IEEE P802.11  
Wireless LANs

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| **Comment resolution for ML Reconfiguration** | | | | |
| **Date: 2021-04-16** | | | | |
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Abstract

Proposed draft text for multi-link (ML) reconfiguration, broadly referring to a set of post-association procedures to make changes to links between APs and non-AP STAs affiliated with two MLDs, and without disassociation. The submission resolves 5 CIDs: 1852, 1857, 2511, 2595 and 2513.

# Revision History

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Revision** | **Changes** |
| 2021-04-02 | 0 | Initial draft |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Comments

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CID** | **Page** | **Clause** | **Comment** | **Proposed Change** | **Proposed Resolution** |
| 1857 | 125.59 | 35.3.1 | The AP MLD Multi Link Operation (MLO) should specify how AP MLD adds new affiliated AP(s) or removes affiliated AP(s). AP MLD may need to add or delete the affiliated AP in order to optimize network performance or to minimize its power consumption in order to be nature friendly. | Please describe how AP MLD may add new affiliated APs and/or remove affiliated APs. | Revised, agree in principle with the comment. Please implement the changes as shown in doc.:IEEE 802.11-21/534r0 and identified with the CID 1857. |
| 2513 | 132.23 | 35.3.5.3 | There are cases when an AP of an AP MLD will need to shutdown. In such scenarios other links affiliated with the MLDs should not be affected. | Add a signle-link tear down procedure. | Revised, agree in principle with the comment. Please implement the changes as shown in doc.:IEEE 802.11-21/534r0 and identified with the CID 2513. |

**Discussion on CIDs 1857 and 2513:**

The comments ask to clarify how AP MLD may add a new affiliated AP or delete an affiliated AP. Currently, 802.11be does not specify this operation, which may lead to interoperability issues in the 802.11be deployments.

An AP MLD may need to adjust the number of available affiliated APs based on traffic load, interference and the number of associated STAs. All devices should be environmentally friendly, so it is important to minimize and optimize AP MLD power consumption. Detailed description of the AP MLD configuration use cases is described in the submission 20/810r1.

802.11be should specify how an AP MLD adds a new affiliated AP. Similarly, 802.11be should specify how an associated non-AP MLDs sets up a link with a new affiliated AP in order to exchange data with the new affiliated AP.

The baseline 802.11 allows an AP to signal that it will terminate/stop operating by sending a BSS Transition Management Request frame with BSS Termination Included field set to 1 to all associated STAs. The current 802.11 description forces the AP to disassociate all STAs before the BSS is terminated.

The disassociation of the non-AP MLD terminates data transmission in all links of the non-AP MLD. This is not desired in ML setup, because non-AP MLD may have links with other affiliated APs and data transmission with these APs may continue without interrupts. 802.11be should clarify when the disassociation of the non-AP MLD is needed and how non-AP MLD operates if one of the APs to which it has a link is deleted.

CID 2513 requests to clarify signaling to delete a single link. It is better to define both Add Link and Delete Link operations to enable flexible link handling. The Add and Delete link signaling are discussed with the CIDs 1852 and 2511.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CID** | **Page** | **Clause** | **Comment** | **Proposed Change** | **Proposed Resolution** |
| 1852 | 100.01 | 11.3.5.3 | The non-AP MLD reassociation to the same AP MLD causes hard reset of all parameters that prevents data transmission for some time, i.e. all links need to reset block acks, SNs, PNs, etc as listed in p.100. The hard reset is especially bad for low delay applications, because it forces all links to stop using the existing parameter values. The add link should be robust in order to protect the privacy of the non-AP MLD. To avoid data transmissions interrupts in all links, the non-AP MLD should have robust Add Link signaling to add a link or modify parameters of a STA affilated with non-AP MLD. | Please include robust Add Link signaling to 802.11be. Add Link allows non-AP MLD to modify the number of links it operates and parameters in uses in the links. Please make sure that Add Link does not cause interrupts to the data transmissions on other links. | Revised, agree in principle with the comment. Please implement the changes as shown in doc.:IEEE 802.11-21/534r0 and identified with the CID 1852. |
| 2511 | 100.12 | 11.3.5.4 | All agreements and allocations listed on this page are reset or deleted once a reassociation occurs. This is completely unncessary and disruptive in a scenario in which a device needs to add a link to an existing setup. There are many use cases for link addition, including a case where an AP is added to an existing AP MLD. | Add a mechanism for link addition such that existing agreements on other links are not affected. | Revised, agree in principle with the comment. Please implement the changes as shown in doc.:IEEE 802.11-21/534r0 and identified with the CID 2511. |
| 2595 |  | 35.3.5.3 |  | There could be instances where either a non-AP MLD or an AP MLD may need to remove (unassociate) one or more setup links without having to perform a multi-link tear down. 11be should allow such link removals. | Revised, agree in principle with the comment. Please implement the changes as shown in doc.:IEEE 802.11-21/534r0 and identified with the CID 2595. |

