ClearPath MSP
ClearWatch

SOLUTION BRIEF

from ClearPath MSP

CLEARWATCH SOLUTION BRIEF · PROXMOX BACKUP SERVER

Proxmox Backup Server monitoring, guest by guest.

How ClearWatch reads PBS with a read-only API token, matches every backup group to its machine, and alerts when a backup stops arriving.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PBS keeps the backups. It does not notice the missing ones.

Proxmox Backup Server is very good at holding backups. What it cannot say is whether last night's backup of a given machine ever arrived: Proxmox VE keeps the schedule and pushes backups in, so PBS never knows one was due. Its web interface shows one server at a time, in groups named by guest ID.

ClearWatch reads each PBS through a ClearBridge with a read-only API token, matches every backup group to its device by the guest's hardware ID, judges each machine against a window you set, and alerts on age, snapshots, verification, space and failed tasks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Guest by guest:** each backup group is matched to its device by the SMBIOS UUID in the backed-up guest configuration.
- **A missing backup turns red:** a machine whose newest snapshot is older than the window (26 hours by default) is stale.
- **Read-only:** Audit and DatastoreReader, roles that cannot change or delete a backup.
- **Configurations stay on your LAN:** only a guest's name, UUID and MAC addresses leave it.

IN THIS BRIEF

01 **The challenge** — What PBS alone leaves to you — 2
02 **How ClearWatch connects** — Token, ClearBridge, what leaves the LAN — 2
03 **Datastores and backup groups** — Usage, snapshots, verification — 4
04 **Machines and matching** — Matching rules, the machine card — 5
05 **Checks and alerts** — Built-in checks and their defaults — 6
06 **Good to know** — Requirements and limits — 6

WHO THIS IS FOR

MSPs and IT teams who back up Proxmox VE guests to Proxmox Backup Server, for one organization or across many clients.

AT A GLANCE

READ BY
A ClearBridge
Over the PBS API on port 8007, every 6 hours.

ACCESS
An API token
Audit on / and DatastoreReader on the datastore.

MATCHING
By guest UUID
Exact first, then MAC and name; a tie links nothing.

MISSING BACKUP
Stale after 26 h
A window you set per server, since PBS holds no schedule.

01 THE CHALLENGE

PBS keeps backups. It does not expect them.

In a Proxmox environment the hypervisor decides when a backup runs and pushes it into Proxmox Backup Server. PBS stores what arrives, deduplicates it and can verify it, but it has no schedule of its own, so a backup that never started leaves nothing behind to report. Its web interface answers one server at a time, and a backup is named `vm/105` rather than after the machine it protects.

THE QUESTION	PBS WEB INTERFACE ALONE	CLEARWATCH
Did every VM back up last night?	Open each group, read its newest snapshot	A machine past **the window you set** turns red on its own
Which machine is `vm/105`?	Guest IDs and notes, per cluster	Each group **matched to its device** by the guest's hardware ID
Is the newest snapshot good?	Verify state, snapshot by snapshot	A **verified mark** on each machine; a failed verify warns
When will a datastore fill?	Datastore summary, per server	Usage and **full-by date** on the board, alerts at 15% and 5% free
Did a task fail overnight?	The task log, per server	**Failed tasks in the last day** counted on the server's device
Every client's PBS at once?	One web interface per server	**One Backups dashboard**, worst first

PBS holds no schedule, so you declare the window

Because Proxmox VE keeps the schedule, ClearWatch judges each machine against a stale window set per server: 26 hours by default, which suits a nightly backup. A machine whose newest snapshot is older than that is **stale**, shown red. If the latest backup task for it also failed, it is **failed**. Silence never looks healthy.

02 HOW CLEARWATCH CONNECTS

Through a ClearBridge, with a read-only token

A Proxmox Backup Server sits on the client's LAN, so ClearWatch reads it through a ClearBridge: the ClearWatch agent on a machine on that network. The server is never opened to the internet, and nothing is ever written to it.

YOUR NETWORK
Proxmox VE
Schedules the backups and pushes them into PBS, as it does today.

→

YOUR NETWORK
Backup Server
Answers its API on port 8007 with its own certificate.

