

Knowledge Base

KB Home

Knowledge Base Help

Search the Knowledge Base

Search

View by Article ID

View

Products -->

Category -->

Enabling root SSH login on an ESX host



(51 Ratings)

Details

This article provides steps to use SSH to login to an ESX host as the root user.

Solution

Actions

- Bookmark Document
- Email Document
- Print Document
- Subscribe to Document

SHARE



KB Article: 8375637

Updated: Jul 23, 2010

Category

How to

Products:

VMware ESX

Product Versions:

VMware ESX 3.0.x

VMware ESX 3.5.x

VMware ESX 4.0.x

VMware ESX 4.1.x

Since ESX 3.0, for increased security, SSH is disabled by default for the `root` account on an ESX host. That is, the actual `sshd` service does not allow root logins. Non-root users are able to login with SSH. This is another layer of protection in addition to the host firewall.

Note: Each SSH connection to an ESX host uses additional Service Console resources. Use caution when using scripts or third party software that create multiple SSH sessions to the ESX Service Console. Excessive use of SSH on an ESX machine may cause the service console to exhibit symptoms of memory exhaustion.

To enable root login for SSH and SCP clients:

1. If you have physical access to the ESX host, login to the console of your ESX host as the `root` user .

If you can only connect to the ESX host over the network, connect using an SSH client (such as PuTTY) and log in as a user other than root. After you are logged in, switch to the root user with the following command:

```
su -
```

Note: If you do not have any other users on the ESX host, you can create a new user by connecting directly to the ESX host with VMware Infrastructure (VI) or vSphere Client. Go to the **Users & Groups** tab, right-click on the Users list and select **Add** to open the **Add New User** dialog. Ensure the **Grant shell access to this user** option is selected. These options are only available when connecting to the ESX host directly. They are not available if connecting to vCenter Server.

2. Edit the configuration file for SSH with the following command:

```
nano /etc/ssh/sshd_config
```

3. Find the line that starts with `PermitRootLogin` and change the `no` to `yes`. You can find this line about 2 pages down from the top. Save the file by first pressing **Ctrl-O** and then **Enter**. Exit with **Ctrl-X**.

4. Restart the `sshd` service with the command:

```
service sshd restart
```

Note: Alternatively, use the command:

Request a Product Feature

To request a new product feature or to provide feedback on a VMware product, please visit the [Request a Product Feature](#) page.

Feedback



(51 Ratings)

Did this article help you?

- ☐ This article resolved my issue.
- ☐ This article did not resolve my issue.
- ☐ This article helped but additional information was required to resolve my issue.

What can we do to improve this information? (4000 or fewer characters)

Email address (optional)

Submit

Permalink to: [Enabling root SSH login on an ESX host](#)



[Read our blog](#)



[Watch KBTV](#)



[Follow us](#)

Download Products

[Visit Download Center](#)
[Download SDKs & APIs](#)
[Download Patches](#)
[Sign Up for Patch Alerts](#)
[Read Downloads Help Guide](#)

Purchase Support

[Review VMware Support Options](#)
[Request Renewal/Upgrade Quote](#)
[Contact VMware Sales](#)
[Locate a VMware Reseller](#)
[View Support Policies](#)

Connect with Experts

[Visit Community Forums](#)
[Join VMware User Groups](#)
[Visit VMworld](#)
[Browse Training](#)
[Register for Support Days](#)

Find Answers

[Visit Product Support Centers](#)
[Read Product Documentation](#)
[Search the Knowledge Base](#)
[Login to Your Account](#)
[Find Support Help Documents](#)