

Qualys API Limits

Overview

The Qualys API enforces limits on the API calls a customer can make based on their subscription settings. The limits apply to the use of all Qualys APIs except “session” V2 API (session login/logout). Default API control settings are provided by the service. Note these settings may be customized per subscription by Qualys Support.

This document describes the API limits, how they are implemented by Qualys, and how you can track API usage and view recent API calls, including blocked calls, within the Qualys user interface.

Tell me about API Controls

Concurrency Limit per Subscription (per API): [The API Concurrency Limit is 2 API calls by default.](#) This is the maximum number of concurrent API call instances allowed within the subscription for each API.

Rate Limit per Subscription (per API): [The API Rate Limit is 300 API calls per hour per API by default starting with Qualys Cloud Suite 8.10.](#) The rate limit is calculated based on settings below.

Rate Limit Count per Subscription (per API): The maximum number of API calls allowed within the subscription during the configured rate limit period. Default count is 300.

Rate Limit Period per Subscription (in seconds, per API): The period of time, in seconds, that defines a window when API calls are counted within the subscription for each API. The window starts from the moment each API call is received by the service and extends backwards 1 hour (or some customized period, in seconds). Default period is 3600 seconds (i.e. 1 hour).

Good to Know - Partners have the ability to view the subscription settings by logging into Qualys Admin and editing the subscription account. The API limits settings appear in the Subscription section under API Control.

How it works

When an API call is received, Qualys first checks the concurrency limit; and if the concurrency limit has been exceeded the API call is blocked and an error is returned. In the case where the concurrency limit has not been exceeded, the service checks the rate limit; and if the rate limit has been exceeded the API call is blocked and an error is returned.

Concurrency Limit

The API concurrency is calculated each time an API call is received and checked against the concurrency limit (2 by default) for the subscription.

Example: A subscription has the default API control settings and there are multiple users. A user makes 2 `asset_group.php` API calls and both API call instances are running. The `asset_group.php` API concurrency limit has been reached, so it's not possible for any user to make another successful `asset_group.php` API call until at least 1 `asset_group.php` API call instance completes. There must be a maximum of 1 `asset_group.php` API call instance running at the time the user makes a new `asset_group.php` API call.

When a user makes an API call for an API that has 2 concurrent API call instances already running, then the new API call is blocked, a Concurrency Limit Exceeded error is reported in the XML output, and an entry is added to the Qualys Activity like this: "API blocked (concurrency): `asset_group.php`"

Rate Limit

The rate count and period are calculated dynamically each time an API call is received. The rate period represents a rolling window when API calls are counted.

A user may distribute the quota of 300 API calls arbitrarily within the time window.

Example: If 300 API calls are received in a 5 minute period and none are blocked by any API limiting rules, then you need to wait 55 minutes before making the next call to the API. During the wait period API calls will be blocked by the rate limiting rule.

When a user makes an API call for an API that is blocked due to exceeding the rate limit, a Rate Limit Exceeded appears in the XML output, and an entry is added to the Qualys Activity Log like this: "API blocked (rate): `asset_group.php`"

Looking for more details?

[Errors Returned in XML output](#)

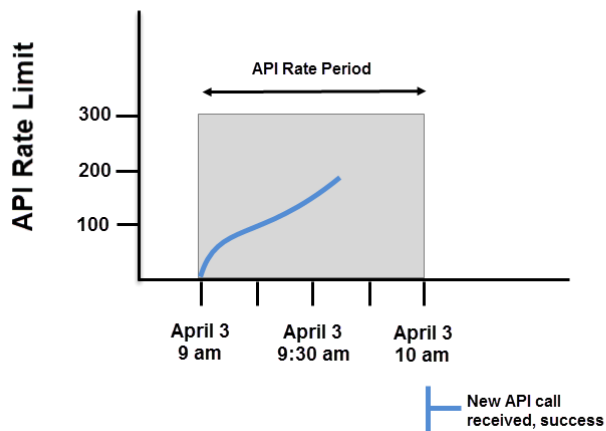
[API Usage in HTTP response headers](#)