→

YOUR NETWORK
ClearBridge
Reads every 6 hours, pins the certificate, and parses guest configurations locally.

→

CLEARWATCH
Backups dashboard
Matches each group to its device, runs the checks, raises the alerts.

The ClearBridge only reads. Nothing is written to PBS, and nothing on the server is opened to the internet.

02 HOW CLEARWATCH CONNECTS, CONTINUED

Add the server, then watch the first read

A server is added from Manage › Integrations with its address, the ClearBridge that can reach it 1 , and an API token: the Token ID, written as `user@realm!token`, and the secret PBS shows once 2 . The ClearBridge you pick decides which client the server belongs to.

Because PBS cannot say how often a backup is due, the form asks for the stale window 3 . Then a panel follows the first read step by step, from the ClearBridge collecting it to the matches it made.

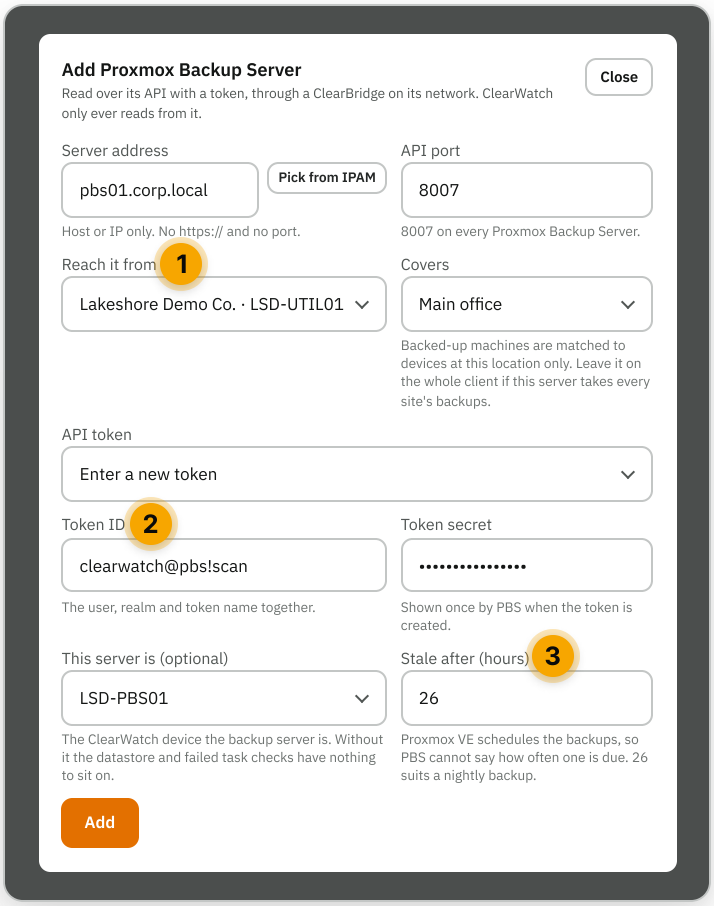


FIGURE 1 Adding a Proxmox Backup Server, rebuilt from the ClearWatch console with demo data.

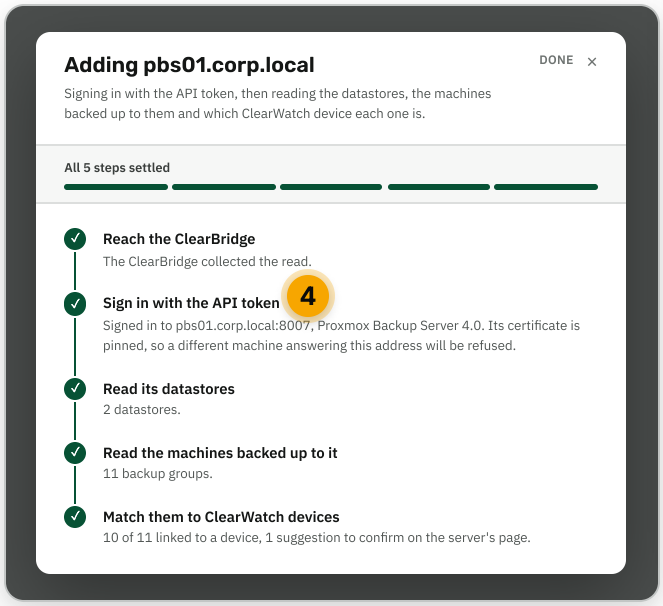


FIGURE 2 The first read, followed live.

