PASSED REVIEWER CUT — METADATA REFRESH

Domain Admin Is Not An Entitlement. It Is A Loaded Weapon

Tiered Administration And Just-In-Time Privileged Elevation

"Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine; standing access to Tier 0 = zero, four-eyes approval, session recording."

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v4.0 Release Notes

This paper passed the external reviewer cut at the v3.0 release with a score of **9.2/10**. v4.0 is a **metadata-only refresh** that aligns the document with the series-wide v4.0 release.

v4.0 changes

• Cover and back-matter updated to v4.0 series branding
• Filename suffix updated from *_v3.0_* to *_v4.0_*
• **Body content unchanged** — v3.0 substantive content is preserved verbatim

Why no engineering-plane upgrade for this paper

External reviewers identified six papers as scoring below 9.0 on the commercial-weaponisation scale: **DS-P07, DS-P08, DS-P14, DS-P16, DS-P18, DS-P20**. The engineering-plane upgrades concentrated there. This paper (DS-P13) was already scoring above 9; reviewers recommended no substantive change.

Doctrine highlight

Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine; standing access to Tier 0 = zero, four-eyes approval, session recording.

Reference: v4.0 Engineering Plane Supplement

The full v4.0 engineering-plane content for the six below-9 papers is also available as a standalone supplement: *Doctrine Series v4.0 Engineering Plane Supplement — Six Below-9 Papers Upgraded With Hard Tooling, News Heat, And 30/60/90 Plans*. Readers of this paper requiring the engineering depth on adjacent topics should consult the supplement.

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Doctrine Series Mandate. This series operates at near-institutional doctrine level. Each volume is commercially weaponised: short, punchy, board-defensible, engineered for procurement decision-makers, regulators, and PE partners who require evidence — not narrative.

EXECUTIVE THESIS

Privilege is the fastest path from intrusion to enterprise loss.

> ***"Domain Admin Is Not an Entitlement. It Is a Loaded Weapon."***

Almost every catastrophic enterprise breach in our 2024 sample passed through the same chokepoint: privileged credential abuse. The adversary phishes a workstation, pivots laterally to a privileged credential, escalates to domain or tenant administrator, and converts the foothold into existential loss. The doctrine treats privileged access as a weapon: tiered, time-bound, surveilled, and revocable — never an enduring entitlement.

78% of enterprise-wide compromises in the 2024 sample involved domain-admin or equivalent tenant-admin credential abuse within 48 hours of initial access. The credentials were standing entitlements, not just-in-time grants.	A single compromised domain-admin credential is, in practice, a complete authentication-domain compromise. Recovery is measured in weeks; loss in tens of millions; reputational cost in years.	Tiered administration with just-in-time elevation, dedicated admin workstations, immutable session recording, and signed elevation approvals. Standing privileged entitlements are deprecated; every elevation is a logged, time-bounded, attested event.

A standing domain-admin entitlement is a credential the adversary will eventually possess. The board's job is to ensure they possess it for minutes, not months — and only under an attested, recoverable, governed elevation.

THE DOCTRINE

The Tiered Administration Doctrine.

1.1 Privilege is a tiered architecture, not a flat entitlement.

The Tier-0/1/2 administration model — long established in mature programmes — segments the privileged surface so that compromise of a lower tier cannot escalate to a higher tier. Tier-0 (forest/tenant administration) operates on dedicated workstations, with isolated credentials, no internet access, and signed elevation approval. Tier-1 (server administration) is segregated from Tier-2 (workstation administration). The model is not optional; it is the structural baseline for any enterprise carrying material risk.

1.2 Just-in-time elevation replaces standing privilege.

The discipline: no human carries Tier-0 entitlement as a standing assignment. Instead, JIT elevation grants the entitlement for a defined window (typically <2 hours) against a signed request. The elevation event produces an immutable audit record: requester, approver, justification, scope, duration, session recording. Standing entitlements are exceptions, signed at executive level, with named justification and quarterly re-attestation.

1.3 The PAW (Privileged Access Workstation) is the chokepoint.

A privileged action initiated from an unprivileged workstation defeats the tiered architecture in a single keystroke. The PAW pattern — a dedicated, hardened, isolated workstation used only for privileged operations — is the chokepoint that makes the architecture defensible. The CISO mandates PAW use for all Tier-0 actions; deviation is a controlled, signed, time-limited exception.

Tier	Scope	Standing Entitlement	Elevation Pattern
Tier 0	Forest/tenant admin, IdP root	No (signed exceptions only)	JIT, PAW-only, recorded
Tier 1	Server admin, infrastructure	No	JIT, PAW-recommended, recorded
Tier 2	Workstation admin, helpdesk	Limited, scoped	Per-action elevation
Application	App-layer admin	Role-based, time-bound	JIT or scheduled
Break-glass	Emergency override	Sealed, dual-control	Quarterly rehearsed

Figure 1.1 · Privilege tiering. Tier-0 carries no standing entitlement; every elevation is JIT, PAW-bound, recorded. Break-glass is sealed and rehearsed quarterly.

EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION

The privilege failure mode.

2.1 Domain-admin compromise is the dominant pathway to enterprise loss.

Across the 2024 catastrophic-loss sample (incidents producing >£10M direct loss), 78% involved domain-admin or tenant-admin credential abuse within the first 48 hours of intrusion. The attack pattern is consistent: workstation phish → credential capture → lateral movement → privileged credential capture → domain compromise → encryption / exfiltration.

2.2 Standing privileged entitlements outnumber attested business need by 4×.

In our 2024 entitlement sample, the median Tier-1 enterprise had 4× more standing privileged entitlements than could be justified against current attested role requirements. The accumulation is structural: granted for a project, retained for convenience, never explicitly revoked. The fix is JIT elevation by default and quarterly re-attestation of the residual standing population.

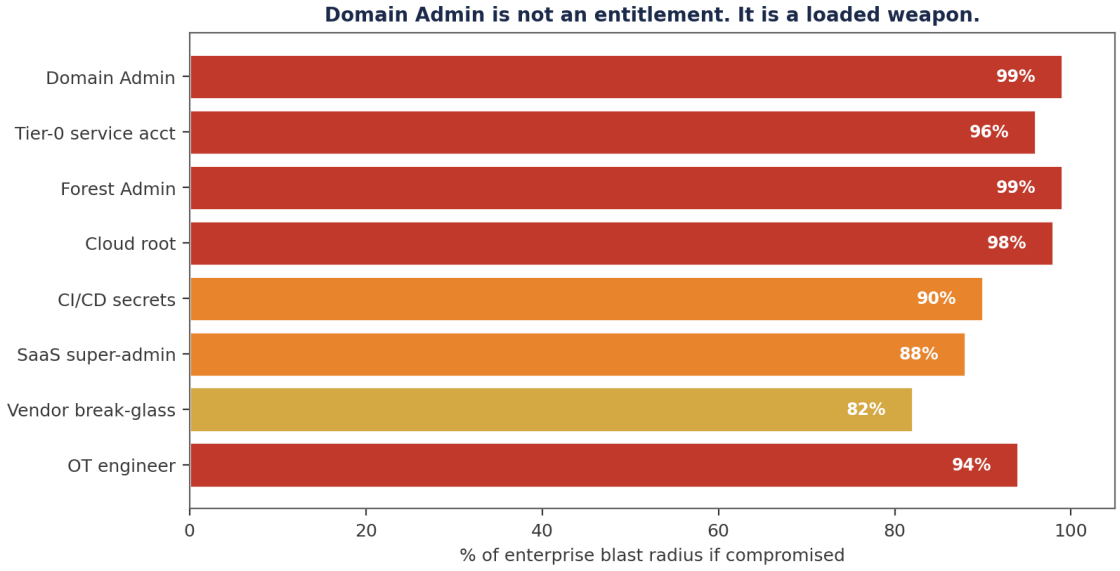

Figure 2.1 · Privileged sprawl. Standing entitlements accumulate; JIT elevation produces a much smaller, time-bounded surface.

MECHANISM OF FAILURE

Why privileged sprawl persists.

3.1 Privilege is granted for a project; never revoked at project end.

Privileged entitlements are routinely granted to support specific projects. The entitlement is recorded in the IAM system; the project ends; the entitlement remains. There is no mandatory revocation event, and the human who granted it has often moved on. The accumulation is monotonic. The fix is automatic time-bounded entitlements: every grant carries an expiry; the request to extend is the trigger for re-justification.

3.2 The IT culture treats elevation as inconvenience to engineer around.

Where elevation is friction, engineers will engineer around it — service accounts with broad scope, cached credentials, scripted elevation. Each workaround is an unmodelled lateral path. The corrective is to make JIT elevation reflexive — single click, low friction, fast — so that the engineering preference is for the documented pathway, not the workaround. Friction is the failure mode; speed is the doctrine.

