Safety and Security Considerations

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Security Considerations for Control Systems Networks

A video providing an overview of security considerations is accessible by clicking the thumbnail at the right, or by copying the following URL to your browser:

https://www.AutomationDirect.com/VID-CM-0028

Manufacturers are realizing that to stay competitive, their Automation and Control Systems need to be more integrated within their plant. The systems often need to be integrated with upstream Enterprise Data Systems, and even further integrated to allow information to be accessible across multiple plants, or even through the Internet. This convergence of the IT world with the Automation World creates challenges in maintaining secure systems and protecting your investments in processes, personnel, data and intellectual property.

While Automation Networks and Systems have built-in password protection schemes, this is only one very small step in securing your systems. Automation Control System Networks need to incorporate data protection and security measures that are at least as robust as a typical business computer system. We recommend that users of PLCs, HMI products and SCADA systems perform your own network security analysis to determine the proper level of security required for you application. However, the Department of Homeland Security's National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) and Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team (ICS-CERT) has provided direction related to network security and safety under an approach described as "Defense in Depth", which is published at https://www.us-cert.gov/sites/default/files/recommended_practices/NCCIC_ICS-CERT_Defense_in_Depth_2016_S508C.pdf.

This comprehensive security strategy involves physical protection methods, as well as process and policy methods. This approach creates multiple layers and levels of security for industrial automation systems. Such safeguards include the location of control system networks behind firewalls, their isolation from business networks, the use of intrusion detection systems, and the use of secure methods for remote access such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). Further, users should minimize network exposure for all control system devices and such control systems and these systems should not directly face the internet. Following these procedures should significantly reduce your risks both from external sources as well as internal sources, and provide a more secure system.

It is the user's responsibility to protect such systems, just as you would protect your computer and business systems. AutomationDirect recommends using one or more of these resources in putting together a secure system:

- US-CERT's Control Systems Security Program at the following web address: https://ics-cert.us-cert.gov/Recommended-Practices
- Special Publication 800-82 of the National Institute of Standards and Technology – Guide to Industrial Control Systems (ICS) Security https://csrc.nist.gov/pubs/sp/800/82/r3/final
- ISA99, Industrial Automation and Control Systems Security https://www.isa.org/standards-and-publications/isa-standards/isa-standards-committees/isa99 (please note this is a summary and these standards have to be purchased from ISA)

This set of resources provides a comprehensive approach to securing a control system network and reducing risk and exposure from security breaches. Given the nature of any system that accesses the internet, it is incumbent upon each user to assess the needs and requirements of their application, and take steps to mitigate the particular security risks inherent in their control system

Safety Guidelines

NOTE: *Products with CE marks perform their required functions safely and adhere to relevant standards as specified by CE directives provided they are used according to their intended purpose and that the instructions in this manual are adhered to. The protection provided by the equipment may be impaired if this equipment is used in a manner not specified in this manual. A listing of our international affiliates is available on our Web site: https://www.AutomationDirect.com*

WARNING: Providing a safe operating environment for personnel and equipment is your responsibility and should be your primary goal during system planning and installation. Automation systems can fail and may result in situations that can cause serious injury to personnel or damage to equipment. Do not rely on the automation system alone to provide a safe operating environment. You should use external electromechanical devices, such as relays or limit switches, that are independent of the PLC application to provide protection for any part of the system that may cause personal injury or damage. Every automation application is different, so there may be special requirements for your particular application. Make sure you follow all national, state, and local government requirements for the proper installation and use of your equipment.

Plan for Safety

The best way to provide a safe operating environment is to make personnel and equipment safety part of the planning process. You should examine every aspect of the system to determine which areas are critical to operator or machine safety. If you are not familiar with control system installation practices, or your company does not have established installation guidelines, you should obtain additional information from the following sources.

- NEMA — The National Electrical Manufacturers Association, located in Washington, D.C. publishes many different documents that discuss standards for industrial control systems. You can order these publications directly from NEMA. Some of these include:

  ICS 1, General Standards for Industrial Control and Systems

  ICS 3, Industrial Systems

  ICS 6, Enclosures for Industrial Control Systems

- NEC — The National Electrical Code provides regulations concerning the installation and use of various types of electrical equipment. Copies of the NEC Handbook can often be obtained from your local electrical equipment distributor or your local library.
- Local and State Agencies — many local governments and state governments have additional requirements above and beyond those described in the NEC Handbook. Check with your local Electrical Inspector or Fire Marshall office for information.

Digital Input Safety Lockout

The StrideLinx router's Digital Input should be used as a part of your safety lockout procedures for any device accessible remotely via the StrideLinx VPN.

This feature can provide an extra level of security or safety, by allowing remote connections only when certain conditions are met, such as when an operator is present or safety interlocks are engaged. The input can be wired directly through a switch, or a series of interlocks, or can be controlled via PLC for more complex control conditions.

Local control of remote access via the digital input must be configured using a configuration file. The settings cannot be remotely changed through the StrideLinx Cloud. For instructions on wiring and configuring the input, see the support article at https://support.stridelinx.com/hc/en-us/articles/360019029717-Switch-VPN-on-off#h_01214682651525330522824.