IN PBS, CREATE	WHY
A user of its own	Never the account Proxmox VE backs up as: that account owns the backups and can usually prune them.
An API token on it	With **Privilege Separation** unchecked, so the token holds exactly the user's rights. Its ID looks like `clearwatch@pbs!scan`.
Audit on /	The task log and each datastore's usage.
DatastoreReader on the datastore	Snapshots, verification, and each guest's backed-up configuration, which holds the UUID that matches a machine exactly.

What leaves your network

- Guest configurations are parsed on the ClearBridge. Only the guest's **name, SMBIOS UUID and network MAC addresses** leave the LAN, never the configuration itself.
- The certificate is pinned on first use 4 , so a different machine answering the address is refused.
- The token is sealed in ClearWatch and handed only to the ClearBridge that reads that server.

A token limited to one namespace

- DatastoreReader on a single namespace, and nothing else, also works: matching, state and snapshot counts carry on.
- It cannot see datastore usage, the failed-task count or the failed state; the board says so in words. A missed backup still turns the machine stale.

03 DATASTORES AND BACKUP GROUPS

Every datastore, every machine, seven days at a glance

On the Backups dashboard each PBS is drawn the way it works: Proxmox VE pushing in, the server holding its datastores, and each datastore holding one tile per machine.

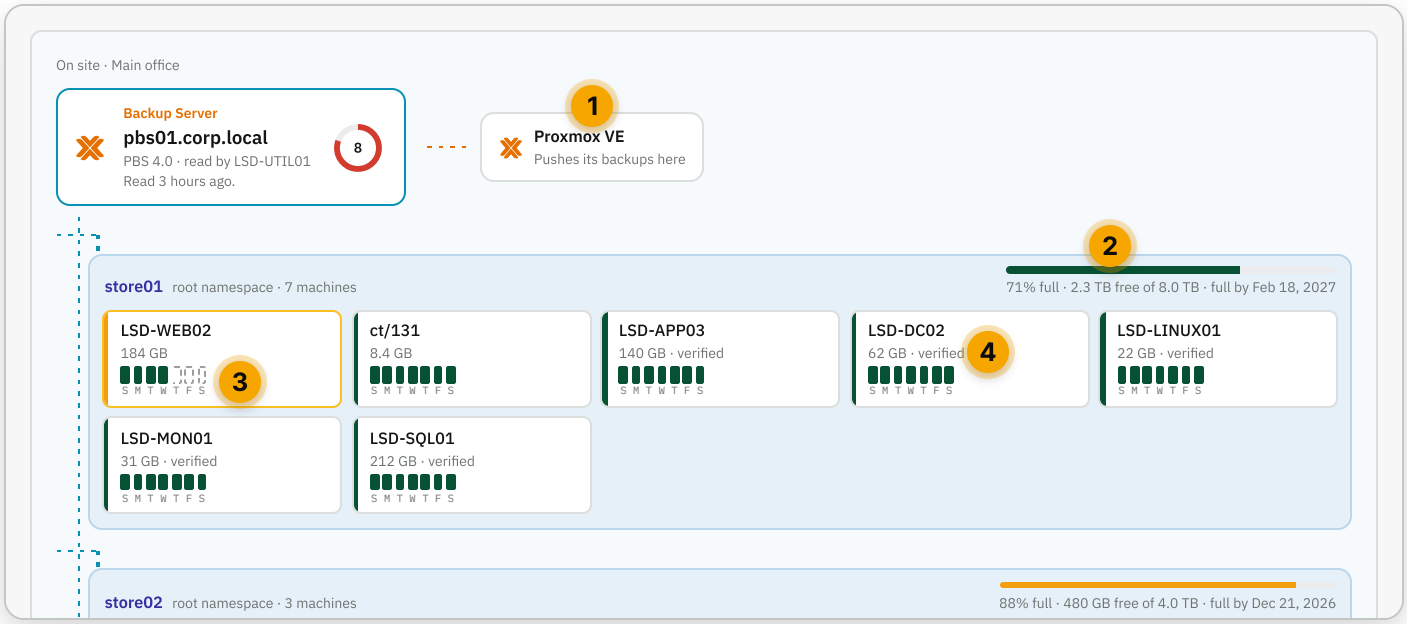


FIGURE 3 A Proxmox Backup Server on the Backups dashboard.

