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Date: January 3, 2024

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Pseudo Wire Protection

Status of this Memo

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Abstract

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Pseudo Wire Protection

This document describes a mechanism that helps to protect and recover user traffic when carried over pseudo-wires. The mechanism requires

some minor modification to the existing pseudo-wire setup procedure, and is fully backward compatible.

The proposed mechanism allows the network operators to setup one or multiple backup pseudo-wires to protect a working pseudo-wire. Upon network failure, user traffic can be switched over to the next "best" pseudo-wire base on preference levels.

This document first describes the motivation of the work base on the discussions with a number of carriers. Then we define the protocol extension itself.

Conventions used in this document

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC-2119 [i].

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1. Terminology

The reader is assumed to be familiar with the terminology in [LDP], [PW-CTRL] and [MHOP-PW]. The new terms are the following:

- . Working Pseudo-wire: A pseudo-wire that carries user traffic, and may be protected by one or multiple associated backup pseudo-wires.

- . Backup Pseudo-wire: A pseudo-wire that is used to re-route user traffic from a working pseudo-wire at head-end.

2. Introduction

Pseudo-wires have been deployed by a number of networks to carry customer layer-2 data traffic. Each Layer-2 data flow (or Attachment Circuit) is mapped to a pseudo-wire. Pseudo-wire setup, maintenance and packet encapsulation have been extensively described in a number of IETF PWE3 drafts [PWE3-CTRL, PWE3-TRANSPORT]. Recently, several carriers have requested that, when offered as a service, pseudo-wires need to possess the same protection and redundancy capabilities that have been deployed in transport networks.

In this draft, we extend the LDP pseudo-wire proposal [PWE3-CTRL] to support protection and restoration operation.

Why is such work necessary?

When it comes to traffic protection, the carriers need to ensure traffic protection on every network segment and in every layer of the network. Just because most of the pseudo-wire traffic will go through MPLS LSP's, we cannot therefore make the assumption that user traffic will be protected via MPLS Fast-Reroute [MPLS-FRR] or RSVP path protection. In the MHOP-PW scenario, even if Tunnel Protection schemes are present in individual PW domains, PW protection against S-PE failures is required.

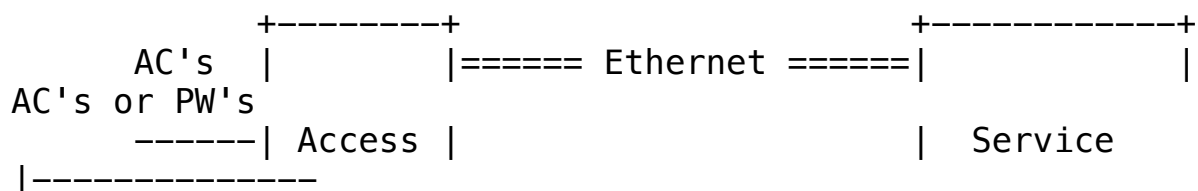
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There are a number of the deployment scenarios where pseudo-wire protection can be critically important:

2.1. Access Networks

Pseudo-wire has been in deployment for multi-service data access. One reason is that pseudo-wire enables data aggregation, which in turn improves bandwidth utilization. In a typical metro network access location (Hub or CO), the statistical multiplexing gain is approximately 3-4 [ATT-REPORT]. The earlier user flows get aggregated, the better bandwidth utilization will be gained by the carriers, especially at the access locations where bandwidth is still expensive.

More importantly, pseudo-wire provides a common data transport layer, where all layer-2 packets can be processed uniformly at provider edge. This enables the carriers to migrate from the traditional layer-2 (ATM or Frame Relay) circuits into high-speed Ethernet without service distraction. A common deployment scenario can be shown as the following:



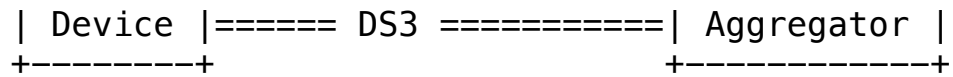


Figure-1: Pseudo-wire network access

Note that, given the size of access networks, the cost of access device and access link management are some of the key deployment considerations, such that the access devices may not be IP routers, and the extensive IP routing and MPLS signaling (such as RSVP-TE) may be not applied in this part of the network.