**Discussion on CIDs 1852, 2511 and 2595:**

The comments say that there should be a way to configure the ML setup i.e., add a new link, delete a link or modify STA parameters in a link, without long interrupts and hard reset of security keys, Sequence numbers, and Packet numbers. The long interrupt is caused by the need to redo the 4-way handshake before any link may send any data. Efficient data transmission also requires setting up block ack agreements, TWTs, traffic streams, etc.

In general, the proposed comment resolution agrees with the comments. The discussion first introduces reasons why reassociation introduces long delays to link add/delete operations. Then resolution for the comments is explained.

**Challenges of using re-association signaling in ML configuration**

As explained in clause 11.3.5.4 the non-AP MLD deletes its keys before it transmits reassociation request frame.

Text

Description automatically generated

Figure – IEEE802.11be D0.3 rules for Reassociation Request transmission to the associated AP.

The transmission of a Re-association Request frame causes the ML setup to transition from State 4 to State 2. When STA operates in State 2, the transmission of class 3 Frames is not allowed. For instance, data frames transmission between AP affiliated with AP MLD and STA affiliated with non-AP MLD is not allowed.

Diagram

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Figure – IEEE802.11md D5.0 State transition diagram and allowed services.

To enable again the data transmissions in the ML setup, the AP MLD needs to accept the Reassociation Request frame by sending Reassociation Response. The AP MLD may also reject the Reassociation Request, in which case the ML setup remains in state 2. For instance, AP MLD may not desire to setup the same number of links as were setup before the reassociation and create fewer links, or reject the whole association. If AP allows smaller number of links creation, the non-AP MLD may try its luck again in another re-association signaling.

A successful Reassociation changes the ML setup to state 3. In this state, the ML does not have PTK, GTK, IGTK and BIGTKS keys that were deleted before the Reassociation Request transmission. The AP MLD and non-AP MLD need to exchange 4-Way handshake to re-establish the keys. After successful key exchange, the MLDs may transmit data.

Efficient data transmission requires still at least block acknowledgements setup, MSCS and/or SCS configurations for QoS and TWT Setup for power save. These setups require transmission of multiple frames. The Figure 3 summarizes the signaling, but due to lack of space the setup signaling for block acks, etc. are not shown in full details.

Graphical user interface, application, table

Description automatically generated

Figure – example of adding a link with re-association signaling.

**Proposed resolution for ML configuration signaling**

The non-AP MLD should be able to configure its ML setup by using protected management frames, so it is secure operation and does not leak information of the MLDs. As discussed in the 802.11bi and 802.11bh, user privacy is very important and over the air transmitted information allows attackers to trace the non-AP MLD.

The ML configuration should be done in state 4, like all multi-link management operations. In ML configuration there is no need to reset PTKSA, GTKSA, IGTKSA and BIGTKSA keys, block acks, MSCS, SCS, TWT, or other parameters. The MLDs continue to use them and may transmit data during the ML configuration operation.