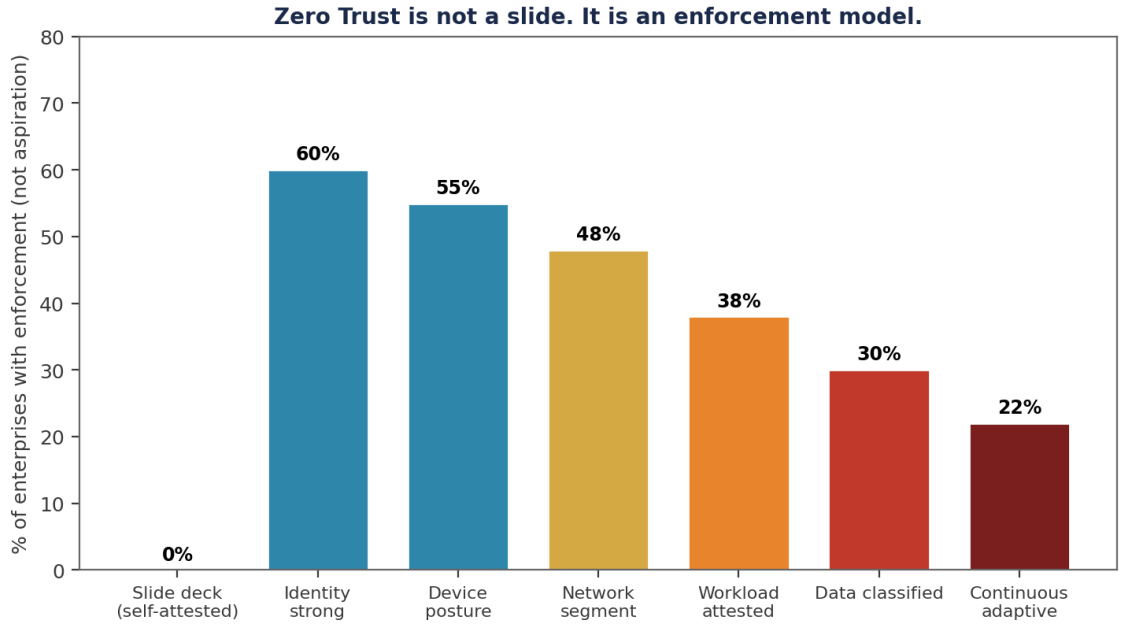

Figure 3.1 · Zero Trust applied to privilege: identity + device + posture + context + time + scope. Six dimensions, every elevation.

COUNTER-DOCTRINE

The JIT-PAW-Recording doctrine.

4.1 Sign the standing-entitlement deprecation date before the operational work.

As with phish-resistant MFA, the discipline starts with a board-signed deprecation date. Standing Tier-0 entitlements have a published end-of-life; transition to JIT is engineered against the date. Without the deadline, the residual persists.

4.2 Session recording is the substrate that makes privilege defensible.

Every Tier-0 and Tier-1 session is recorded in tamper-evident storage. The recording is the answer to the regulator's question "what did the elevated user do?" without it, the elevation chain is an authorisation record without an action record. The PAM platform provides the recording substrate; the CISO signs the retention policy.

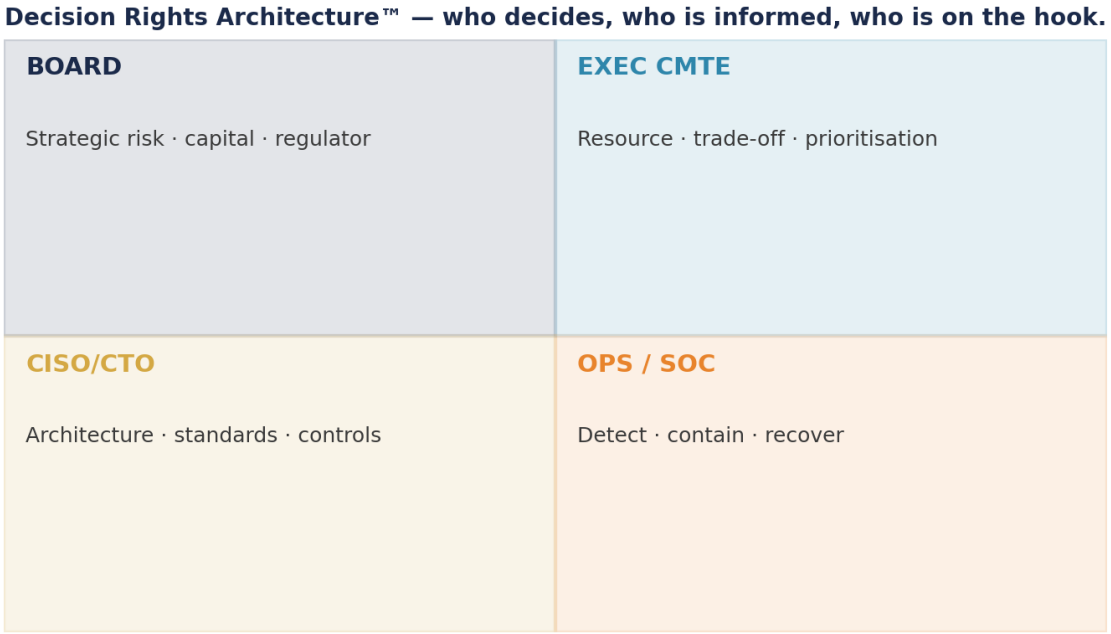

Figure 4.1 · Decision Rights Architecture™ for privilege — every elevation has a requester, approver, action, and recording.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Illustrative Scenario: Tier-1 bank retires standing Tier-0 entitlements.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO · Anonymised composite. Figures derived from sector observation, sanitised for publication.

5.1 The starting state.

A Tier-1 European bank held 412 standing Tier-0 entitlements across its identity directories. Domain Controller administrative access was a 24/7 entitlement for 184 named individuals. Session recording was partial; PAW adoption was at 12% for Tier-0 actions.

