The CSF Firewall on a cPanel Server: What It Does, Installing It from Manage Plugins, and the First Settings

WHM/cPanel · https://www.hyyat.com/en/knowledgebase/csf-firewall-whm/

Short answerCSF is a firewall for Linux servers, and its **lfd** service watches for failed logins and blocks their source. On a cPanel server it is now installed from **WHM, then cPanel, then Manage Plugins** as “ConfigServer Security & Firewall for cPanel”. After installing, whitelist your own IP, review the ports, then turn testing mode off.

Embedded media: https://www.hyyat.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/hyyat-srv-csf-en.mp4?_=1

A server on the internet gets knocked on all day: SSH logins with guessed passwords, scans for open ports, requests from addresses with a bad reputation. CSF is the doorman that decides what gets in. It is one of the most widely used firewalls with cPanel because it understands cPanel’s services and adds its own management page to WHM.

What CSF is made of

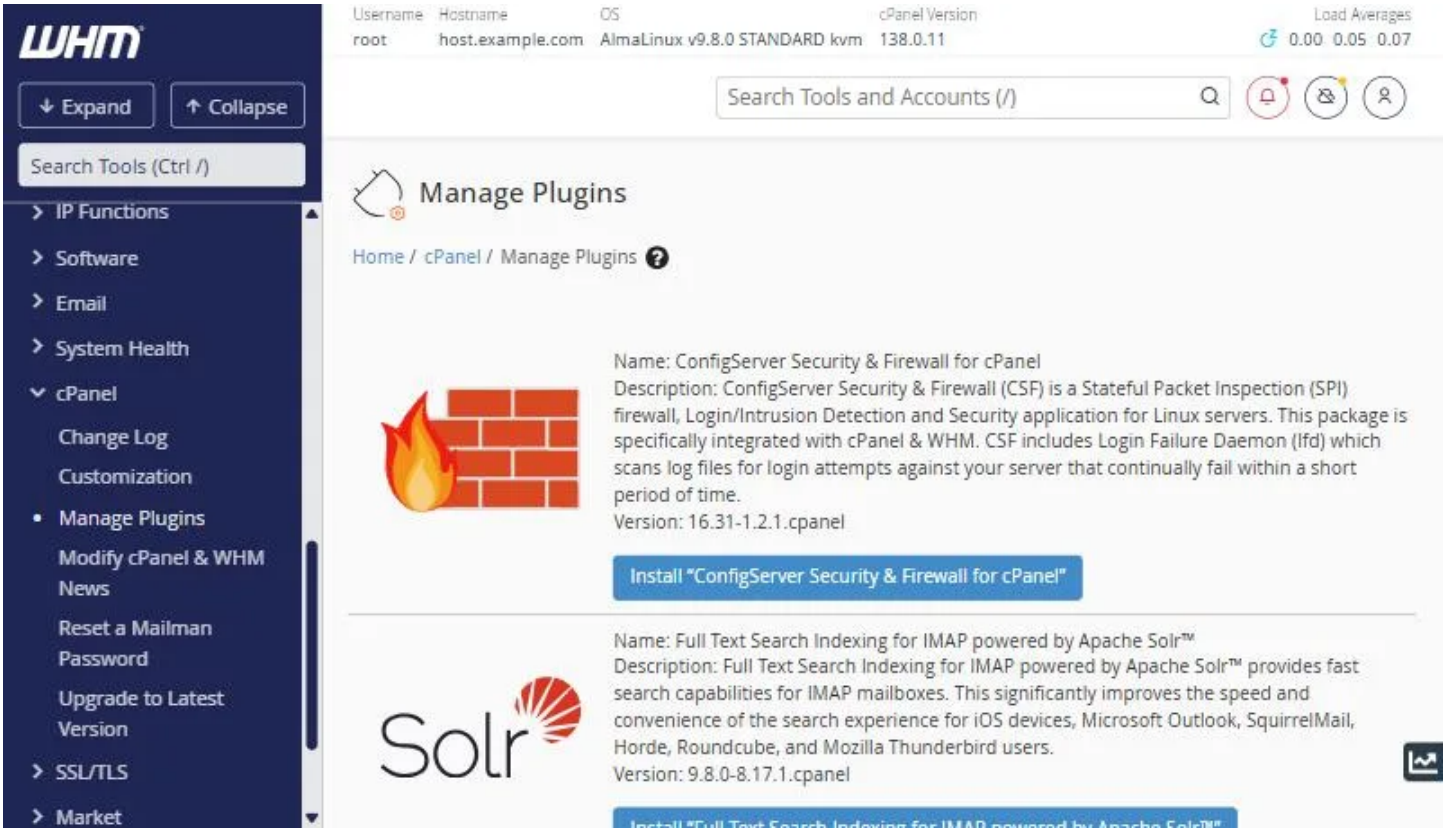
Part	What it does
csf	The firewall itself: opens allowed ports, closes the rest and applies allow and deny lists
lfd (Login Failure Daemon)	Reads login logs continuously and blocks an address that keeps failing, temporarily or permanently
The WHM page	Manages settings and lists inside WHM without SSH
Configuration files	Chiefly `/etc/csf/csf.conf` for settings, plus `csf.allow` and `csf.deny` for the lists

