

This education topic provides a high-level overview of the system-managed tape (SMStape) support in System z (z/OS) and ends with a discussion of the mount flow for scratch and private allocations and the components that are involved.



This presentation begins with an overview of the system-managed tape (SMStape) environment. It then moves on to discuss which System z components are involved with SMStape and what role each component plays. From there, two examples are covered that will explain in detail how both a scratch and specific mount request are satisfied by the system. The presentation concludes with a short discussion on error handling and recovery action.



System-managed tape (SMStape) was introduced in 1993 along with the IBM 3495 Tape Library Dataserver, IBM's first automated tape library. Over the years, additional enhancements have been made to support new automated tape libraries along with virtual and manual tape libraries.

SMStape support is responsible for managing the tape volumes and libraries in a System z (z/OS) environment. This includes tracking volume categories, determining which volumes, devices, and libraries can satisfy a request, providing information about the tape library environment, error handling and recovery actions, and many other functions. However, the host application and tape management system are still responsible for managing the data that resides on the volumes.

SMStape consists of multiple components all working together to manage the tape environment.



A tape library consists of a set of tape volumes and tape drives where those volumes can be mounted. Volumes can only be mounted on tape devices defined to the library that owns the volumes. A tape library can be automated, virtual, or manual. An automated tape library uses robotics to automatically retrieve and mount a volume that is requested. A manual library requires an operator to manually mount a requested volume. A virtual tape library uses logical volumes, which reside on cache instead of physical tapes to satisfy requests. These logical volumes can then be migrated to physical tape by the library to conserve cache. If a request is made for data that resides on a migrated volume, the logical volume is written back to cache before the request is satisfied.

Each type of tape library can support multiple device types, recording formats, and media types.



SMStape support consists of these components:

Catalog is responsible for the user catalog (VOLCAT), which houses volumes and tape library records. It is commonly referred to as the tape configuration database (TCDB). Catalog also provides Access Method Services (IDCAMS), which can create, alter, delete, and list volume and library records. Access Method Services is mostly used for recovery purposes.

MVS Allocation is responsible for allocating a library device from a list of eligible devices.

Open/Close/End of Volume is used during data set open and volume verification processing to provide a set of installation exits that interface with tape management systems. These installation exits provide a means for a user to allow or disallow the use of a volume.





SMS provides a set of interfaces that allow a user to control tape library volume and device selection. For new allocations, the Automatic Class Selection (ACS) routines are invoked during job processing. Simple IF-THEN-ELSE logic is used to assign policy constructs to a new allocation. The three different constructs in the ACS routines used to direct the allocation are storage class, storage group, and data class. The storage class construct is used to make the request SMS-managed. The storage group construct can direct the request to specific libraries. Finally, the data class construct can be used to direct the request to a specific media type or recording technology or both. These three constructs can be specified directly in the JCL or the ACS routines can be written so that the proper construct is automatically determined after the job is submitted. In addition to storage, class, storage group and data class there is also management class. Management class is not directly used in the allocation path by the SMStape support.



This slide presents an example of how ACS routines are used during a new allocation request. First, the Storage Class construct is looked at to determine if this request should be SMS-managed. If the request should be SMS-managed, the Storage Group construct is then queried to determine which library should handle the request. In this example, SGATL is the storage group name assigned to an ATL library while SGVTS is the storage group name assigned to an ATL library while SGVTS is the storage group name assigned to a VTS. Depending on which Storage Group is chosen, this request could be directed to either an ATL or VTS library. Finally, the Dataclass construct is queried to determine whether or not a particular media type or recording technology should be used for this request.



Device Services/AOM is the component responsible for providing an interface to send I/O to a tape library. This isolates all I/O to tape libraries into a single component. In addition to building and executing channel programs to the library, Device Services/AOM also maps which device pools (or tape subsystems) reside in which tape libraries. A device pool is a string of up to 16 tape devices attached to a single control unit. All devices in a device pool must support the same media types and recording formats.



OAM provides a set of library and volume related services. The Library Automation Communication Services (CBRXLACS) is primarily responsible for mounting and demounting a volume. The Library Control Services (CBRXLCS) provides an interface for users to control various aspects of the library and obtain tape library and volume related information.



In addition to the service interfaces, OAM also provides an interface to modify the catalog or TCDB. CBRXLIB is used to create, retrieve, and update a tape library record while CBRXVOL is used to create, retrieve, update, replace, or delete a tape volume record.

OAM also provides a set of installation exits at key processing points. CBRUXENT is used to allow or disallow the entry of tape cartridges into a tape library while CBRUXEJC is used to allow or disallow cartridges to be ejected from a tape library. CBRUXCUA is invoked to determine if a change use attribute (scratch/private transitions) is allowed for a particular volume. CBRUXVNL is used to direct allocation into a specific library for shelf resident volumes.



The OAM address space must be active in order to allow cartridge entry and eject processing, operator command processing (such as library and tape volume displays), audit processing, and unsolicited attention message processing. Job processing (mount/demount activity) does not require the OAM address space to be active, however the recommendation is to always run with the OAM address space active.