In this part of the network, one method may be to run pseudo-wires over the access links, and conduct traffic protection at per-pseudo-wire level.

2.2. Metro Networks

First of all, many of the MPLS-enabled metro networks today do not operate with RSVP-TE, which MPLS Fast-Reroute is based on. Secondly, many of the metro networks have already deployed pseudo-wires in one form or another (such as VPLS). Thus, pseudo-wire traffic protection becomes vital.

Another issue is that given the heterogeneous nature and subsequent

complexity in network topology, the metro networks may not be able to guarantee parallel MPLS tunnels between two edge nodes with the same bandwidth. In this case, pseudo-wire protection may be the only method for user traffic.

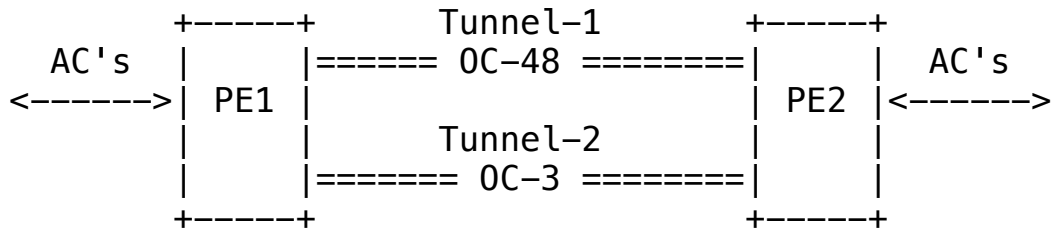


Figure-2: Bandwidth Mismatch

In Figure-2, there exist two parallel tunnels (LSP's) between two PE's with different link capacity. Whenever the bandwidth on a protecting link is smaller than that on the working link, we may run into trouble during protection and restoration.

In the example, let's assume that both tunnels are MPLS LSP's.

Network operators have enabled MPLS fast-reroute to enable both LSP's protecting each other. From the PE's, a number of AC's are aggregated into the LSP's as pseudo-wires. Some AC's carry mission-critical data, while others transport best-effort data. If Tunnel-1 fails, all traffic on Tunnel-1 will be switched into Tunnel-2. However, since both tunnels have different bandwidth, mission-critical traffic could be dropped or delayed as a result of link congestion during switch-over.

This problem can be easily resolved if each pseudo-wire has its own preference, which allows the pseudo-wires to preempt each other when it becomes necessary. Also note that, since the pseudo-wires are always bi-directional, the preference assignment must be consistent on both ends of the pseudo-wires.

2.3. MS-PWs use cases

Multi-segment pseudo-wire [MS-ARCH, MHOP-PW, Segmented-PW] has gained much traction in carrier networks recently. It allows pseudo-wire traffic to transport over multiple PW Domains (Access/Core Metro/WAN or different provider networks).

Within each network, the type of the PSN tunnels may be different.

And there is no guarantee that the PSN tunnels within each network or over the inter-provider links will be protected. Also any failure of the S-PE nodes can not be addressed by the tunnel protection, and

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therefore has to be addressed by a PW protection scheme. The head-end nodes (T-PE's) may use PW OAM (VCCV/PW Status TLV) to detect any network failure that may affect the pseudo-wires, and can reroute user traffic on a per-pseudo-wire basis.

