OPNsense Setup and Maintenance Guide

This guide outlines the essential configuration steps after installing OPNsense, followed by recommended maintenance tasks to ensure long-term stability, security, and performance.

Essential Steps After a Fresh Install

- Go to **System → Settings → General**:
    - Set your local timezone (e.g. `America/Montreal`)
    - Define hostname (e.g. `router.home`) and local domain if needed

- Go to **System → Settings → Time**:
    - Enable NTP sync with reliable servers (e.g. `0.ca.pool.ntp.org`)

- Go to **System → Access → Users**:
    - Change the password for the `admin` account
    - Optionally create a new user with limited privileges

- Go to **Interfaces → Assignments**:
    - Confirm WAN and LAN mappings

- Go to **Interfaces → WAN**:
    - Configure PPPoE, static IP, or DHCP depending on your ISP

- Go to **Services → DHCP Server**:
    - Enable DHCP on LAN
    - Configure static leases if needed

- Go to **Services → Unbound DNS → Blocklist**:
    - Add blocklists (e.g. StevenBlack's hosts) to filter ads, malware, and adult content

- Go to **Firewall → Rules → LAN**:
    - Allow outbound traffic by default
    - Optionally block private IP ranges or sensitive ports

- Go to **Firewall → Rules → WAN**:
    - Block all unsolicited inbound traffic

- Go to **System → Settings → Administration**:
    - Enable SSH access if needed
    - Restrict access to trusted IPs

- Go to **System → Configuration → Backups**:
    - Download encrypted configuration file manually
    - Set up automated backups to Google Drive or Nextcloud

OPNsense recommended maintenance tasks

Weekly Maintenance Tasks

- **Check for firmware updates**
  - Menu: **System → Firmware → Updates**
  - Duration: 5–10 minutes
  - Notes: Some updates may trigger a reboot; OPNsense will notify you before applying

- **Review system logs and interface status**
  - Menu: **System → Diagnostics → Logs & Interfaces**
  - Duration: 5–10 minutes
  - Notes: Look for errors, dropped packets, or unusual activity

Monthly Maintenance Tasks

- **Verify backup integrity and schedule**
  - Menu: **System → Configuration → Backups**
  - Duration: 5 minutes
  - Notes: Ensure remote backups are recent and restorable

- **Check email notifications**
  - Menu: **System → Settings → Notifications**
  - Duration: 5 minutes
  - Notes: Confirm SMTP settings and test alert delivery

- **Monitor traffic usage**
  - Menu: **Reporting → NetFlow**
  - Duration: 5–15 minutes
  - Notes: Useful for identifying bandwidth hogs or suspicious traffic

Quarterly Maintenance Tasks

- **Test DNS filtering effectiveness**
  - Menu: **Services → Unbound DNS → Blocklist**
  - Duration: 10 minutes
  - Notes: Update blocklists and verify that filtering is active

- **Verify firewall rules**
  - Menu: **Firewall → Rules → LAN / WAN**
  - Duration: 10–20 minutes
  - Notes: Ensure rules match current network needs and security posture

- **Review VPN configuration**
  - Menu: **VPN → WireGuard / OpenVPN**
  - Duration: 10–15 minutes
  - Notes: Test connectivity and update keys or endpoints if needed

Semi-Annual Maintenance Tasks

- **Audit user accounts and privileges**
  - Menu: **System → Access → Users / Groups**
  - Duration: 10 minutes
  - Notes: Remove unused accounts and verify privilege scopes

- **Reboot the system (if uptime exceeds 6+ months)**
  - Menu: **System → Diagnostics → Reboot**
  - Duration: 2–3 minutes
  - Notes: Prevents memory leaks and applies kernel-level updates

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