

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 online or offline

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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