting

In All Control Panel Items , click Administrative Tools



Click Local Security Policy



Navigate to

Security Settings – Local Policies – Audit Policy

Check both “Success” & “Failure” options :

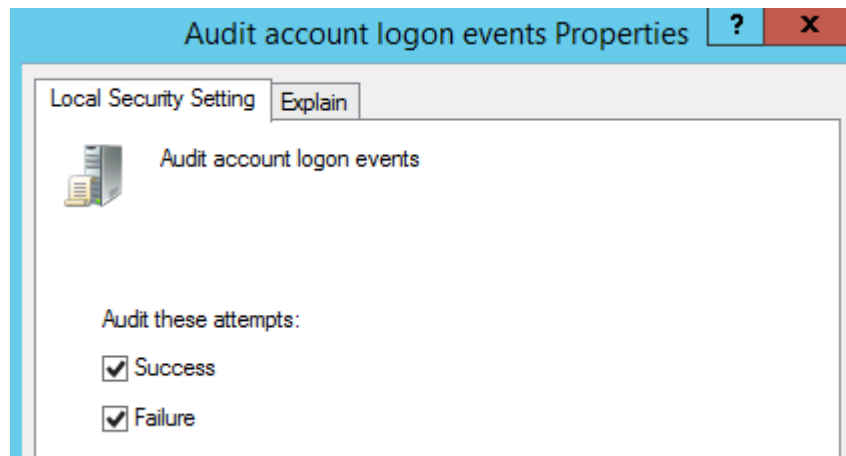
- (1) Audit account logon events
- (2) Audit account management
- (3) Audit directory service access
- (4) Audit logon events
- (5) Audit object access
- (6) Audit policy change
- (7) Audit system events

Check “Failure” option for :

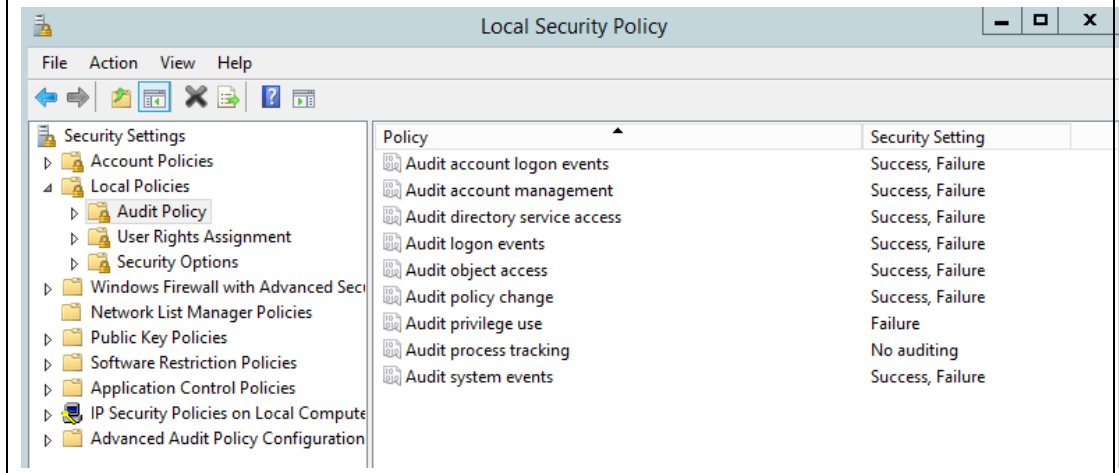
- (1) Audit privilege use

Uncheck both “Success” & “Failure” options, which means “No auditing” option for :

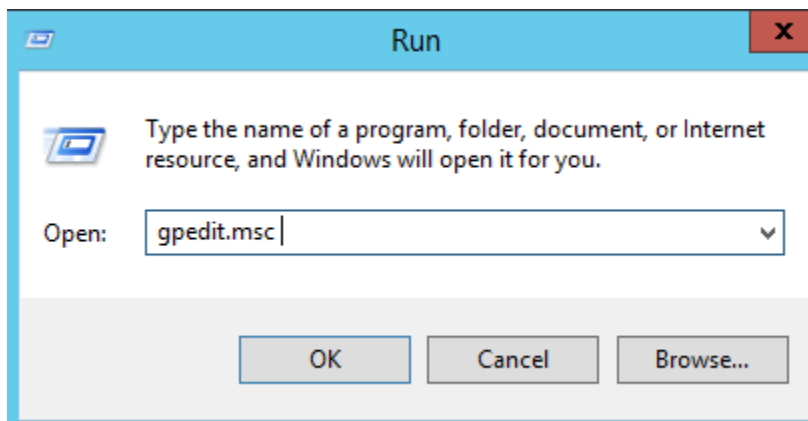
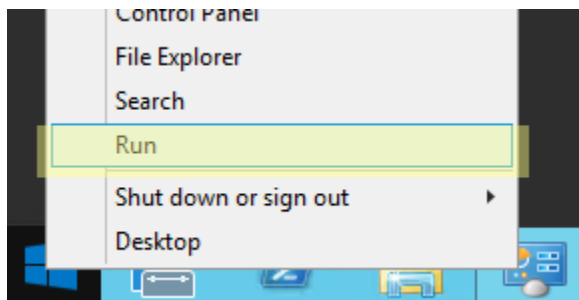
- (1) Audit process tracking