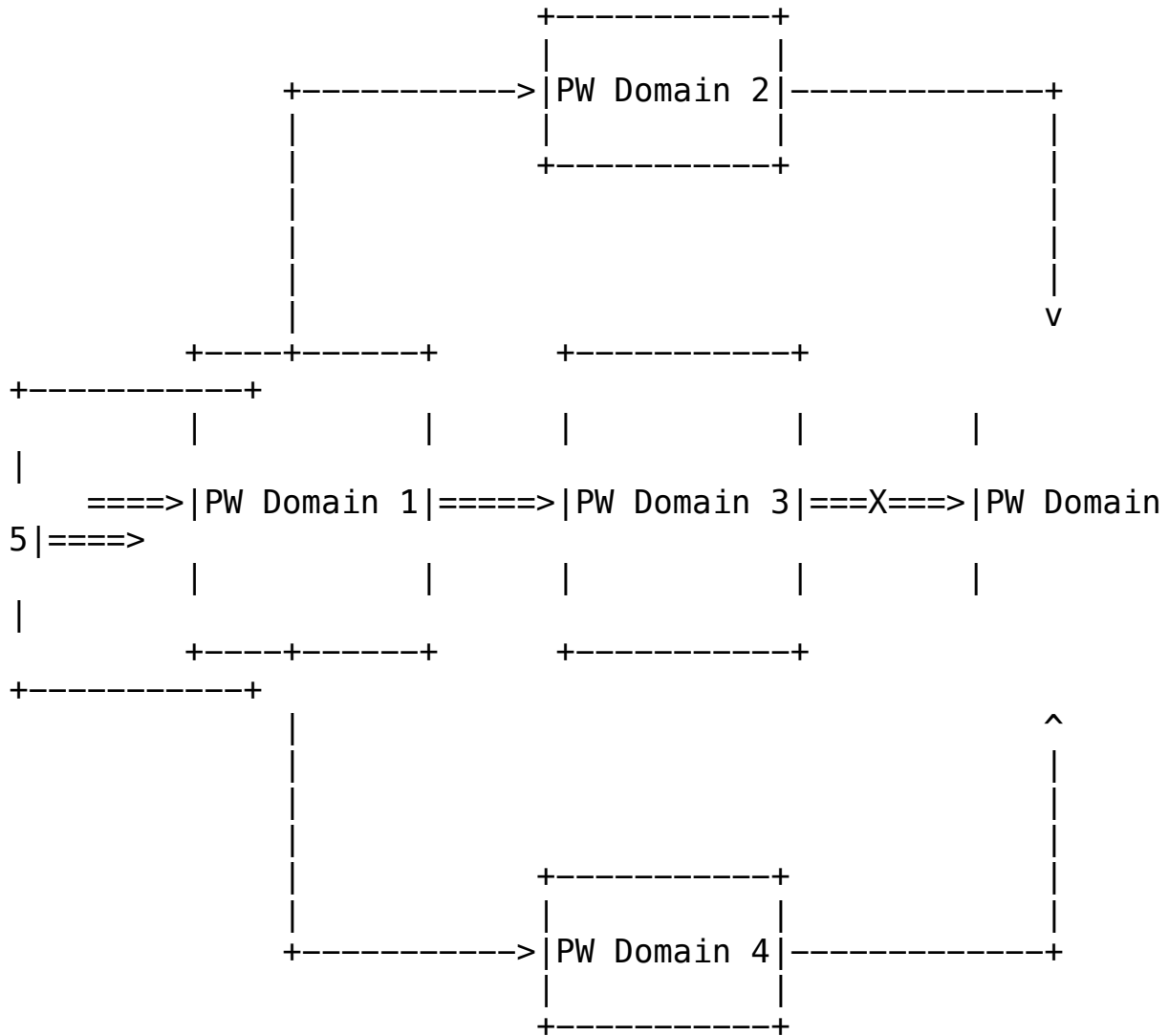


Figure-3: Multi-segment PW in PW Domain environment

For example, in Figure-3, a multi-hop pseudo-wire traverses through Pw Domain 1, 3 and 5. Say, the link or the S-PEís between PW Domain 3 and 5 has failed. From the head-end the pseudo-wire can be re-routed through PW Domains 2 or 4.

2.4. Planned Traffic Switch-over

Finally, the network operators need to have the ability to support planned traffic shifting. In Figure-2, there are two links between two PE's carrying a number of pseudo-wires. During network maintenance, carriers may decide to shift all traffic from a set of pseudo-wires from one link to another temporarily without causing traffic disturbance to users. To support this operation, pseudo-wire protection can be manually triggered from the operators [NOTE1].