[Qualys Activity Log](#)

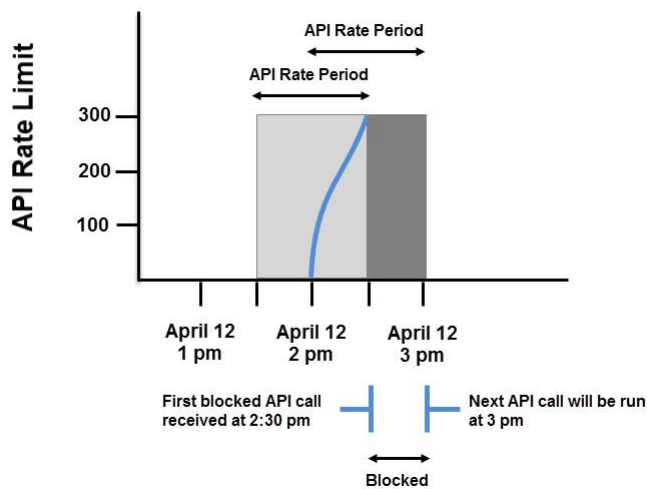
Let's take a look

Let's review API call history for a subscription with the default API limits.

Example: An API call was received on April 3 at 10 AM. The service calculated the API rate period by creating a window that extends backwards 1 hour from the time the API call was received to April 3 at 9 AM. The total number of API calls received in the window is 200 so the API call instance received on April 3 at 10 AM runs successfully.



Example: 300 API calls were received starting April 12 at 2 PM. The first blocked API call was received on April 12 at 2:30 PM. Users could not run API calls for 30 minutes. The next time an API can be received and run is April 12 at 3 PM, assuming there is a maximum of 1 API call instance currently running at that time.



Errors Returned in XML output

Each API call returns an informational message in the XML output when the API call was blocked because the concurrency limit or rate limit has been exceeded for the API being called. Please note if an API call was blocked, only one error is returned. In the case where the concurrency limit has been exceeded, a Concurrency Limit Exceeded error will be reported (and a Rate Limit Exceeded error will not be reported).

Concurrency Limit Exceeded Error

An API call returns this error in the XML output in the case where a user makes an API call and the total number of concurrent API instances, which are currently running, exceeds the limit for the subscription.

For a V1 API, the error will appear like this:

```
<GENERIC_RETURN>
  <API name="asset_group_list.php" username="acme_es1" at="2017-04-12T14:52:39Z" />
  <RETURN status="FAILED" number="1999">
    This API cannot be run again until 1 currently running API instance has finished.
  </RETURN>
</GENERIC_RETURN>
```

For a V2 API, the error will appear like this:

```
<SIMPLE_RETURN>
  <RESPONSE>
    <DATETIME>2017-04-12T14:52:39Z </DATETIME>
    <CODE>1960</CODE>
    <TEXT> This API cannot be run again until 1 currently running API instance has finished.</TEXT>
    <ITEM_LIST>
      <ITEM>
        <KEY>CALLS_TO_FINISH</KEY>
        <VALUE>2</VALUE>
      </ITEM>
    </ITEM_LIST>
  </RESPONSE>
</SIMPLE_RETURN>
```

Rate Limit Exceeded Error

An API call returns this error in the XML output in the case where a user makes an API call and the rate limit for the API, as defined for the subscription, has already been reached. In other words, the rate limit count (maximum number of API call instances) has already been reached for the rate limit period.

For a V1 API, the error will appear like this:

```
<GENERIC_RETURN>
  <API name="asset_group_list.php" username="acme_es1" at="2017-04-12T14:52:39Z" />
  <RETURN status="FAILED" number="1999">
    This API cannot be run again for another 23 hours, 57 minutes and 54 seconds.
  </RETURN>
</GENERIC_RETURN>
```

For a V2 API, the error will appear like this:

```
<SIMPLE_RETURN>
  <RESPONSE>
```

```

<DATETIME>2017-04-12T14:52:39Z </DATETIME>
<CODE>1965</CODE>
<TEXT> This API cannot be run again for another 23 hours, 57 minutes and 54 seconds.</TEXT>
<ITEM_LIST>
  <ITEM>
    <KEY>SECONDS_TO_WAIT</KEY>
    <VALUE>68928</VALUE>
  </ITEM>
</ITEM_LIST>
</RESPONSE>
</SIMPLE_RETURN>

```

API Usage in HTTP response headers

Your subscription’s API usage and quota information is exposed in the HTTP response headers generated by Qualys APIs (all APIs except “session” V2 API).