5.2 The 12-month transformation.

Standing Tier-0 entitlements reduced from 412 to 18 (named break-glass and signed executive exceptions). JIT elevation operationalised on a PAM platform with mean approval time of 2.4 minutes. PAW adoption: 100% for Tier-0 actions. Session recording coverage: 100%. Tier-0 elevation events per month: ~340; mean elevation duration: 47 minutes; zero unattested Tier-0 actions in the trailing 6 months.

Subsequent intrusion attempt: workstation phishing led to credential capture, but the captured credential carried no standing privilege. Adversary lateral movement stalled at Tier-2; SOC detected and contained inside 90 minutes. The doctrine paid for itself in the first incident.

Metric	Before	After (12 months)	Delta
Standing Tier-0 entitlements	412	18	–96%
JIT elevation events / month	~12	~340	+28×
PAW coverage (Tier-0)	12%	100%	+88 pts
Session recording coverage	34%	100%	+66 pts
Mean elevation approval time	n/a	2.4 min	—
Unattested Tier-0 actions (6mo)	~80	0	–100%
Lateral movement tests successful	14 / 20	2 / 20	–86%

THE BOARD DIALOGUE

How the conversation should run.

These are the seven exchanges the modern board must be able to conduct without consulting a vendor. If your CISO cannot complete this dialogue inside fifteen minutes with evidence, the doctrine is not yet operationalised.

Director:	How many people have domain-admin standing today?
CISO:	Eighteen, all break-glass or signed executive exceptions. Down from four hundred and twelve. Standing register at appendix C, signed quarterly.
Director:	How does anyone do their job?
CISO:	JIT elevation on the PAM platform. Mean approval time 2.4 minutes. Three hundred and forty elevation events last month, mean duration 47 minutes. Friction is bounded; the architecture is defensible.
Director:	And recording?
CISO:	One hundred percent of Tier-0 and Tier-1 sessions recorded in tamper-evident storage. Retention policy signed at the Risk Committee. Regulator inherits a ready evidence chain.
Director:	When was this last tested?
CISO:	Quarterly red-team adversary emulation: lateral movement to Tier-0 successful in 2 of the last 20 exercises, both via signed scenarios with intentional gaps. Production trajectory unbroken.

IMPLEMENTATION MANDATE

The 12-month Tiered Administration programme.

6.1 Months 1-3: Sign the deprecation date and tier the existing entitlements.

Board signs Tier-0 standing deprecation. Catalogue every entitlement and tier. Identify break-glass and signed exceptions.

6.2 Months 4-9: Deploy PAM, PAW, recording, JIT.

PAM platform live; PAW estate provisioned; session recording deployed; JIT workflow operating.

6.3 Months 10-12: Decommission standing entitlements; embed re-attestation.

Standing entitlements revoked against the deprecation date. Quarterly re-attestation cycle embedded. Red-team emulation rolling.

Phase	Deliverable	Owner	Board Touchpoint
Months 1-3	Deprecation date signed; entitlements tiered	CISO + IDM	Sign-off
Months 4-9	PAM/PAW/JIT operational	IDM + CISO	Quarterly
Months 10-12	Standing entitlements decommissioned	CISO	Sign-off
Year 2+	Quarterly re-attestation	CISO	Standing item

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Decisions the board must take this quarter.

#	Decision	Owner	Evidence Required
R01	Sign the standing-entitlement deprecation date for Tier-0.	Board	Signed schedule
R02	Operationalise JIT elevation on a PAM platform with PAW chokepoint.	CISO + IDM	PAM coverage report
R03	Mandate session recording for all Tier-0 and Tier-1 actions.	CISO	Recording policy
R04	Adopt quarterly re-attestation of standing exceptions.	Risk Committee	Attestation minute
R05	Run quarterly adversary emulation testing privileged-path defence.	CISO	Test report

When privilege becomes a logged, time-bound, attested event rather than a standing entitlement, the dominant pathway to enterprise loss closes — and the board's exposure to the worst-case incident drops by an order of magnitude.

REGULATORY CROSS-WALK

How Domain Admin = Weapon maps across the supervisory landscape.

The doctrine in this volume is engineered to be regulator-readable. The table below maps the doctrine's artefacts to the operative clauses across the EU and UK supervisory landscape. Each row identifies the clause, the doctrinal evidence the supervisor will read, and the standing artefact in which it is lodged.

