IEEE P802.11
Wireless LANs

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| “Proposal for a revised Annex G containing Examples of Frame Exchange Sequences”  |
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Abstract

This proposal seeks to introduce the reader to an alternative version of Annex G for describing frame exchange sequence examples, their temporal boundaries, and recommended practice based on frame exchange sequences that are specified in the P802.11-REVme/D2.1 document.

# Background

The Architecture Standing Committee has extensively debated the disposition of Annex G for many meetings. In the course of those discussions, the group has requested a proposed revision to Annex G that explains to the novice reader of the 802.11 standard, using informative text, the concept of frame exchange sequences, as the term is consistently used throughout the standard in various contexts. To this end, proposed text for Annex G is presented below for discussion. We may want to consider as part of the discussion the prospect of moving the informative text in clause O.3 (Example of RD frame exchanges) to Annex G, as it appears to be out of place in its current location.

The proposed Annex G presented below contains an informative example of a frame exchange sequence. The style of this proposed Annex G follows the style of other Annexes that provide exemplary descriptions of the normative text. In particular, consideration has been given to Annex I, Annex K.1, Annex L, Annex O.3, Annex Q, and Annex W.

# Perspectives on the frame exchange sequence time interval

For any given frame exchange sequence (FES), there can be different understandings among the peer STAs about when the FES terminates. Nonetheless, this is not a problem. For example,

Persepctive #1: The STA that initiates the FES (STA #1) identifies the end of the FES as the end of a PIFS interval following the last transmission during the FES. The timing for the end of the last transmission of the FES is either pre-determined by the particular FES (e.g., an RTS / CTS exchange) or is scheduled by STA #1 (BAR frame).

Perspective #2: The peer STA to STA #1 (STA #2) identifies the end of the FES as the end of a PIFS interval following the last transmission during the FES from its perspective. This understanding may differ from STA #1. For example, if STA #1 transmits PPDUs to four different STAs (STA #2 through STA #5) during a single FES, and STA #2’s CCA function indicates the medium is idle while the BlockAcks from STA #3 through #5 are transnmitted, then STA #2 will declare the end of the frame exchange sequence a PIFS interval after its BlockAck transmission. Note, however, that the NAV protection signaled by STA #1 still prevents STA #2 from initiating any transmission until STA #5 has transmitted, regardless of CCA sensing. If STA #2’s CCA function indicates the medium is busy when the BlockAcks from STA #3 through #5 are transmitted, then STA #2 will immediately terminate its FES with STA #1 if it can decode the PPDU, per the normative text. See §11.2.6:

“The STA can determine the end of the frame exchange sequence through any of the following:

* It receives an individually addressed frame addressed to another STA.
* It receives a frame with a TA that differs from the TA of the frame that started the TXOP.

. . .

* The CS mechanism (see 10.3.2.1 (CS mechanism) indicates that the medium is idle at the TxPIFS slot boundary (defined in 10.3.7 (DCF timing relations)).”

This nuance is not currently captured in the normative text, and should be explained to the reader in Annex G where appropriate.

**Annex G (revised)**

(informative)

# Examples of Frame Exchange Sequences

## Introduction

Frame exchange sequences are described in a variety of contexts throughout this standard, though the rules governing frame exchange sequences are mostly contained in the QoS facility. Descriptions of frame exchange sequences are generally included in the normative text of multiple PHY clauses (i.e., Clauses 26 through 28 (each describing a different peer PHY entity). It is entirely possible for STAs to operate in a heterogenous environment, where there can be different peer PHY entities operating in accordance with different PHY clauses in the same geographic area.

Often, these descriptions are tailored to the specific requirements context of the clause in which they appear. For some PHY scenarios, there is only one wireless channel instance, for other PHY scenarios, there may be several channel instances of the wireless medium, due to sectorization, beamforming, and MU-MIMO that can impact single wireless channel PHYs. At times there has been some confusion surrounding the temporal boundaries of frame exchange sequences on the wireless medium, and the resulting implications of those boundaries to the operation of STAs. This is particularly important when understanding their impact on mechanisms and procedures that are triggered and/or terminated by frame exchange sequence boundaries, such as scanning, synchronization, BSS initialization, and power save mechanisms (which cannot be initiated until the current frame exchange sequence is completed), and power management indications (which cannot be modified until the current frame exchange sequence is completed). In addition, indications that maintain overlapping control with frame exchange sequences of the wireless medium are alsomimpacted by these boundaries. Some of the affected indications include:

1. Power Management subfield
2. Mesh Power Save Level subfield
3. Block Ack Timeout Value field
4. Nominal Minimum TWT Wake Duration field

The purpose of this Annex is to provide examples of frame exchange sequences that depict their usage throughout the various clauses of this standard. This Annex will not cover reference designs or recommended implementations of frame exchange sequences. The examples of frame exchange sequences that will be covered in Annex G include the following contexts:

1. Distributed Coordination Function (DCF). This example is one in which a minimum specified duration exists between basic frame exchange sequences.
2. HCF controlled channel access (HCCA). This example is one in which HCF frame exchange sequences are implemented as part of the handling rules defined by the HCF.
3. MCF controlled channel access (MCCA). This example is one in which the efficiency of frame exchange sequences is optimized in a mesh BSS.
4. Transmission opportunity (TXOP). This example is one in which frame exchange sequences may be initiated by one or more QoS STAs or an AP in an MU cascading sequence. In this case, a TXOP responder may or may not transmit its frame within the time window of the TXOP, given the estimated time required for transmission of the response frame may be inexact.
5. Groupcast with Retries (GCR) TXOP. This example is one in which frame exchange sequences may be initiated by one or more APs and/or mesh stations to support the GCR service.
6. Multiple frame exchange sequences in an EDCA TXOP or HCCA TXOP. This example is one in which other mechanisms have overlapping control of the wireless medium with frame exchange sequences.
7. Association of a GLK STA with a GLK AP. This example is one of many in which frame exchange sequences may occur outside the context of an HCF, MCCA or TXOP. Service Period, Announcement Transmission Interval (ATI) and Data Transfer Interval (DTI) are other examples.
8. Peer-to-peer application. This example is one in which a peer-to-peer application can identify individual frame exchange sequences between HE STAs.
9. Block Ack for VHT PHYs. This example is one in which a single frame exchange sequence includes multiple block acknowledgments, each from a different STA, and each preceded by either a BAR or a VHT MU PPDU transmitted by an AP STA.
10. Restricted Access Window (RAW). This example is one in which a frame exchange sequence shall not exceed the allocated RAW slot boundary.
11. GCR MU-BAR. This example is one in which a frame exchange sequence includes two types of Block Acks for the GCR group members.
12. RD frame exchanges. This example is shown in the informative text of clause O.3.
13. Implicit transmit beamforming. This example is one in which a transmit beamforming frame exchange sequence is initiated by an unsteered PPDU that includes a training request.
14. SU-MIMO and MU-MIMO channel access. This example is one in which frame exchange sequences use MIMO channel access to exchange frames.
15. TXOP-based sectorization operation. This example is one in which spatially orthogonal frame exchange sequences are transmitted until the expiry of the SO timer without resetting the NAV.
16. Sector training. This example is one in which an AP transmits NDP CTS frames, followed by sector ID feedback.
17. Power management in an MBSS. This example shows the unique endings of the frame exchange sequence.

## Example 1—HE and VHT STA Frame Exchange Sequences with MU acknowledgments

The HE STA and VHT STA are capable of frame exchange sequences that contain multi-user acknowledgments, as described in Clause 10.3.2.13.

### Termination of the frame exchange sequence time interval

For any given multi-user frame exchange sequence (FES), there can be different understandings among the peer STAs that exchange frames about when the FES terminates. For this example, there are two perspectives:

Persepctive #1: The STA that initiates the FES (STA #1, also called the TXOP holder) identifies the end of the FES as the end of a PIFS interval following the last transmission during the FES. The timing for the end of the last transmission of the FES is either pre-determined by the particular FES (e.g., an RTS / CTS exchange) or is scheduled by STA #1 for the current FES (when it schedules BAR frames).

Perspective #2: A peer STA to STA #1 (STA #2) identifies the end of the FES as the end of a PIFS interval following the last transmission during the FES from its perspective. This understanding may differ from STA #1. For example, if STA #1 transmits PPDUs to four different STAs (STA #2 through STA #5) during a single FES, and STA #2’s CCA function indicates the medium is idle while the BlockAcks from STA #3 through #5 are transnmitted, then STA #2 will declare the end of the frame exchange sequence a PIFS interval after its BlockAck transmission. Note, however, that the NAV protection signaled by STA #1 still prevents STA #2 from initiating any transmission until STA #5 has transmitted, regardless of CCA sensing. If STA #2’s CCA function indicates the medium is busy when the BlockAcks from STA #3 through #5 are transmitted, then STA #2 will immediately terminate its FES with STA #1 if it can decode the PPDU, per the normative text. See §11.2.6:

“The STA can determine the end of the frame exchange sequence through any of the following:

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. . .

* The CS mechanism (see 10.3.2.1 (CS mechanism) indicates that the medium is idle at the TxPIFS slot boundary (defined in 10.3.7 (DCF timing relations)).”

These differences in perspective allow for the possibility that a non-TXOP holder may engage scanning, power save, and/or power management mechanisms while the TXOP holder is waiting for BlockAck frames from other non-TXOP holders. This behavior may or may not impact the delivery of re-transmissions from the TXOP holder.

## Example 2—RD frame exchange sequences

***[Editor instruction to copy the text in O.3]***