The HTTP response headers generated by Qualys APIs are described below.

HEADER	DESCRIPTION
X-RateLimit-Limit	Maximum number of API calls allowed in any given time period of <number-sec> seconds, where <number-sec> is the value of X-RateLimit-Window-Sec.
X-RateLimit-Window-Sec	Time period (in seconds) during which up to <number-limit> API calls are allowed, where <number-limit> is the value of X-RateLimit-Limit.
X-RateLimit-Remaining	Number of API calls you can make right now before reaching the rate limit <number-limit> in the last <number-sec> seconds.
X-RateLimit-ToWait-Sec	The wait period (in seconds) before you can make the next API call without being blocked by the rate limiting rule.
X-ConcurrencyLimit-Limit	Number of API calls you are allowed to run simultaneously.
X-ConcurrencyLimit-Running	Number of API calls that are running right now (including the one identified in the current HTTP response header).

The HTTP status code “OK” (example: “HTTP/1.1 200 OK”) is returned in the header for normal (not blocked) API calls. The HTTP status code “Conflict” (example: “HTTP/1.1 409 Conflict”) is returned for API calls that were blocked.

Sample HTTP Response Headers

Sample 1: Normal API call (API call not blocked)

Returned from API call using HTTP authentication.

```
< HTTP/1.1 200 OK
< Date: Fri, 28 Apr 2017 05:28:39 GMT
< Server: Qualys
< X-Frame-Options: SAMEORIGIN
< X-RateLimit-Limit: 300
< X-RateLimit-Window-Sec: 3600
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Limit: 50
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Running: 0
< X-RateLimit-ToWait-Sec: 0
< X-RateLimit-Remaining: 287
< X-Qualys-Application-Version: QWEB-8.10.0.0-SNAPSHOT-20170427151441#3811
< X-Server-Virtual-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< X-Server-Http-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< Transfer-Encoding: chunked
< Content-Type: text/xml;charset=UTF-8
```

Sample 2: API Call Blocked - Rate Limit exceeded

Returned from API call using HTTP authentication.

```
< HTTP/1.1 409 Conflict
< Date: Fri, 28 Apr 2017 06:32:34 GMT
< Server: Qualys
< X-Frame-Options: SAMEORIGIN
< X-RateLimit-Limit: 1
< X-RateLimit-Window-Sec: 3600
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Limit: 5
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Running: 0
< X-RateLimit-ToWait-Sec: 981
< X-RateLimit-Remaining: 0
< X-Qualys-Application-Version: QWEB-8.10.0.0-SNAPSHOT-20170427151441#3811
< X-Server-Virtual-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< X-Server-Http-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< Transfer-Encoding: chunked
< Content-Type: text/xml;charset=UTF-8
```