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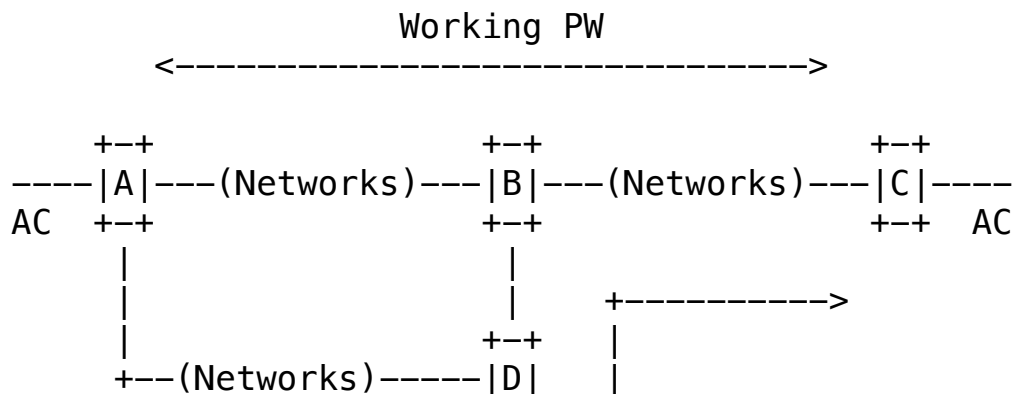
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3. Design Considerations

3.1. Signaling a Backup Pseudo-wire

When operating in multi-domain environment, the working and backup pseudo-wires may arrive on the same PE nodes (S-PE's).



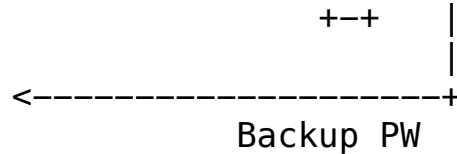


Figure-4: Why we need to identify backup PWs

As shown in Figure-4, the Working PW goes through nodes A, B and C, while a Backup PW may take a different route, A, D, B and C. Node B is the S-PE that would receive Label Mapping messages for both working and backup pseudo-wires. Unless B knows the difference between the working and backup pseudo-wires, it may mistakenly think that there has been a route change within the network, and thereby stop the processing of the pseudo-wires.

To make the message processing possible, the backup pseudo-wires must at least satisfy the following criteria:

1. Unambiguously and uniquely identifying the backup pseudo-wire
2. Unambiguously associating working PW with their backups.

Pseudo-wires can be identified via either FEC 128 (PWid) or FEC 129 (Generalized FEC). In latter case, each pseudo-wire can be uniquely identified as a pair of <AGI> and <AII> [PW Control]. Since there are a number of limitations in using FEC 128 in multi-hop environment, we will support pseudo-wire protection with FEC 129 only.

There are a number of options in making the backup pseudo-wires

unique:

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1. Assign a new <AII> for each backup pseudo-wire: To make the association of working and backup pseudo-wires at T-PE's, we may put some grouping information inside the <AII>. For example, we may use the first two bytes of the Global ID field in AII Type 2 [MHOP-PW] as the protection group ID. However, this will require the format change in all AII's, and cause potential backward compatibility issues.

2. Assign a new <AGI> for all the working and backup pseudo-wires: When used in L2VPN's, the <AGI> is used as "VPN ID" [L2VPN], which has an entirely different meaning from the pseudo-wire protection grouping. We will elaborate this further below.

3. Use one bit somewhere in the PW FEC to distinguish working and protecting pseudo-wires: However, the operators may choose multiple backup pseudo-wires to protect one working pseudo-wire. In this case, one bit would not be sufficient.

In our design, we will use an opaque "Protection TLV", in which each

working and backup pseudo-wires will have a different identification (or reference ID). All working and backup pseudo-wires will have the same <AGI> and <AII>. At pseudo-wire setup time, each working and backup pseudo-wires will get its own MPLS labels for packet forwarding.

3.2. Determination of Protection Path

RSVP-TE messages uses Explicit Routing Object (ERO) to setup the LSP's. CR-LDP [RFC3212], section 4.1 has also defined an Explicit Route TLV to achieve the same purpose. One key advantage in using explicit routes is that it provides a simple solution to ensure the working and backup pseudo-wires do not traverse through the same routes (i.e. no fate-sharing).