PBS has no jobs, so the picture is machines rather than jobs: Proxmox VE pushes in 1 , and the ring counts how many machines are protected (8 of 10 here).

Each datastore shows its fill and the date PBS expects it to be full 2 . A store past 85% turns amber. Above every server, Failed, Warning and Successful filters narrow the board.

Each tile carries seven days of snapshots, an empty day drawn as an outline 3 , and a verified mark 4 . The list below puts the worst first, and a red or amber pill there opens the reason.

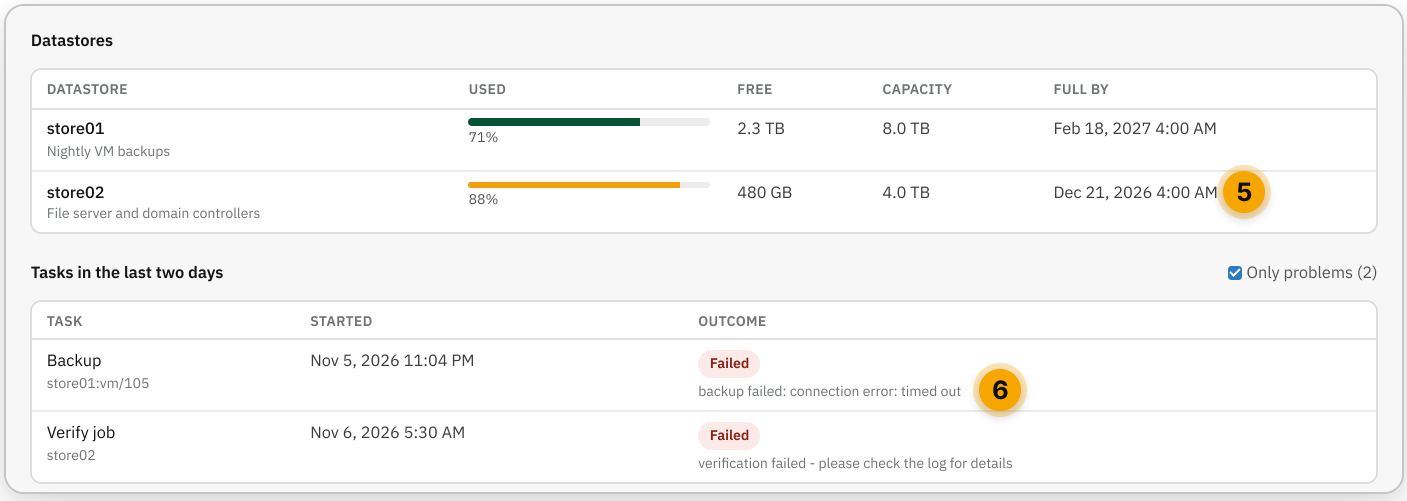


FIGURE 4 The Datastores and Tasks sections of the server's own page.

The server's own page lists each datastore with used, free and capacity, and the full-by date 5 . Below it, the tasks of the last two days open on the problems, with PBS's own status beside each one 6 : on a failure, PBS writes the error itself there, so it is shown word for word.

04 MACHINES AND MATCHING

Each backup group, matched to the machine it is

PBS names a backup group by type and guest ID. The ClearBridge reads each guest's backed-up configuration, and ClearWatch uses what is in it to find the ClearWatch device that group belongs to.