A note about ConfigServer

The original developer, ConfigServer, has shut down, but cPanel now provides CSF as a plugin in WHM's Manage Plugins, where it is installed and updated. ConfigServer's other tools, such as Explorer and ConfigServer Mail Manage, are no longer available; alternatives to Explorer are in browsing server files.

Installing from WHM

`WHM › cPanel › Manage Plugins`



1. **Open Manage Plugins** under cPanel in the sidebar, or search for Plugins.
2. **Find the card** "ConfigServer Security & Firewall for cPanel", with its version underneath.
3. **Click Install** WHM waits for the install to finish and shows the result.
4. **Open the firewall** it appears under **Plugins** in WHM as ConfigServer Security & Firewall.

If the server already has an older CSF installed by hand from ConfigServer's site, do not install it twice. Check its version at the top of its WHM page, and if you need to move to the current build, copy `/etc/csf` first.

The first five things after installing

Order	What to do	Why
1	Add your fixed IP under **Quick Allow**	So lfd does not block you after a mistyped password
2	Review **TCP_IN** and **TCP_OUT** in Firewall Configuration	Make sure cPanel, mail and any service you use are open; see opening a port in CSF
3	Run **Check Server Security**	Lists known weak points in the server's setup
4	Set **TESTING = 0**	In testing mode the rules are flushed every 5 minutes, so there is no real protection
5	Set the alert address **LF_ALERT_TO**	So you are told when an address is blocked or root logs in

Testing mode exists so you do not lock yourself out while first configuring. Only turn it off once you have confirmed you can still reach SSH and WHM after restarting CSF.

CSF and cPHulk together?

Yes, they work side by side. cPHulk protects the cPanel, WHM and mail logins; lfd in CSF watches a wider set of logs, including SSH and FTP. If a customer cannot reach the server, check both: cPHulk and the `csf -g` command in CSF commands.

Three things to remember

- CSF is installed today from WHM through Manage Plugins, not by downloading from ConfigServer's site.
- First step, always: your IP on the whitelist, then the ports, then testing mode off.
- Warnings after installation, such as RESTRICT_SYSLOG, have simple fixes in their own guides.

What server owners ask us

Is CSF free?
Yes. It installs as a plugin from Manage Plugins at no extra cost.

Do I need CSF if my provider has an external firewall?

An external firewall protects ports, but lfd adds automatic blocking of password guessers, which external firewalls do not usually do.

What if CSF blocks me?
Log in through the server console in your provider’s panel and run `csf -dr your-ip`, then `csf -a your-ip`.

Does CSF slow the server down?
Its overhead is normally light. Very large block lists can add load, so do not block huge ranges without need.

Related guides

- How to Open a Port in the CSF Firewall from WHM
- Important CSF firewall commands via SSH
- How to Fix “RESTRICT_SYSLOG is disabled” in CSF
- cPHulk in WHM: Unblocking an IP, Whitelisting and Blacklisting, and Tuning Brute Force Protection
- 5 Tips to Secure Your cPanel Server

All WHM guides →

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