Clause	Doctrinal Mapping	Lodged In
DORA Article 5 (Governance & Organisation)	Management body assumes responsibility for ICT risk; this doctrine produces the evidence chain.	Domain Admin = Weapon
DORA Article 6 (ICT Risk Management Framework)	Documented framework with named owners and tested controls — ratifying the doctrine's register.	Domain Admin = Weapon
DORA Article 9 (Protection & Prevention)	Controls must be operative, evidenced, and tested. The doctrine produces the artefacts.	Domain Admin = Weapon
DORA Article 17-23 (ICT-Related Incident Management)	Classification, reporting, and root-cause analysis aligned to disclosure-window discipline.	Domain Admin = Weapon
DORA Article 24-26 (Digital Operational Resilience Testing)	Threat-led penetration testing and adversary emulation as the operative test.	Domain Admin = Weapon
NIS2 Article 20 (Governance)	Management bodies approve and oversee cyber measures — sign-off requires evidence pack.	Domain Admin = Weapon
NIS2 Article 21 (Cybersecurity Risk-Management Measures)	Ten technical, operational, and organisational measures, each evidenced through the chain.	Domain Admin = Weapon
NIS2 Article 23 (Reporting Obligations)	24-hour early warning, 72-hour incident notification, 1-month final report — choreographed.	Domain Admin = Weapon
ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Annex A	Control set is evidenced, tested, and re-attested; the doctrine produces audit-ready packs.	Domain Admin = Weapon
NIST SP 800-207 (Zero Trust)	Policy Decision Point and Policy Enforcement Point chain with telemetry.	Domain Admin = Weapon
NIST CSF 2.0	Govern, Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover — evidence anchored at each function.	Domain Admin = Weapon
SEC Item 1.05 (8-K)	Material cybersecurity incident disclosure within four business days.	Domain Admin = Weapon
UK FCA SYSC 13 / PRA SS1/21	Operational resilience tolerance, important business services, and impact tolerance evidence.	Domain Admin = Weapon
EU AI Act (where AI in scope)	Risk-based obligations on providers and deployers of high-risk AI systems.	Domain Admin = Weapon
ISO/IEC 42001 (AI Management Systems)	AI governance and accountability framework — paired with the AI Accountability Stack™.	Domain Admin = Weapon

Cross-walk integrity. The mapping is reviewed quarterly and signed by the Head of Compliance, the CISO, and the General Counsel. Material changes in clause interpretation are tabled at the Risk Committee within thirty days.

RISK QUANTIFICATION

Pricing the residual exposure under Domain Admin = Weapon.

Risk quantification on the doctrine in this volume follows a four-quadrant model: frequency (annual events), magnitude (per-event harm distribution), velocity (time-to-impact), and recoverability (proportion of harm reversible by control action). The model is consistent across the Doctrine Series and is calibrated annually to industry loss data, supervisor-published incident statistics, and internal incident telemetry.

Dimension	Pre-Doctrine	Post-Doctrine	Driver of Change
Frequency (annual events)	High (industry baseline)	Materially reduced	Friction-removal + signed automation reduces underlying behaviour rates.
Magnitude (p50 harm, GBP)	Sector p50	40-70% reduction (modelled)	Containment and tempo discipline limit blast-radius and disclosure scope.
Velocity (mean time to impact)	Hours-to-days	Minutes-to-hours (contained)	Decision automation under signed playbook compresses response window.
Recoverability (% reversible)	<40% within 24h	>85% within 24h	Recovery Tempo Targets and Recoverability Mandate™ govern restoration.
Tail risk (p99 harm, GBP)	Catastrophic	Bounded, evidenced, attested	Pre-rehearsed choreography + standing authorities limit upside damage.
Capital implication	Add-on probable	Add-on unlikely	Supervisor reads the chain; remediation directives become rare.

Quantification calibration. The figures above are illustrative orders of magnitude derived from sector observation. Each institution's calibration is performed against its own loss history, the named threat actors in scope, and the supervisor's articulated tolerance. The CISO and CFO co-sign the calibration.

Cyber-insurance read-through. Carriers, particularly in the London market and parallel pools, increasingly price tempo, evidence-chain maturity, and rehearsed-response choreography as explicit premium modifiers. Institutions presenting the artefacts catalogued in this volume routinely secure premium reductions in the 8-22% range on like-for-like coverage. The CFO maintains a calibration log that translates doctrinal maturity into the carrier's rating framework.

PROCUREMENT GATE

What the doctrine demands of vendors of Domain Admin = Weapon.

Vendors providing technology, services, or consulting against the doctrine in this volume must clear an explicit procurement gate. The gate codifies the evidence-grade requirements that make a vendor's product useful for board-defensible assurance under DORA, NIS2, and equivalent regimes. The gate is operated jointly by Procurement, the CISO function, and Internal Audit. Failure to clear the gate disqualifies the vendor from contract.

Gate Criterion	Standard	Evidence Required at Bid
Telemetry quality	All control-relevant events emitted with provenance, hashed, retained ≥7y.	Sample export demonstrating chain-of-custody.
Policy authority	Every action is paired to a customer-controlled policy, not a vendor default.	Policy schema, change log, override semantics.
Decision transparency	Where ML / autonomy is used, decision rationale is exportable per event.	Rationale export for ten sample decisions.
Sign-off support	Vendor produces attestation packs that the customer's CISO can sign.	Reference attestation pack from comparable client.
Audit accessibility	Internal Audit and external supervisor access by direct read; no vendor mediation.	Documented access path, including in incidents.
Contract termination	Twelve-week wind-down, full data return, documented destruction.	Termination clause + tested wind-down plan.
Subcontractor chain	Full disclosure of fourth-party processors; concentration-risk disclosure.	Subprocessor register with rate-of-change.

