Engineer Platform

Verified firewall rules by position

Verified firewall rules by position rather than presence, reading the numbered rule list and the live packet-filter chain, because a rule that exists is not a rule any packet reaches.

August 2026

firewall rules checked by position, not presence

Situation. A firewall status listing shows a set of rules. A packet filter evaluates an ordered list and stops at the first match. Those are different things, and the difference is invisible in every tool that prints a summary — which is how the host ran for a year with a rate limit that no packet ever reached, sitting below a broader rule that matched first.

Task. Firewall verification had to read position rather than membership, because presence had already been demonstrated to prove nothing.

Action. The checks now read the numbered rule listing and the live filter chain, and assert against order. Exactly one rule exists per port and always with a protocol, because a rule without one silently widens the surface. The SSH port carries a rate limit and never an allow beside it, since an allow above a limit is precisely the shadowing that was found. The declared public surface is a short list of five ports, asserted as a whole rather than checked individually, so a port that appears without being declared fails rather than being noticed. The security report renders the rules in match order with a warning at the top of the section explaining how to read it, because the next person to open that file will otherwise read a set.

Result. The firewall posture is now checked the way a packet experiences it. The most useful outcome was not the check but what it revealed about the reporting that preceded it: every tool involved had been printing the rate limit for a year, correctly, and none of them had been asked the only question that mattered.

Bring this experience to your project

Use “Verified firewall rules by position” as a starting point for a similar challenge in your organisation. The services behind this work are available for your project. Day-to-day care of servers, mail, accounts and updates, so the things everybody relies on stay boring.

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Look behind the result

Read the situation, decisions and result in this example. We can discuss which parts transfer to your constraints and which need another approach. Verified firewall rules by position — firewall rules checked by position, not presence

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Do your firewall rules block what you think they block?

Talk through your project with the engineer responsible for delivery. We agree the scope, price basis and handover in writing before work begins.

Role context: Security Engineer. It draws on Infrastructure, Automation & CI/CD, Networking & VPN, Linux & Servers, Security and Testing & QA. And while you are here, we are rather good at System Administration, Networking & VPN Setup and Security & Access Management.

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One piece of **a longer record** — and it is all on this site.

Every entry is written the same way: the situation, the task, what we did and what changed.

See the whole record

Define the improvement you need

Bring the deployment path, the operational risks and the people on call. We can scope a change with checks, a recovery route and clear ownership.

See what it costs Get in touch →

Do your firewall rules block what you think they block?

Ask about the decisions behind “Verified firewall rules by position”. You will speak with the people who can explain the work and assess your own project.

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