The ML configuration should not cause any changes to the links that are not configured. The simplest solution is to include only the parameters related to the configured (added, deleted and modified) links into ML Configuration Request and ML Configuration Response frames.

One ML configuration signaling should be able to add one or more links, so that single signaling can carry all required modifications. Similarly, as in association request, the AP should be able to select per requested link whether it accepts a link creation. If the configuration Request contains both link additions and link deletions, then the AP MLD should be allowed only to reject or accept all proposed changes. This avoid situations where a link is deleted, but no new link is created. Configuration Requests only for link(s) deletion should be always accepted by the AP MLD.

Table

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure – Example of ML reconfiguration signaling to add a link. Data can be transmitted in other links while the new link is being added and no need to redo block ack setups after the new link addition.

TGbe Editor: Editing instructions preceded by “TGbe Editor” are instructions to the TGbe editor to modify existing material in the TGbe draft. As a result of adopting the changes, the TGbe editor will execute the instructions rather than copy them to the TGbe Draft.

### **9.4.1.1 Action field** [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

TGbe editor: Add a new row to Table 9-51 (Category values) in numerical order, and update the Reserved row:

Table 9-51—Category values

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Code | Meaning | See subclause | Robust | Group addressed privacy |
| <ANA> | NSEP Priority Service | 9.6.34 (NSEP Priority Access Action frame details) | Yes | No |
| <ANA> | EHT | 9.6.35 (EHT Action frame details) | No | No |
| <ANA> | Protected EHT | 9.6.36 (Protected EHT Action frame details) | Yes | No |

### **9.4.1.9 Status Code field** [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

TGbe editor: Add a new row to Table 9-50 (Status codes) in numerical order, and update the Reserved row:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 9-50—Status codes | | | |
| Status code | Name | Meaning |
| <ANA> | REJECTED\_WITH\_SUGGESTED\_LINKS | Requested reconfiguration is rejected and alternative links are suggested. |

### **9.4.2.295b Multi-Link element** [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

### 9.4.2.295b.1 General

TGbe editor: Add a new row to Table 9-322am (Type subfield encoding) in numerical order, and update the Reserved row:

Table 9-322am—Type subfield encoding

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Type subfield value** | **Multi-Link element variant name** |
|  |
| 0 | Basic |  |
| 1 | Probe Request |  |
| 2 | Reconfiguration |  |
| TBD | Reserved |  |

### 9.4.2.295b.2 Basic variant Multi-Link element

TGbe editor: Change the title of Figure 9-788ej (Per-STA Control field format) as follows:

Figure 9-788ej—Per-STA Control field format for Basic variant Multi-Link element

TGbe editor: Add the following new sub-clause:

### 9.4.2.295b.4 Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element

The Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element is used to recommend or request a reconfiguration operation for one or more non-AP STAs affiliated with a non-AP MLD (see 35.3.6 (Multi-link reconfiguration)).

The Common Info field is not present in the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element.

The Link Info field, if present, contains one or more subelements. The subelement format and ordering of subelements are defined in 9.4.3. The Subelement ID field values for the defined subelements are shown in Table 9-322an1 (Optional subelement IDs for the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element).

Table 9-322an1— Optional subelement IDs for the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subelement ID** | **Name** | **Extensible** |
| 0 | Per-STA Profile | Yes |
| 1-220 | Reserved |  |
| 221 | Vendor Specific | Vendor defined |
| 222-255 | Reserved |  |

Each Per-STA Profile subelement starts with a Per-STA Control field with the format defined in Figure 9-788ek2 ([Per-STA Control field format for Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element)](#bookmark46).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Link ID | Complete Profile | New Link ID | Delete  Request | Reserved |
| Bits: | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 |

When transmitted by a non-AP STA

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Link ID | Complete Profile | New Link ID | Delete  Imminent | Reserved | Delete Timer |
| Bits: | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 0 or 16 |

When transmitted by an AP

Figure 9-788ek2—Per-STA Control field format for Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element

The Link ID subfield specifies a value that uniquely identifies the link that the reported STA is operating on.