Sample 3: API V2 Call Blocked - Concurrency Limit exceeded

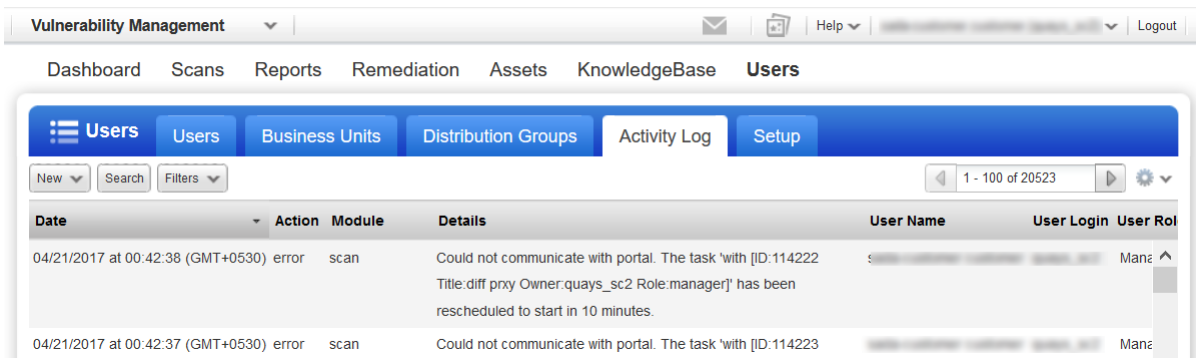
Returned from API V2 call using API V2 session authentication.

```
< HTTP/1.1 409 Conflict
< Date: Fri, 28 Apr 2017 05:45:20 GMT
< Server: Qualys
< X-Frame-Options: SAMEORIGIN
< X-RateLimit-Limit: 10
< X-RateLimit-Window-Sec: 10
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Limit: 1
< X-Concurrency-Limit-Running: 1
< X-Qualys-Application-Version: QWEB-8.10.0.0-SNAPSHOT-20170427151441#3811
< X-Server-Virtual-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< X-Server-Http-Host: qualysapi.qualys.com
< Transfer-Encoding: chunked
< Content-Type: text/xml;charset=UTF-8
```

Good to Know - In the case where the concurrency limit has been reached, no information about rate limits will appear in the HTTP headers.

Qualys Activity Log

The Qualys Activity Log shows details about user activities including actions taken using the Qualys user interface and API. Just log into Qualys portal, select VM from the module picker, and go to Users > Activity Log.

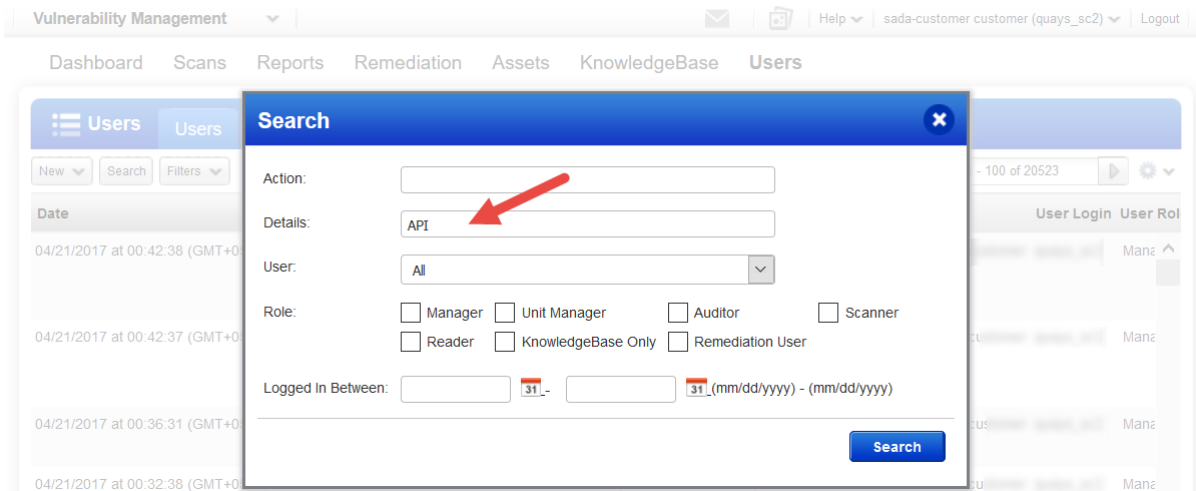


The screenshot shows the Qualys Activity Log interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Vulnerability Management' and 'Users' selected. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'Users', 'Business Units', 'Distribution Groups', 'Activity Log', and 'Setup'. The 'Activity Log' tab is active. Below the tabs, there is a search bar and a table of activity entries. The table has columns for Date, Action, Module, Details, User Name, User Login, and User Role. The first entry shows an error message: 'Could not communicate with portal. The task [with ID:114222 Title:diff prxy Owner:quays_sc2 Role:manager] has been rescheduled to start in 10 minutes.'