Result is



Run gpedit.msc

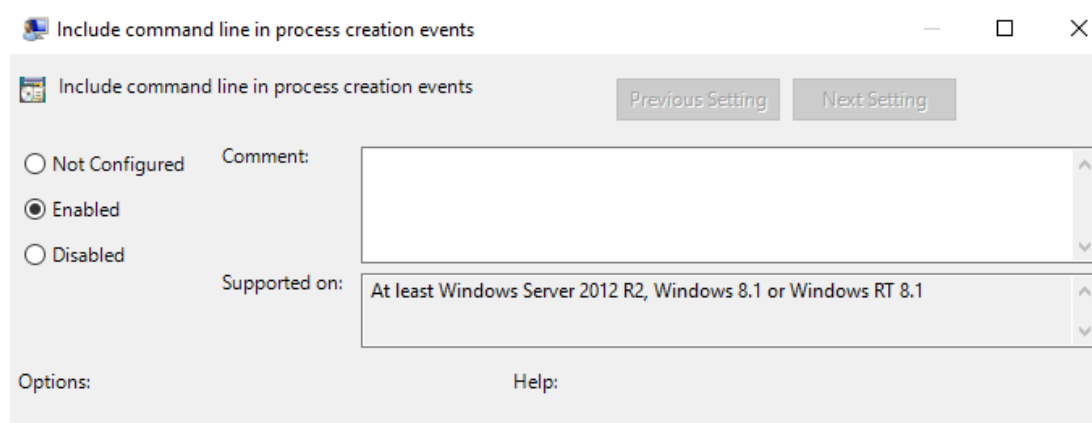


Navigate to

Computer Configuration – Administrative Templates – System – Audit Process Creation

Click Include command line in process creation events

Select Enabled

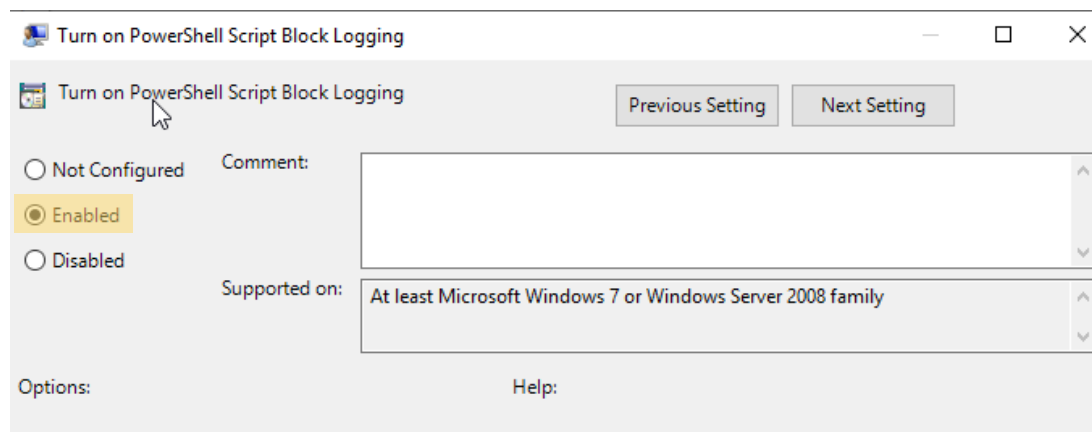


Navigate to

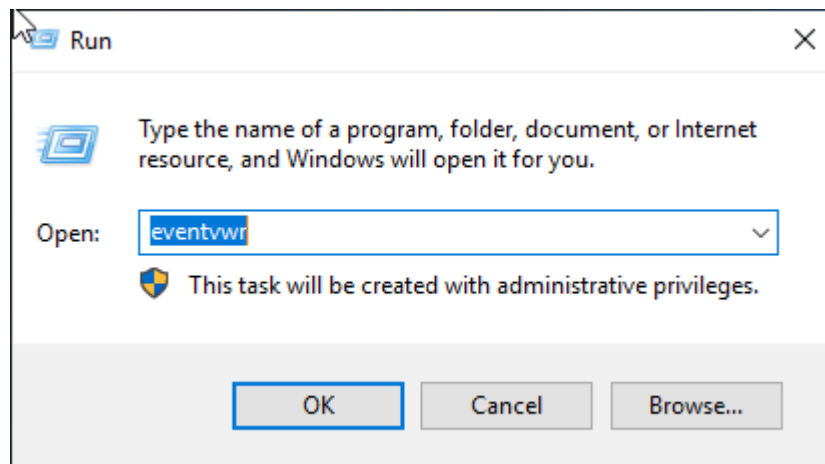
Computer Configuration – Administrative Templates – Windows Components – Windows PowerShell

Click Turn on PowerShell Script Block Logging

Select Enabled



Run eventvwr



Go to Event Viewer(Local) – Windows Logs, right click System and selectProperty, set Maximum log size, such as 2GB for System log as below. Apply the same setting for all components under Windows Logs.

Event Viewer (Local)

- Custom Views
- Windows Logs
 - Application
 - Security
 - Setup
 - System
 - Forwarded Events
- Applications and Services Logs
- Subscriptions

Windows Logs

Name	Type	Number of Events	Size
Application	Administrative	960	2.07 MB
Security	Administrative	7,984	6.07 MB
Setup	Operational	0	68 KB
System	Administrative	4,284	2.07 MB
Forwarded Events	Operational	0	68 KB

Log Properties - System (Type: Administrative)

General Subscriptions

Full Name: System

Log path: %SystemRoot%\System32\Winevt\Logs\System.evtx

Log size: 2.07 MB(2,166,784 bytes)

Created: Thursday, 19 May 2022 1:21:54 AM

Modified: Wednesday, 25 May 2022 6:04:49 AM

Accessed: Wednesday, 25 May 2022 6:04:49 AM

Enable logging

Maximum log size (KB):

When maximum event log size is reached:

- Overwrite events as needed (oldest events first)
- Archive the log when full, do not overwrite events
- Do not overwrite events (Clear logs manually)

Clear Log