The Complete Profile subfield is set to 1 when the Per-STA Profile subelement of the Multi-Link element is complete as defined in 35.3.2.2 (Complete or partial per-STA profile). Otherwise, the subfield is set to 0.

In the remainder of this subclause, the non-AP STA related to each Per-STA Profile subelement included in the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element is referred to as the subject non-AP STA.

NOTE—The subject non-AP STA is the non-AP STA that is either directly represented by the Per-STA Profile subelement (when transmitted by a non-AP MLD), or connected to the AP that is represented by the Per-STA Profile subelement (when transmitted by an AP MLD).

When transmitted by a non-AP MLD,

* The New Link ID subfield identifies the new AP that the non-AP MLD is requesting to connect the subject non-AP STA to, or is set to 15 if the non-AP MLD is not making a request to create a link to a new AP. The subfield is reserved when the Delete Request subfield is nonzero.
* The Delete Request subfield is set to 1 to request to delete the subject non-AP STA, and set to 0 otherwise. The subfield is reserved when the New Link ID subfield is not 15.

When transmitted by an AP MLD,

* The New Link ID subfield identifies the AP that the AP MLD is recommending the subject non-AP STA connect to, or to 15 if the AP MLD is not making any recommendation.
* The Delete Imminent subfield is set to 1 to indicate that the link to the subject non-AP STA will be deleted at the time indicated by the Delete Timer subfield, and set to 0 otherwise.
* The Delete Timer subfield is present when the Delete Imminent subfield is nonzero, and indicates the number of target beacon transmission times (TBTTs) of the AP the subject non-AP STA is connected to until the link is deleted; it is not present when the Delete Imminent subfield is zero.

TGbe editor: Add the following new section and its subsections:

9.6.36 Protected EHT Action frame details

9.6.36.1 Protected EHT Action field [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

A Protected EHT Action field, in the octet immediately after the Category field, differentiates the Protected EHT Action frame formats. The Protected EHT Action field values associated with each frame format within the Protected EHT category are defined in Table 9-xxx1 (Protected EHT Action field values).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 9-xxx1—Protected EHT Action field values | |
| Value | Meaning |
| <ANA> | ML Configuration Notify |
| <ANA> | ML Configuration Request |
| <ANA> | ML Configuration Response |
| 3–255 | Reserved |

9.6.36.2 ML Configuration Notify frame format [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

The ML Configuration Notify frame is an Action frame of category Protected EHT. The Action field of an ML Configuration Notify frame contains the information shown in Table 9-xxx2 (ML Configuration Notify frame Action field format).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 9-xxx2—ML Configuration Notify frame Action field format | |
| Order | Information |
| 1 | Category |
| 2 | Protected EHT Action |
| 3 | Dialog Token |
| 4 | Multi-Link |

The Category field is defined in Table 9-51 (Category values).

The Protected EHT Action field is defined in 9.6.36.1 (General).

The Dialog Token field is a nonzero value chosen by the transmitting AP MLD to identify a notify/request/response sequence.

The Multi-Link element is defined in 9.4.2.295b (Multi-Link element); the variant of the Multi-Link element used in the frame is the Reconfiguration variant (9.4.2.295b.4 (Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element)).

9.6.36.3 ML Configuration Request frame format [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

The ML Configuration Request frame is an Action frame of category Protected EHT. The Action field of an ML Configuration Request frame contains the information shown in Table 9-xxx3 (ML Configuration Request frame Action field format).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 9-xxx3—ML Configuration Request frame Action field format | |
| Order | Information |
| 1 | Category |
| 2 | Protected EHT Action |
| 3 | Dialog Token |
| 4 | Multi-Link |

The Category field is defined in Table 9-51 (Category values).

The Protected EHT Action field is defined in 9.6.36.1 (General).

The Dialog Token field is set to the value of the Dialog Token field in the corresponding ML Configuration Notify frame to identify the notify/request/response sequence, or set to a nonzero value chosen by the transmitting non-AP MLD to identify the request/response sequence.