Date	Action	Module	Details	User Name	User Login	User Role
04/21/2017 at 00:42:38 (GMT+0530)	error	scan	Could not communicate with portal. The task [with ID:114222 Title:diff prxy Owner:quays_sc2 Role:manager] has been rescheduled to start in 10 minutes.			Manag
04/21/2017 at 00:42:37 (GMT+0530)	error	scan	Could not communicate with portal. The task [with ID:114223			Manag

Viewing API related activity logs

Use the search option to find API logs. For example you can search for API in Details.



The screenshot shows the Qualys Activity Log search interface. A search modal is open, allowing users to filter activity logs. The modal has fields for Action, Details, User, Role, and Logged In Between. The 'Details' field is highlighted with a red arrow and contains the text 'API'. The 'Role' field has several checkboxes: Manager, Unit Manager, Auditor, Scanner, Reader, KnowledgeBase Only, and Remediation User. The 'Logged In Between' field has a date range selector with a calendar icon. A 'Search' button is located at the bottom right of the modal.

Search

Action:

Details:

User:

Role: Manager Unit Manager Auditor Scanner
 Reader KnowledgeBase Only Remediation User

Logged In Between: 31 - 31 (mm/dd/yyyy) - (mm/dd/yyyy)

Search

Concurrency Limit error - For an API call that exceeded the Concurrency Limit the log details is in the format: "API blocked (concurrency): <API name>"

Date	Action	Module	Details	User Name
04/28/2017 at 11:18:55 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:18:26 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:18:00 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:16:09 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API blocked (concurrency): /api/2.0/fo/asset/group/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:16:08 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/group/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:15:20 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API blocked (concurrency): /api/2.0/fo/asset/group/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:15:19 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/group/index.php	[redacted]

Rate Limit error - For an API call that exceeded the Rate Limit the details entry is the format: "API blocked (rate): <API name>"

Date	Action	Module	Details	User Name
04/28/2017 at 12:02:35 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API blocked (rate): /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 12:02:34 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API blocked (rate): /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]
04/28/2017 at 11:18:55 (GMT+0530)	request	auth	API: /api/2.0/fo/asset/hostvm/detection/index.php	[redacted]

Tell me about Activity Log permissions -The logs you see depends on your user role. Managers see actions performed by all user. Unit Managers see actions performed by all users within their business unit. Scanners and Readers see their own actions only. Auditors see compliance actions performed by all users.

Date	Action	Module
04/21/2017 at 00:42:38 (GMT+0530)	error	scan

Viewing Recent API Calls

The API Calls List includes APIs subject to the API limits (all APIs except "session" V2 API). By default the service displays API calls submitted (by users) and/or updated (by Qualys) in the past week.

API Processes						
API	User Login	Incident Signature	Incident Created Date	State	Submitted	Last Updated
/api/2.0/fo/asset /group/index.php				Finished	04/28/2017 at 11:16:08 (GMT+0530)	04/28/2017 at 11:16:10 (GMT+0530)
/api/2.0/fo/asset /group/index.php				Blocked (Concurrency)	04/28/2017 at 11:16:09 (GMT+0530)	04/28/2017 at 11:16:09 (GMT+0530)
/api/2.0/fo/asset				Finished	04/28/2017 at 11:15:19 (GMT+0530)	04/28/2017 at 11:15:21 (GMT+0530)

Tell me about Recent API Calls permissions - Managers see all API calls performed by all users in the subscription. Unit Managers, Scanners and Readers see all VM API calls, and PC and WAS API calls when the corresponding modules are enabled for their account.

State - The value for State will be one of the following: Queued, Running, Expired, Finished (means API call completed successfully), Blocked (Rate) or Blocked (Concurrency).

User Login - This is the user who made the API call. The value “-” appears here when you are restricted from viewing this information due to your account permissions and all these conditions are true:

- 1) Your user role is Unit Manager, Scanner or Reader,
- 2) The user who performed the API call is not in your business unit, and
- 3) Your subscription has this user permission selected: “Restrict view of user information for users outside of business unit”.

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