However, when operating in multi-domain environment, the carriers may not want to share network resource information among each other. In this case, there is no need to specify for each step the explicit routing information during pseudo-wire setup.

In our design, by default, we do not require the use of explicit routes during working and backup pseudo-wire setup. Instead, we rely on the intermediate nodes (S-PE's) to provide the best possible routes for the pseudo-wires.

However, it is important to realize that the edge node (T-PE's) may have the capability of interfacing with either multi-

lateral policy

servers, or MP-BGP, and obtain the exact inter-domain routing information for backup pseudo-wires. For example, it is possible that

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the PE nodes distribute the protection information via MP-BGP as a part of L2VPN setup sequence. Such mechanism can ensure that the working and protection pseudo-wires will not traverse through the same set of PSN tunnels.

The exact mechanism in obtaining inter-domain protection path information is outside the scope of this draft.

3.3. Protection Schemes

Typically, there is three types of point-to-point protection in telecommunication networks: 1+1, 1:1 and 1:N.

1+1 is to transmit same traffic over two parallel links. The receiver will only pick traffic from one link at any given time. In event of failure, at least one of the links still carries the actual traffic.

For example, SONET UPSR (Unidirectional Path-Switching Rings) is an implementation of 1+1 protection. However, this may not be desirable in many networks, if the protection path consumes

network resources
such as link bandwidth.

1:1 protection is to use one connection to protect another connection. When a failure in working connection has been detected, the network node would switch traffic to an alternative or backup connection. The most popular 1:1 protection is SONET APS. The efficiency of 1:1 protection is sometimes measured in terms of switch-over time.

1:N is a generalized version of 1:1. In 1:N, one connection is established to protection multiple working connections.

MPLS Facility

Backup is one such example. One of its key advantages is that it introduces less number of states that intermediate nodes have to manage.

In pseudo-wire protection however, each AC may have its own layer-2 characteristics that need to be maintained separately. Thus, it may be difficult to apply 1:N protection. For example, it is not clear that it is feasible or reasonable to setup a single backup pseudo-wire to protect best-effort Ethernet VLAN connections plus ATM SPVCís with CBR and VBR traffic requirements.

In our design, we shall only support 1:1 protection.

3.4. Protection Types

Pseudo-wire protection will support the following types:
cold, warm

and hot standby.

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. Cold Standby

This is a common method in optical transport network, where the nodes will only negotiate and establish backup pseudo-wires after the detection of network failure.

This type of protection can be implemented with the existing specification [PW-CTRL, MHOP-PW]. Upon the detection of network failure, the PE nodes will re-negotiate another pseudo-wire, and transmit packets over. The protection effectiveness depends on how fast two edge nodes can react to network failure and process control messages after the failure.

. Warm Standby

The edge nodes will negotiate backup pseudo-wires and exchange labels prior to any network failure. However, data forwarding path will not be programmed for label processing and QoS enforcement until after the detection of network failures.

Such practice and requirement come from traditional transport

carriers. In SONET/SDH networks, switches reserve the protection time slots ahead of time. Upon the detection of network failure, the nodes "wake-up" the protection connections.

. Hot Standby

This is the most efficient protection method. The protecting pseudo-wires are established before any network failure. This is also known as "make-before-break". Upon the detection of network failure, the edge nodes will switch data traffic into pre-established backup pseudo-wires directly. The protection efficiency is therefore depending on the speed for failure detection and switch-over, the latter being in the order of milliseconds.

This is the default operation in our proposal.

3.5. Pseudo-wire Preemption

Pseudo-wires are not created equal. In case of network failure or congestion, the ones that carry important user traffic should get better treatment than those of best-effort data traffic. Thus, the operator should have the ability to assign preference levels to the pseudo-wires. During network failure or congestion, the PEís (both T-

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PEs and S-PEs) can preempt less important pseudo-wires and make room for more important traffic.

It is important to realize that we have made the above design decision base on the following assumptions:

First, network failure and traffic congestion won't last for a long period of time in carrier networks. As such, assigning preference levels to pseudo-wires would provide temporary congestion avoidance to important user traffic.

Secondly, pseudo-wire preemption operation takes place among individual pseudo-wires, and does not necessarily involve the use of working and protection pseudo-wires.