The Multi-Link element is defined in 9.4.2.295b (Multi-Link element); the variant of the Multi-Link element used in the frame is the Reconfiguration variant (9.4.2.295b.4 (Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element)).

9.6.36.4 ML Configuration Response frame format [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

The ML Configuration Response frame is an Action frame of category Protected EHT. The Action field of an ML Configuration Response frame contains the information shown in Table 9-xxx4 (ML Configuration Response frame Action field format).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 9-xxx4—ML Configuration Response frame Action field format | |
| Order | Information |
| 1 | Category |
| 2 | Protected EHT Action |
| 3 | Dialog Token |
| 4 | Status Code |
| 5 | Multi-Link (optional) |

The Category field is defined in Table 9-51 (Category values).

The Protected EHT Action field is defined in 9.6.36.1 (General).

The Dialog Token field is set to the value of the Dialog Token field in the corresponding ML Configuration Request frame.

The Status Code field is defined in 9.4.1.9 (Status Code field).

The Multi-Link element is defined in 9.4.2.295b (Multi-Link element); the variant of the Multi-Link element used in the frame is either the Basic variant (9.4.2.295b.2 (Basic variant Multi-Link element)) or the Reconfiguration variant (9.4.2.295b.4 (Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element)).

TGbe editor: Add the following new clause and its subclauses, and renumber other sections under 35.3 accordingly; the requested section number is the section immediately after Multi-link (re)setup (35.3.5 in 11be Draft 0.4), to maintain a logical flow.

35.3.6 Multi-link reconfiguration

35.3.6.1 General [#1857], [#2513], [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

Multi-link reconfiguration (ML reconfiguration, or reconfiguration for short) refers to a set of procedures to make changes to *multi-link (ML) configuration*, defined as the set of links between the APs and non-AP STAs affiliated with an AP MLD and a non-AP MLD in the associated state.

Through reconfiguration, a non-AP MLD may request to add and/or delete multiple links to an AP MLD it is associated with, using any link that has been set up between them (i.e., through any non-AP STA that is associated with an AP affiliated with the AP MLD), while staying in the associated state. In addition, an AP MLD can prompt an associated non-AP MLD to request reconfiguration based on the AP MLD’s recommendation.

Figure 35-xyz1 illustrates two example reconfiguration scenarios. In Figure 35-xyz1(a), an AP MLD makes a new AP STA available to its multi-link operation. An associated non-AP MLD, having discovered the new AP STA (through a recent beacon for example, or through a targeted notify message as described later in this subclause), requests a new link to the new AP STA, while staying in the associated state. In Figure 35-xyz1(b), a non-AP MLD adds a new non-AP STA to its multi-link operation and requests a new link to an AP STA affiliated with that AP MLD, again while staying in the associated state.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure 35-xyz1 – Examples of multi-link reconfiguration

Reconfiguration also includes procedures for an AP MLD to announce changes to its affiliated APs. AP discovery procedures are defined in 35.3.6.2 (AP discovery).

Reconfiguration signaling is in the form of a request/response exchange initiated by a non-AP MLD; however, an AP MLD may recommend that a non-AP MLD initiates a reconfiguration request. The basic (non-AP MLD initiated) reconfiguration procedure is defined in 35.3.6.3 (Basic reconfiguration procedure). AP MLD recommended reconfiguration is defined in 35.3.6.4 (AP MLD recommended reconfiguration). Changes to multi-link operation caused by reconfiguration are defined in 35.3.6.5 (Changes to multi-link operation after reconfiguration).

35.3.6.2 AP discovery [#1857], [#2513]

An AP MLD may add or remove affiliated APs anytime during its operation. Changes to affiliated APs may be announced through Multi-Link and Reduced Neighbor Report elements in Beacon and Probe Response frames, or by following the procedure in 36.3.6.4 (AP MLD recommended reconfiguration).