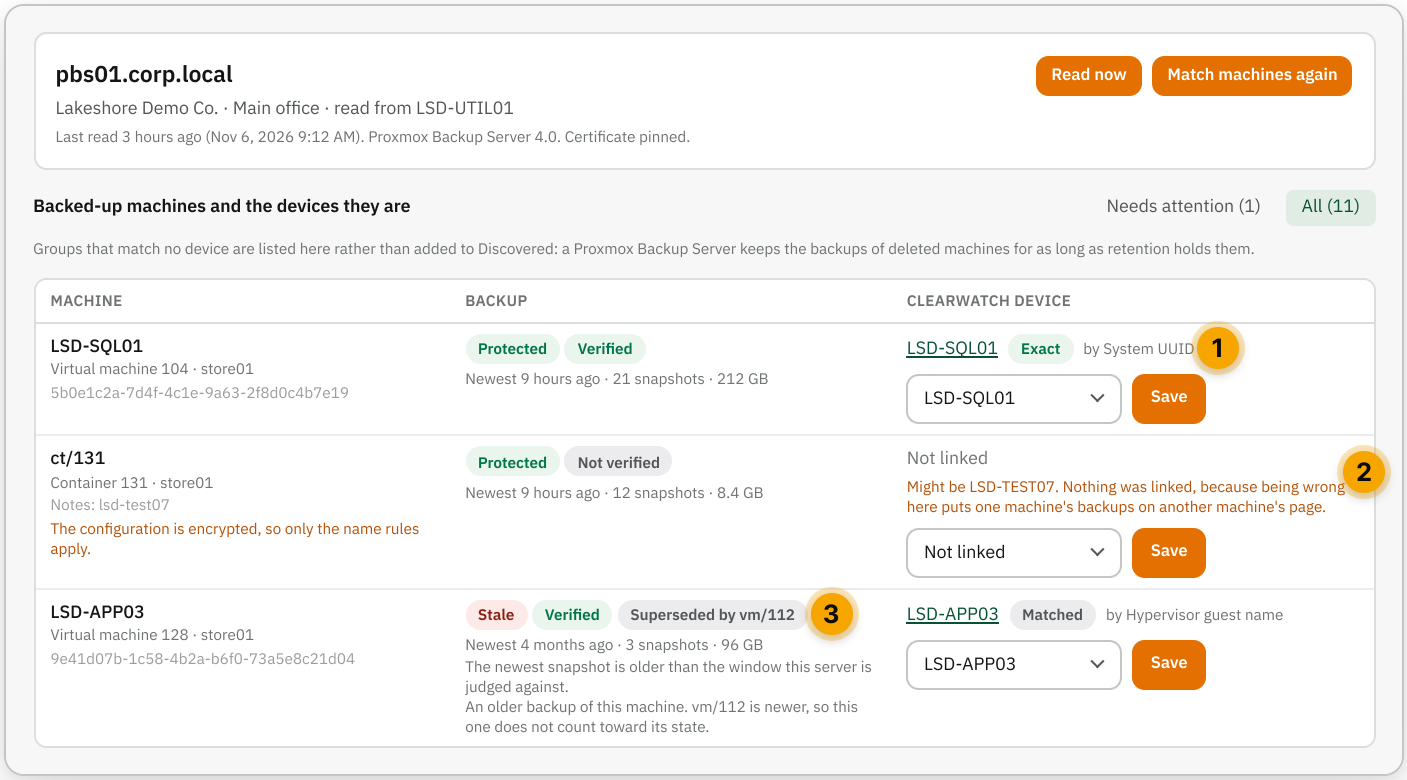


FIGURE 5 A PBS server's page: its header and, below its settings, the table that maps backup groups to devices.

COMPARED	RESULT
System UUID	EXACT links itself 1
Network card MAC	MATCHED links itself
Guest name, host name	MATCHED links itself
Guest ID, snapshot notes	SUGGESTED only 2

Rules run in order and the first hit wins. A tie links nothing, and a link set by hand is never overwritten. A guest ID only ever suggests, because it is unique per cluster, not per client.

When a VM is rebuilt, its old group stays behind. The older group on the same datastore is marked superseded 3 and stops counting, so it cannot turn a healthy machine red.

PBS never creates devices. It keeps deleted machines' backups for as long as retention holds them, so a group that matches nothing is listed on the server's page for someone to link by hand.