3.6. Backup Pseudo-wire Priorities

The operators may establish multiple backup pseudo-wires for a particular working pseudo-wire. When the working pseudo-wire is experiencing network failure, its traffic will be switched onto one of the backup pseudo-wires. This requires the tail-end T-PEs and S-PEs to understand which backup pseudo-wire to use in case of failure.

In this proposal, the pseudo-wire initiator will always

assign a priority level to each of the backup pseudo-wires. During switch-over, user traffic will be switched onto the backup pseudo-wire with the highest priority level.

4. Backup Pseudo-wire Extension

Setting up backup pseudo-wires is based on [PW-CTRL], [LDP] and [MHOP-PW]. PW label binding uses targeted LDP, where two edge nodes first establish an LDP session using the Extended Discovery mechanism described in [LDP]. PW's are initiated via LDP Label Mapping messages. Each message contains a FEC TLV, a Label TLV, and some optional TLV's.

We only support the Generalized ID FEC (129) during the proposed operation.

PW protection operates under the assumption that there exists more than one route between a pair of PE's to transport data traffic, as shown in Figure-5.

+-----+ +-----+

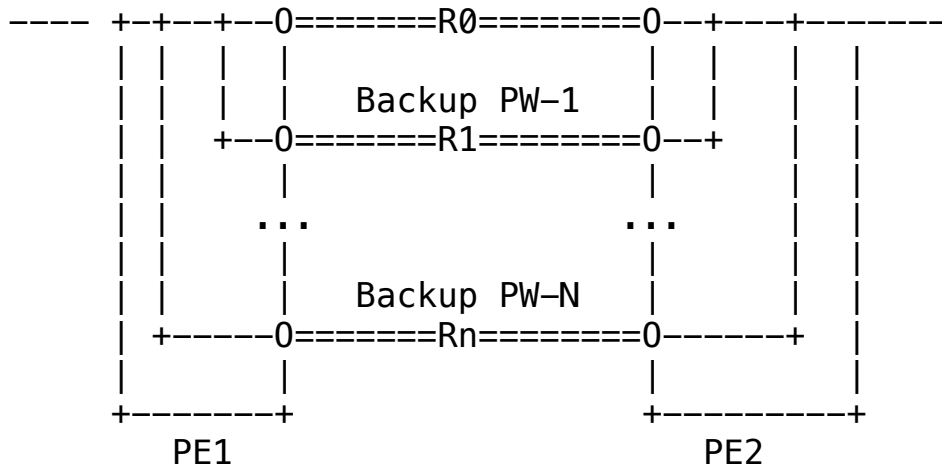


Figure-5: PW Protection Example

For each working PW, the PEs may setup one or multiple backup PWs.

The procedure for establishing backup PWs is the same as the one for

regular PWs [PW-CTRL, MHOP-PW]. The only difference is that during

backup PW initiation, a Protection TLV will be included in the

mapping messages. The Protection TLV includes, among a number of

other parameters, a reference ID and a backup priority level.

The working pseudo-wire MUST not attach the Protection TLV.

The Label Mapping messages for backup Pseudowires may be sent over

multiple routes between two PEs. In case of multi-segment PW, the

messages may be processed at multiple provider edge nodes, which will

rely on the reference IDs to distinguish each of the backup PWs.