When deleting an affiliated AP, the AP MLD shall follow the procedure in 11.21.7 (BSS transition management for network load balancing) to notify STAs that are not affiliated with any MLD associated with that AP MLD of the corresponding BSS termination.

If an AP to which a non-AP MLD has a link is deleted, operation will continue on the remaining links as specified in 36.3.6.5 (Changes to multi-link operation after reconfiguration).

35.3.6.3 Basic reconfiguration procedure [#1852], [#2511],[#2595]

A non-AP MLD in the associated state may request modification of an ML configuration by sending, from an affiliated STA, an ML Configuration Request frame to the corresponding AP affiliated with the AP MLD that it is associated with. The ML Configuration Request frame shall contain a Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element that includes one or more Per-STA Profile subelements for each STA that the non-AP MLD is requesting to add, delete, or to connect to a different AP (including a different AP in the current ML configuration). The Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element shall not include any other Per-STA Profile subelements.

The following rules apply for each Per-STA Profile subelement included in the Multi-Link element and the corresponding non-AP STA:

* If the non-AP MLD is requesting to add a link connecting the non-AP STA to an affiliated AP, it shall set the Link ID subfield to 15, the New Link ID subfield to the value that identifies the AP, and the Delete Request subfield to 0.
* If the non-AP MLD is deleting the link connecting the non-AP STA to an affiliated AP, it shall set the Link ID subfield to the value that identifies the AP, and the Delete Request subfield to 1.
* If the non-AP MLD is requesting to connect the non-AP STA to a different AP, it shall set the Link ID subfield to the value that identifies the AP that the non-AP STA is connected to, and the New Link ID subfield to a value that identifies the requested new AP.

If the AP MLD accepts the request, it shall set the Status Code field in the ML Configuration Response frame to SUCCESS, and shall include in the response frame a Basic variant Multi-Link element that includes one or more Per-STA Profile subelements for each AP that has formed a new link with a non-AP STA affiliated with the non-AP MLD as a result of the reconfiguration. The Basic variant Multi-Link element shall not include any other Per-STA Profile subelements. For each Per-STA Profile subelement included in the Multi-Link element, the Complete Profile subfield in the Per-STA Control field shall be set to 1, and the per-STA profile of the AP shall be complete as defined in 35.3.2.2 (Complete or partial per-STA profile).

If the AP MLD does not accept the request, it may suggest an alternative ML configuration by setting the Status Code field in the ML Configuration Response frame to REFUSED\_WITH\_SUGGESTED\_LINKS, and including in the response frame a Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element that includes a recommended AP for each non-AP STA present in the ML Configuration Request frame. For each non-AP STA in the recommended ML configuration, the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element shall include a Per-STA Profile subelement constructed as follows:

* The Link ID subfield in the Per-STA Control field shall identify the AP that the STA is connected to at the time of sending the response frame, or (for new STAs) the AP that the non-AP MLD had requested to connect the STA to.
* If the AP MLD is recommending deletion of the link to the non-AP STA, it shall set the Complete Profile subfield to 0, and the New Link ID subfield to 15. The Per-STA Profile subelement shall not include any other fields or elements.
* Otherwise, the AP MLD shall set the Complete Profile subfield to 1, and the New Link ID subfield to a value that identifies the recommended affiliated AP for the non-AP STA. The Per-STA Profile subelement shall include the per-STA profile of the recommended AP, and shall be complete as defined in 35.3.2.2 (Complete or partial per-STA profile).

If the AP MLD has not accepted the request, and is not suggesting an alternative ML configuration, it shall set the Status Code field in the ML Configuration Response frame to one of REFUSED\_REASON\_UNSPECIFIED, REFUSED\_CAPABILITIES\_MISMATCH, REFUSED\_EXTERNAL\_REASON, REFUSED\_AP\_OUT\_ OF\_MEMORY, REFUSED\_BASIC\_RATES\_MISMATCH, and REFUSED\_TEMPORARILY. The ML Configuration Response frame shall not include a Multi-Link element in this case.