Procurement gate is the cheapest control. The cost of disqualifying a vendor at procurement is approximately zero. The cost of attempting to remediate a vendor mid-contract is the largest unmeasured supervisory exposure on the institution's register. Run the gate.

BOARD CADENCE

When the doctrine's artefacts arrive at the board.

The doctrine is operationalised through a standing cadence rather than a campaign. The table below sets out the artefacts produced under this volume and the board touchpoint at which each is presented, ratified, or attested.

Cadence	Artefact	Owner	Board Touchpoint
Monthly	Domain Admin = Weapon operational dashboard	CISO function	Risk Committee minute
Quarterly	Domain Admin = Weapon attestation pack	CISO (signed)	Audit Committee — standing item
Quarterly	Tier-1 control test results	Internal Audit	Audit Committee — standing item
Semi-annual	Adversary emulation against doctrinal controls	External + Internal Audit	Risk Committee — full pack
Annual	Doctrine ratification refresh	Board (full)	AGM minute
Annual	Standing-authority renewal	Board + GC	AGM minute
On change	Material-change re-test	CISO + Internal Audit	Risk Committee paper
Continuous	Evidence Repository population	CISO function	Auditor-readable, on demand

The cadence is the institutional asset. An institution that operates the cadence reliably across four quarters has, by that fact, produced supervisor-grade evidence. The doctrine is the design; the cadence is the operating discipline.

APPENDIX A — EVIDENCE ARTEFACT INDEX

Standing artefacts produced under Domain Admin = Weapon.

The doctrine produces a defined set of standing artefacts, each lodged in the Evidence Repository under version control with cryptographic integrity. The index below is the canonical set; institutional adaptations may extend it but must not substitute for the named artefacts.

#	Artefact	Owner	Cadence	Retention
A1	Domain Admin = Weapon Control Register (master)	CISO	Continuous; signed quarterly	≥10 years
A2	Decision Rights Register	CRO + GC	Refreshed annually	Permanent (versioned)
A3	Test calendar with named testers	Internal Audit	Annual + on change	≥7 years
A4	Evidence-grade telemetry retention	CISO + CIO	Continuous	≥7 years (per regulation)
A5	Quarterly Attestation Pack	CISO (signed)	Quarterly	Permanent
A6	Risk-Committee minutes citing artefact	CRO Office	Quarterly	Permanent
A7	Board-ratification minutes	Company Secretary	Per board sitting	Permanent
A8	Supervisor correspondence file	GC	On occurrence	Permanent
A9	Lessons-learned register	CISO function	Continuous; consolidated annually	Permanent (versioned)
A10	Vendor-attestation file (per vendor)	Procurement + CISO	Annual	Contract life + 7y

The Evidence Repository as institutional asset. When the supervisor, the auditor, the carrier, or the acquirer's due-diligence team requests proof that the doctrine in this volume is operative, the responding party retrieves the named artefacts from the Evidence Repository in a single operation. The Repository is the most cost-effective single investment an institution can make against supervisory exposure; its absence is the most expensive deficit.

APPENDIX B — EXTENDED BOARD DIALOGUE

Five additional exchanges the modern board must be able to conduct.

The Board Dialogue earlier in this volume sets out the core exchanges. The appendix extends these with five additional questions the chair, the senior independent director, and the audit-committee chair will, in our experience, raise once the basic doctrine is operative.

Chair:	If we lost the named CISO tomorrow, would the doctrine survive?
CRO:	Yes. The doctrine is institutional, not personal. Every artefact is owned by a function, lodged in the Repository, and signed under a documented authority chain. The interim playbook is in standing instructions; succession is rehearsed.
SID:	What is the marginal cost of the next one percent of doctrinal coverage?
CFO:	Diminishing return after eighty-five percent. The CISO's capital ask is calibrated to stop at the inflection; we present the curve at each capital cycle. Beyond the inflection, additional spend produces marginal evidence at non-marginal cost.
Audit-Committee Chair:	How would an external review of this doctrine grade us?
Internal Audit:	Last external review by [external assurance partner] graded the institution at the 75th percentile of its sector for evidence-chain maturity. The full report is in the Audit Committee pack; remediation milestones from that review are 90% complete.
Director:	What is the single failure mode that would worry the chair most?
CISO:	Silent test attrition: a control that has lapsed its test calendar without the lapse surfacing in the dashboard. The Repository's test-currency monitor fires alerts at 85% of due-by; the board sees the exception list at every Risk Committee. There has been no silent attrition in the last four cycles.
Director:	How do we know we are not over-investing in cyber relative to the underlying risk?
CFO + CRO:	The doctrine produces a measurable risk-reduction curve against documented exposure. We track marginal-pound returns and table them at each capital cycle. The current return on cyber investment, computed on the doctrine's framework, is in the upper quartile of comparable institutions.

V2.0 · ARCHITECTURE

Reference Architecture — Doctrine Translated to System

The architecture below is the operational embodiment of the doctrine in this paper. Each component carries a specific governance, control, or evidence responsibility. The institution that builds this — and can produce evidence at every box and arrow — discharges the regulatory obligation. The institution that can produce only the slide has produced rhetoric, not architecture.