The working and backup PWs must have the same attachment circuit

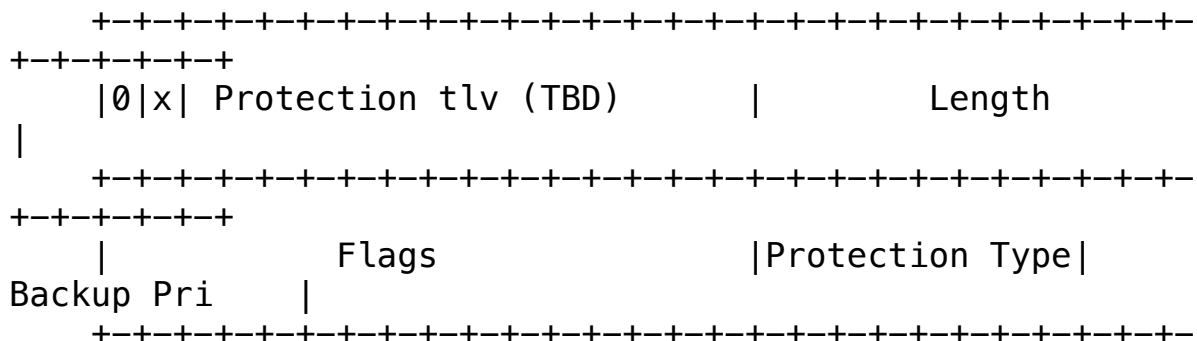
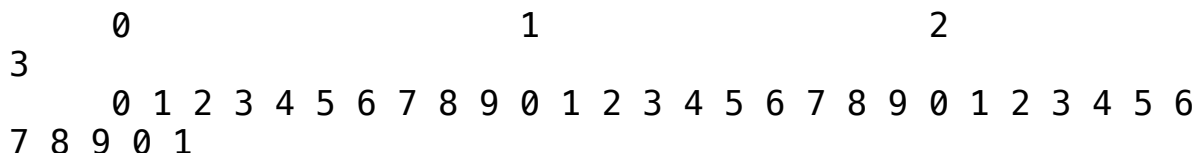
information. During network failure, the T-PEs will switch user

traffic into the backup PWs that has the highest backup priority level. After network recovery, the PE's will revert back to the working PW based on configurable behavior (immediately or during a maintenance window).

4.1. The PROTECTION TLV

With the Protection TLV, the operator can configure the protection mechanism that they prefer. Since the pseudo-wires are always bidirectional, exchanging protection information between PE nodes will help to achieve a consistent protection behavior for pseudo-wires.

The Protection TLV has the following format:



- Protection Type

Currently we have defined the following values:

Hot Standby: 0
Warm Standby: 1

The default value is 0 (Hot Standby). More information is in Section 3.4.

- Backup Priority

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This is the priority level with respect to a backup PW. The value of 0 is the highest. When the traffic on a working PW needs to be switch-over, if there are multiple backup PWs, the one with the highest backup priority will be used to carry traffic.

- Reference ID

This is assigned by the pseudo-wire originating nodes (T-PE's). For all the backup pseudo-wires that protect the same working pseudo-wire, they must have different IDs. The reasoning is in Section 3.1.

4.2. Head-end PE Operation

As illustrated in Figure-5, the operator can first initiate the Working PW over route R0, and then initiate the Backup PW-1 over route R1, the Backup PW-2 over route R2, and so on and so forth.

The Label Mapping messages for both working and backup PW's must have the same Generalized ID FEC (that is, the same <AGI>, <AII> and AC interface data).

Each backup PW's must carry a Protection TLV with a different Reference ID and Backup Priority.

The head-end PE's (T-PE's) should not initiate the backup PW's until the working PW is up and running.

Further, the T-PE's should keep track of the PW-SW-POINT TLV [Segmented-PW] for both working and backup pseudo-wires. The PW-SW-POINT TLV has the information on the intermediate hops that the PW's have traversed. For the backup PW's that do not allow fate-sharing, their PW-SW-POINT TLV should not overlap with the working PW.

For the backup PW's that do not need bandwidth guarantee, it does not need to carry the PW Bandwidth TLV during setup, and the B-Flag must always be off. Otherwise, the backup PW's must carry the same PW Bandwidth TLV as in the working PW.

4.3. Switched PE Operation

In case of multi-hop PW's, the intermediate PE's (S-

PEs) will perform the following checks when receiving a Label Mapping message:

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If it does not support the Protection TLV, it will reject the messages, and notify the head-end PE directly with "Don't support PW Protection" status code.

If it supports the Protection TLV and the message consists of a Protection TLV, the S-PE will compare the Reference ID on the PW's that share the same <AGI> and <AII>. If there is an entry with the same Reference ID, the Label Message will be rejected with "Duplicated Reference ID" status code.

If the new backup PW has a backup priority that already exists, the request will be rejected with "Mismatched Backup Priority" status code.

Otherwise, the S-PE will interface with either static or dynamic (i.e. BGP) routing tables, and place the backup PW's on a next-hop route that is different from the working PW.