RMM is a tape management product that can manage tape volumes and the datasets that reside on those volumes, and maintain detailed volume and dataset information within its own database. RMM also provides utilities to return volumes to scratch and can track the movement and location of volumes both on and off-site.



Now, two examples will be covered in depth to explain how both a scratch and specific mount request are satisfied by SMStape.

The first example will cover a scratch mount request in a JES2 environment where a volume is being written from load point (DISP=NEW).

The first step is MVS Allocation calling SMS to invoke the ACS routines. The ACS routines will then assign a data class, storage class, management class, and storage group to the request. These assigned constructs will determine if the request is SMS-managed, whether a particular media type or recording format is to be used, and which library will receive the request. After assigning each of the constructs, SMS then invokes OAM with the storage group and data class information. OAM then determines which libraries are associated with the assigned storage group and invokes Device Services to get a list of device pools that reside in that library. OAM then determines which devices are eligible to satisfy the request by using the media type and recording format specified in the data class construct.



After receiving the device pools from Device Services, OAM then returns this list to SMS ordered by scratch volume availability. SMS then returns this list of device pools to MVS Allocation. MVS Allocation then builds an eligible device list taking into account both the device type and cartridge loader status. Based on this eligible device list, MVS Allocation can then allocate a device to satisfy the request. In the event of a non-deferred mount, MVS Allocation invokes OAM's CBRXLACS services to mount the volume, whereas in a deferred mount situation, OPEN/CLOSE/End of Volume will invoke OAM to mount the volume.

In the event this request is satisfied by a VTS, the ACS routine assigned constructs are then passed to the library allowing for outboard policy actions against the volume.



After OAM has been called to process the mount request, OAM then invokes Device Services to send the category mount order to the library. The library then selects a scratch volume from the specified scratch category and schedules the mount. MVS Allocation completes as soon as the mount is scheduled and the job step begins. The job issues an OPEN for the requested tape dataset and OPEN invokes OAM to wait for the mount to complete. When the mount completes, the library notifies Device Services, which notifies OAM, which notifies OPEN. OPEN can then read the volume label and perform label verification.



If OPEN is successful, it invokes SMS to move the volume from SCRATCH to PRIVATE status. The tape management system is given an opportunity at this point in time to approve or disapprove of the volume's category change. SMS then invokes OAM to change the use attribute (CUA) of the volume using CBRXLCS. When invoked for a CUA, OAM invokes CBRUXCUA, the change use attribute installation exit, which notifies the tape management system that the volume will be changing categories. To complete the CUA request, OAM invokes Device Services to change the volume category to PRIVATE at the library. After that is complete, OAM then moves the volume from SCRATCH to PRIVATE in the TCDB. After the volume has been successfully moved to the PRIVATE category, OPEN can finally return to the caller with a successful OPEN, at which point data can be written to the volume.



The second example details how a specific mount request is handled by SMStape and its related components.

MVS Allocation begins by invoking SMS to determine if the specified volume resides in a tape library. SMS invokes OAM to retrieve the volume record from the TCDB that can provide this information. If the volume is not library resident, OAM invokes the volume not in library exit (CBRUXVNL) to provide an operator the opportunity to enter the shelf resident volume into the library. Once the volume is determined to be library resident, SMS invokes OAM with the VOLSERs to verify that all volumes are in the PRIVATE category and belong to the same storage group.



OAM then calls Device Services to obtain a list of devices in the library associated with the storage group assigned to the volume. Using media type and recording technology information, OAM eliminates ineligible devices. Once a list of eligible device pools is created, it is returned to SMS, which passes it back to MVS Allocation. Note, for a read request, OAM will order this device pool list from oldest device type to newest. This allows newer device types to stay available for requests that can only be satisfied by a newer device type. Once MVS Allocation receives the device pool list, it builds a list of eligible devices and allocates a device. As with a scratch request, in the case of a non-deferred mount, MVS Allocation invokes OAM for the mount request and in the case of a deferred mount, OPEN invokes OAM for the mount.



Once OAM has received the mount request, it calls Device Services to issue the mount request to the library. Once the mount has been scheduled, MVS Allocation completes processing and the job step begins. The job issues an OPEN for the dataset and OPEN in turn calls OAM to wait until the mount is complete.



Once the mount is complete, the library sends notification to Device Services, which notifies OAM, which notifies OPEN. OPEN then reads the volume label and performs label verification. If successful, OPEN invokes SMS to update fields in the TCDB volume record. SMS then calls OAM's CBRXVOL interface to update the volume TCDB record. Once the volume record is updated, OPEN returns to the caller with a successful notification and data can then be read or written to the volume.



In either scenario, if the mount request cannot be scheduled or does not complete, OAM's CBRXLACS recovery path examines the error and attempts recovery. CBR4195I and CBR4196D are issued to the console. These messages give the operator an opportunity to either retry or cancel the mount. An example of these messages is shown.



During a scratch mount request, if OPEN fails the mount, OAM's CBRXLACS function is invoked to demount the volume, assign it to the error category, and then retry the mount with another scratch volume, up to five additional times.



For additional information refer to the z/OS DFSMS Object Access Method, Planning, Installation and Storage Administration Guide for Tape Libraries (SC35-0427).



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System managed tape overview

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