A non-AP MLD shall not request a reconfiguration that would result in no links remaining between the MLDs.

An AP MLD shall accept reconfiguration requests that only delete links.

36.3.6.4 AP MLD recommended reconfiguration [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

An AP MLD may recommend multi-link reconfiguration by sending an ML Configuration Notify frame (notify frame for short) to an associated non-AP MLD. The notify frame may be transmitted over any link that has been set up between the AP MLD and the non-AP MLD, and shall contain a Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element that follows the same rules as the Reconfiguration variant Multi-Link element included in an ML Configuration Response frame when the Status Code field is set to REFUSED\_WITH\_SUGGESTED\_LINKS, as defined in 36.3.6.2 (Basic reconfiguration procedure).

In addition, if the AP MLD is recommending deletion of a link, either directly or through recommending that a non-AP STA connect to a new AP, and the AP MLD intends to delete the link at a future time, it shall set to 1 the Delete Imminent subfield in the Per-STA Control field of the per-STA profile of the AP whose link will be deleted, and the Delete Timer subfield to the number of target beacon transmission times (TBTTs) of that AP before the link is deleted, if it has not been deleted by the non-AP STA by then. The value indicated by the Delete Timer subfield shall be longer than the MLD max idle period.

In response to an ML Configuration Notify frame, a non-AP MLD may initiate reconfiguration following the procedure defined in 35.3.6.3 (Basic reconfiguration procedure). The ML configuration requested in the ML Configuration Request frame should not conflict with the configuration suggested in the notify frame; specifically, the requested configuration should not include a link to an affiliated AP from an affiliated non-AP STA that is different from the affiliated non-AP STA that the AP MLD has suggested for that AP.

Figure 35-xyz2 illustrates two examples of reconfiguration recommended by an AP MLD. In both examples, at the time of association, the AP and non-AP MLD have two affiliated STAs each (operating on 2.4 and 5 GHz channels in this example), and later, AP MLD notifies the associated non-AP MLD of availability of a third AP (AP3, operating in 6 GHz in this example), and recommends that the non-AP STA2 connect to AP3. In the scenario shown in Figure 35-xyz2(b), the AP MLD further indicates an imminent deletion of the 5 GHz link by setting the Delete Imminent subfield in the Per-STA Profile subelement corresponding to non-AP STA2 to 1. The non-AP MLD requests a new configuration with non-AP STA2 connected to AP3 instead of AP2, which is accepted by the AP MLD. In the scenario shown in Figure 35-xyz2(c), the AP MLD does not indicate 5 GHz link deletion. The non-AP MLD, having learned about AP3, requests to add a link to AP3 from a new non-AP STA (STA3), keeping its existing links, which is accepted by the AP MLD. Reconfiguration frames can be transmitted on either of the 2.4 GHz or 5 GHz channels (the figure shows transmission on the 2.4 GHz channel), and the non-AP MLD stays in the associated state throughout reconfiguration.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure 35-xyz2 – Examples of AP-recommended reconfiguration

35.3.6.5 Changes to multi-link operation after reconfiguration [#1857], [#2513], [#1852], [#2511], [#2595]

There shall be no changes to the operation of any link during reconfiguration, other than links that are added or deleted, e.g., no changes to security keys, power save operation, established TWTs, and the list of TIDs mapped to the link.

Once a link is deleted, the AP and non-AP STAs terminating the link at the time of deletion shall no longer transmit frames to and receive frames from each other on that link, and all operation states such as power save mode and established TWTs shall no longer be valid. A new link connecting the same AP and non-AP STA shall have the same state as a link introduced at multi-link setup.

A TID with default mapping (i.e., not mapped to specific link(s)) can be transmitted over any new link that has been set up after reconfiguration. To maintain TID operation continuity under reconfiguration, the MLDs should steer TIDs away from affected links before they are deleted, using the TID-to-link mapping procedure defined in 35.3.6.1(TID-to-link mapping).