If the F-flag (Fate Sharing Flag) is set, and the S-PE

cannot find an alternative next-hop, the backup PW will go through the same route as the working PW. If the flag is clear, the S-PE will terminate the backup PW setup, and reject the Label Mapping message with "Working and backup PW's share the same fate" status code.

If the B-flag (Bandwidth CAC Required) is set, and the S-PE cannot reserve resource on the out-going link, the label mapping message will be rejected with "Out of Backup Resource" status code.

4.4. Tail-end PW Operation

As shown in Figure-5, when PE2 receives a Label Mapping message, it will perform the following checks:

If PE2 does not support the Protection TLV, it will reject the new request with "Don't support PW Protection" status code.

If PE2 supports the Protection TLV, it will process the rest of the mapping message. PE2 needs to check if it already has the PW's with the same attachment ID (PWid or the combination of AGI, SAI and TAI) in its database.

On each PE, all PW's with the same attachment ID must have different backup priority. In this case, PE2 will always reject the mapping message with the same backup priority by replying a Label Release message. PE2 should notify PE1 with a "Mismatched Backup Priority" status code.

If PE2 decides to accept the Label Mapping message, then it has to make sure that a LSP is setup in the opposite direction (PE1->PE2).

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If no corresponding tunnel, it must initiate it by sending a Label Mapping message to PE1.

Other than reversing the SAI and TAI in PW FEC, PE2 must send the same Protection TLV (with the same Reference ID and Backup Priority etc.) back to PE1.

4.5. Manual Provisioning

When a backup PW is initiated from one end (PE1), the other end (PE2) must comply by replying a Label Mapping message with the same Protection TLV. However, it is possible that the operators are to setup a PW from both ends (PE1 and PE2) manually. In this case, if the protection parameters are inconsistent, the PE's need to reject the PW setup, and notify the operators.

5. Pseudo-wire Preference Extension

As described in Section 3.5, one method to protect important pseudo-wires is by allowing them to preempt other less important

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- Setup Preference Level

This is the preference level with respect to initiate a PW. The value of 0 is the highest. The Setup Preference Level is used in deciding whether this PW can preempt another PW.

- Holding Preference Level

This is the preference level with respect to maintain a PW. The value of 0 is the highest. The Holding Preference Level is used in deciding whether this PW can be preempted by another PW.

5.2. The Interpretation of Preference

PW preemption implementation depends on the definition of preferences.

Each preference level can be interpreted as the strict priority of a PW, or a traffic class as defined in DiffServ, or the weight of a data flow when it is in combination with the bandwidth assigned to the PW, or the combination of above.

This requires further feedback from the operators.

However, when we mention preemption, it implies that data packets from the PWs with high preference level will override the network links that may have been shared by another set of PWs.

5.3. PE Operation

The operators from the head-end PE can assign the preference information during PW setup.

Upon the detection of network congestion, the PE node can preempt the less important PWs, and allow the important traffic to go through.

The preemption operation may take place on each segment of a MS-PW, or the entire path of a MS-PW. The operation details require further details from the operators.

6. IANA Considerations

We have defined the following protocol extension:

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6.1. PW Protection TLV

This is a new LDP TLV type.

6.2. PE Preference TLV

This is a new LDP TLV type.

6.3. PW Status Code

The edge nodes need to inform each other in a number of error conditions. Several PW status codes need to be defined:

```
0x0000XYZ "Duplicated Reference ID"  
0x0000XYZ "Don't support PW Protection"  
0x0000XYZ "Mismatched Backup Priority"  
0x0000XYZ "Out of Backup Resource"  
0x0000XYZ "Working and backup PW's share the same fate"
```

Security Considerations

This document specifies the LDP extensions that are needed for protecting pseudo-wires. It will have the same security properties as in [LDP] and [PW-CTRL].

Normative References

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[MS-ARCH] M Bocci et. al. "An Architecture for Multi-
Segment Pseudo
Wire Emulation Edge-to-Edge", draft-ietf-pwe3-ms-pw-
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[NOTE1] Other mechanism may also be applicable for
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Informative References

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