

UNCLASSIFIED



RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX 9 STIG CHEF DOCUMENTATION

Version 2, Release 9

01 July 2026

Developed by DISA for the DoW

UNCLASSIFIED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. BACKGROUND.....	1
2. INSTALLATION.....	2
2.1 Installing Chef Client.....	2
2.2 Cookbooks.....	2
3. CONFIGURATION	3
3.1 Simple	3
3.2 Custom	3
4. CONTENT EXTRACTION	4
5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.....	5
5.1 Reboot for SELINUX Configuration Changes	5

1. BACKGROUND

Chef is an open source, cross-platform configuration management solution used to define and enforce system and application configurations. This package provides Chef configurations that implement most of the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 9 STIG. While the content has been tested during development, all possible system and environmental factors could not be tested. Before using this content in a production environment, perform testing with the intended settings in a test environment. There is no mandate to use this content; it is published as a resource to assist in the application of security guidance to systems. Use it in the manner and to the extent that it assists with this goal.

2. INSTALLATION

The following instructions are for stand-alone installation using [chef-client](#) for testing purposes. A production environment will likely use Chef Server and Chef Clients. See [here](#) for details.

2.1 Installing Chef Client

1. Download the RHEL 9 x64 Chef Client `.rpm` from [here](#)¹.
2. Install by running the following example command:

```
sudo rpm -ivh <DOWNLOADED_PACKAGE_NAME>.rpm
```

2.2 Cookbooks

Unzip `rhel9STIG-chef.zip`. Run the included `install.sh` script. This script unzips the included cookbook inside the cookbook directory.

¹ https://omnitruck.chef.io/stable/chef/download?p=el&pv=9&m=x86_64

3. CONFIGURATION

3.1 Simple

To apply the default STIG Chef configuration to the local machine only, run the **enforce.sh** script to enforce the STIG. To tailor the configuration, follow the steps in the next section.

3.2 Custom

To customize, adjust the attributes in the `cookbooks\rhel9STIG\attributes\default.rb` file. This file contains configuration data to define which configuration settings to manage and the values for these settings. Edit this configuration file in a text editor to best suit each system's requirements as needed. For example, to turn off STIG rule ID 258151, set the "Manage" attribute equal to **false**. To set STIG rule ID 258107's minimum password length to 20, set the `"_etc_security_pwquality_conf_Line"` attribute to **'minlen = 20'**.

```
default['rhel9STIG']['stigrule_258151']['Manage'] = false
default['rhel9STIG']['stigrule_258151']['Setting']['audit_Action'] = :install

default['rhel9STIG']['stigrule_258107']['Manage'] = true
default['rhel9STIG']['stigrule_258107']['Setting']['_etc_security_pwquality_c
onf_Line'] = 'minlen = 15'
```

For more information on attributes, see [here](#).

Note: While useful for testing, this approach is not recommended for a production Chef Server environment. Rather than changing the cookbook defaults, which may change in future versions of the cookbook, attributes should be overridden using Chef capabilities such as [roles](#) or [environments](#).

4. CONTENT EXTRACTION

This compliance extraction methodology returns results based on a system's compliance with the enforcement content. This may be different from STIG compliance. For example, multiple values may be allowed by the STIG but will be marked as “fail” if the value does not match the single exact value in the enforcement content. Additionally, if a value is customized in such a way to violate a STIG rule it will be marked as “pass” since it matches the enforcement content’s expected value.

At the completion of a successful Chef run, content extraction of the configuration results into XCCDF results can be performed via a Chef handler. Use of this handler can be controlled via modification of the following variable in the `cookbooks/rhel9STIG/attributes/default.rb` file:

```
default['rhel9STIG']['XCCDF_result']['Manage'] = true
```

Configuration of the handler is controlled via modification of the following variables in the `cookbooks/rhel9STIG/recipes/default.rb` file:

```
chef_handler 'Chef::Handler::StigXml' do
  source "#{Chef::Config[:file_cache_path]}/stig_xml.rb"
  arguments :stigName => 'U_Red_Hat_Enterprise_Linux_9_V2R9_Manual-
xccdf.xml', :path => '/path/where/to/write/results.xml'
```

The above resource controls the arguments to the handler writing the XCCDF results file to the `:path` using the manual STIG named `:stigName`. The XCCDF results file is output by default as `/tmp/xccdf-results.xml` if no `:path` is provided.

Note: The STIG name provided above should match the STIG release and version number for which the Chef content is built.

Chef provides a means of checking compliance without enforcement called `--why-run` mode. To use this mode, run the following:

```
chef-client -z -o rhel9STIG --why-run
```

Note: For the content extraction handler to function, a prior run without `--why-run` must have completed successfully.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Reboot for SELINUX Configuration Changes

If this cookbook makes changes to SELINUX configuration, it will restart the system to allow the new settings to take effect. If an automatic restart is not desired, disable management of these rules.