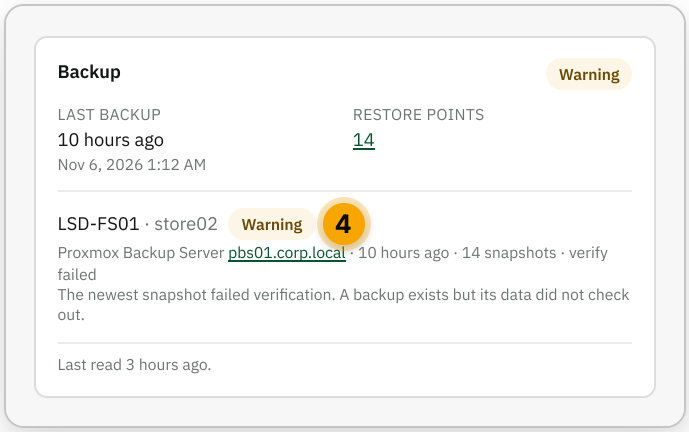


FIGURE 6 The Backup card on a protected machine's Overview.

On each machine's page, a Backup card names the server, the datastore, the snapshot count and the verification 4. The count opens the list of snapshots behind it.

A retired machine can be **excluded with a written reason** of 10 to 500 characters, logged under the person's name. It returns on its own if a new backup appears.

05 CHECKS AND ALERTS

What raises an alert, out of the box

PBS machines use ClearWatch's built-in backup monitors: **Backup health** and **Backup restorable** on each machine that should be backed up, and **Backup server health** on the PBS server's own device. Every level is a default you can change, for everyone or for one device.

CHECK	MONITOR	WARNING	FAILED
Backup state	Backup health	Verification failed, or result unreadable	Stale (past the window), or failed
Hours since last backup	Backup health	26 hours	50 hours
Restore points held	Backup health	3 snapshots	1 snapshot
Backup restorable	Backup restorable	Result unreadable	No snapshot in the policy window, verification failed, or newest snapshot older than 8 days
Datastore free space	Backup server health	15%	5%, one row per datastore
Failed tasks in the last day	Backup server health	1 task	3 tasks

Applied to a machine, Backup health shows each check's state beside its levels (1), and alerts follow your notification policies like any other check.

Restore points held counts snapshots, so a retention chain that is quietly collapsing is caught. PBS has no malware scan, so the malware verdict does not apply.

On a Proxmox VE cluster ClearWatch also watches, a guest backed up to PBS counts as covered in **Guests with no backup**, and the cluster's Backup card shows its PBS state beside it.

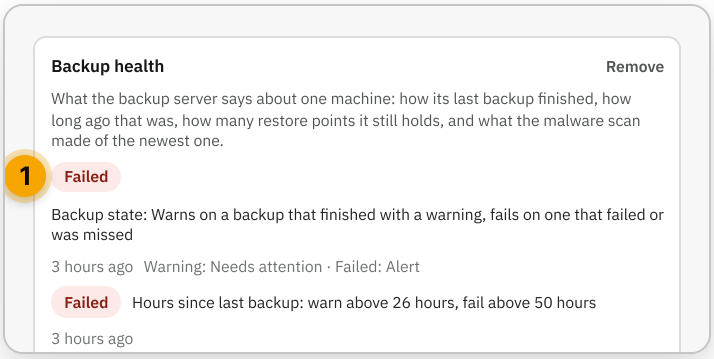


FIGURE 7 Backup health on LSD-WEB02. All screens are rebuilt with demo data.

06 GOOD TO KNOW

Requirements

- A ClearBridge that reaches the server on port 8007.
- An API token set up as in section 02.
- The PBS server as a ClearWatch device, named in "This server is", for the datastore and task checks.
- A stale window that fits your backup schedule.

Limits

- Each PBS belongs to one client. A server shared by several clients is not split by namespace.
- Sync jobs to a second PBS are not tracked as an offsite copy.
- A machine whose guest configuration is encrypted is matched by name only.
- Read every 6 hours, or on demand.

See every PBS machine on one board.

Start a free trial, or ask us to walk your Proxmox Backup Servers through it with you.

clearwatch.com

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