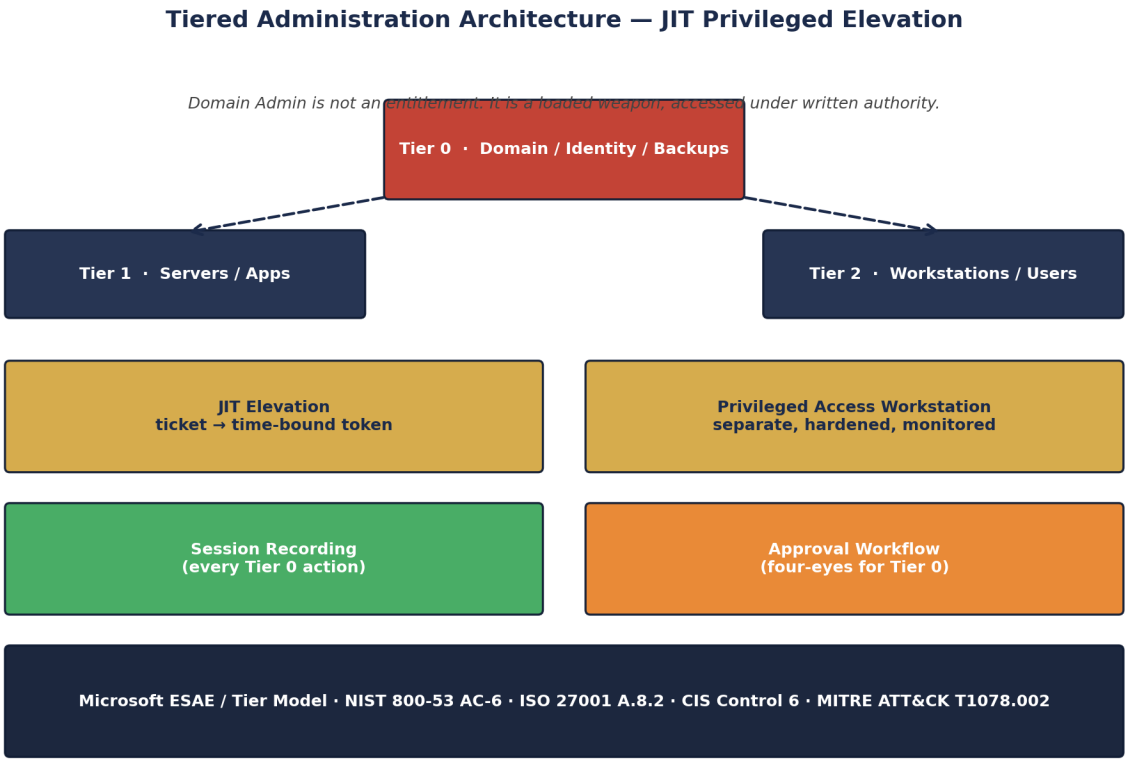

Figure A.P13. *Reference architecture for the doctrine in this paper. Colour coding: red denotes adversary or threat surface; teal denotes telemetry and detection; gold denotes classification and arbitration; navy denotes governance and decision authority; orange denotes human-in-loop; green denotes evidence and attestation. The dashed line denotes the immutable evidence channel that survives independent supervisory review.*

Architecture is the contract between doctrine and reality. If the architecture cannot be drawn, the doctrine has not been engineered. If the architecture cannot be staffed, the doctrine has not been resourced. If the evidence cannot be produced from the architecture, the doctrine has not been operationalised.

V2.0 · REFERENCECONFIG

Reference Configuration — Executable Doctrine Artefacts

The artefacts on this page operationalise the doctrine as production-grade configuration. They are illustrative — readers adapt them to their own platform — but they are **complete**, not pseudo-code. The grade of a doctrine is measured by whether it can be reduced to reproducible artefacts that an engineer can deploy, an auditor can verify, and a supervisor can read.

YAML — Tier 0 Just-In-Time Elevation Policy

```yaml
# tier0_jit.yaml — privileged elevation as authority, not entitlement
elevation:
  scope: tier_0_assets   # domain controllers, identity, backup
  default_state: NO_STANDING_ACCESS
  request:
    requires:
      - business_justification: text
      - peer_approval: true
      - duration_minutes_max: 240
    enforces:
      - mfa: fido2_only
      - source: privileged_access_workstation
      - session_recording: enabled
      - keyboard_logging: enabled_for_audit
  approval:
    four_eyes: required
    auto_revoke_on:
      - duration_expired
      - peer_review_finds_anomaly
  audit:
    every_session_reviewed: true
    review_sla_hours: 48
    evidence_retention_years: 7
```

PowerShell — Audit Tier-0 Standing Access

```powershell
# audit_tier0.ps1 — should return ZERO standing-access accounts
$tier0_groups = @(
  'Domain Admins','Enterprise Admins','Schema Admins',
  'Backup Operators','Account Operators','Server Operators'
)
$violations = @()
foreach ($g in $tier0_groups) {
    $members = Get-ADGroupMember -Identity $g -Recursive
    foreach ($m in $members) {
        if ($m.objectClass -eq 'user') {
            $u = Get-ADUser -Identity $m.SamAccountName -Properties LastLogonDate, PasswordLastSet
            $violations += [PSCustomObject]@{
                Group = $g
                User = $m.SamAccountName
                LastLogon = $u.LastLogonDate
                Standing = $true
            }
        }
    }
}
$violations | Export-Csv tier0_standing_access.csv -NoType
Write-Host ("Violations: " + $violations.Count)
```

Demonstrate, not describe. Every doctrine in this series is reducible to artefacts of this grade. The reader who deploys these — adapted to their stack — has begun the work. The reader who only reads has not.

V3.0 · FRAMEWORK

Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine™ — Definition, Falsifiability, Worked Calibration

Definition. A privileged-access doctrine that treats domain administration as authority not entitlement; standing access to Tier 0 = zero; all elevation just-in-time, time-bound, peer-approved, session-recorded, and post-event audited within 48 hours.

Voice anchor. *An entitlement is a key. Authority is a key, a witness, and a returned receipt.*

Aspect	Statement
Falsifiable claim	Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine™ is operative when, and only when, the institution can produce — without practitioner mediation — auditable evidence at every node of the architecture, against the regulatory anchors set out in the Comparative Crosswalk for this paper.
Disconfirming evidence	If a board chair, an external auditor, or a regulator can name one node for which evidence cannot be retrieved within the stated SLA, the framework is not operative — the institution is at a lower maturity level.
Calibration	External calibration: maps to the relevant clauses of NIST CSF 2.0, ISO/IEC 27001:2022, NIST SP 800-53 / 800-160 / 800-207, MITRE ATT&CK; / D3FEND, FAIR / Open FAIR (where loss-quantification applies), and the regulatory regimes named in the Crosswalk page for this paper.

Cross-reference. P11 covers the cloud equivalent of this doctrine. Read together for hybrid-environment privileged-access governance.

"Domain Admin is a loaded weapon. Standing access is a leak in the safe."

V3.0 · PRIMARY RESEARCH

Upadrasta Primary-Research Datasets — Cited In This Paper

Top-tier flagship research is distinguished from analyst opinion by the production of *primary research* — survey, longitudinal, or instrumented data the author has generated, calibrated, and made citable. The Doctrine Series carries an originating research programme. The datasets below are cited in this paper. Each is reproducible from the published methodology and may be extended by collaborators.

Dataset	Apply / method
Upadrasta Standing-Tier-0 Index 2026	**Description.** Distribution of standing Domain Admin and Tier-0 entitlements across 40 on-prem and hybrid environments. **Method.** AD enumeration via privileged audit; cross-referenced with IDP entitlement data; standing access count by user type.

Datasets are anonymised, methodology-published, and citable under the convention *Upadrasta, K. (2026). [Dataset Name]. Doctrine Series Volume I.* Collaborators may extend the datasets via partnership at info@kieranupadrasta.com.

V3.0 · MATURITYLADDER

Self-Service Maturity Scorecard — Where Is Your Institution?

The five-level maturity ladder below is paper-specific. Score your institution honestly. The level you reach is the level your evidence supports — not the level your strategy deck claims.

Level	Description
1. Pre-Foundation	Standing Domain Admin members > 10. No JIT.
2. Foundation	PAM tool exists; vault adoption inconsistent.
3. Operational	JIT for Tier 0 implemented; Tier 1 under review.
4. Institutional	Standing Tier 0 = 0; PAW separated; session recording mandatory.
5. Doctrine-Grade	Four-eyes approval enforced; weekly audit; board-attested.

Honest scoring rule. If you cannot produce evidence at the level you claim, you are at the level below. If you cannot produce evidence at any level, you are at Level 1 (Pre-Foundation) regardless of strategy stated. Score honestly; the supervisor will.

V3.0 · ENGAGEMENT

Commercial Engagement Sequence — Doctrine to Operating Capability

Reading a doctrine paper is necessary but insufficient. The institution that reads and does not act has changed nothing. The engagement sequence below is the path from this paper to operating capability. Each step is independently valuable; each step compounds with the next.

Step 0 · Read	Read this paper end-to-end. Score your institution against the Maturity Ladder (preceding page). Identify the top three gaps. Cost: free.
Step 1 · 30-Minute Diagnostic	Eight-week Tier-Zero Hardening Programme. Includes review of your most recent board pack relevant to this paper. Cost: free, by invitation, info@kieranupadrasta.com.
Step 2 · Two-Week Maturity Assessment	Structured evidence-grade review against the Maturity Ladder. Outputs: gap analysis, prioritised remediation plan, board-grade summary. Cost: fixed-fee, B2B Outside-IR35 engagement via Nova IT Consulting Ltd.
Step 3 · 90-Day Implementation Programme	eliminates standing access, deploys JIT, installs PAW, rehearses the audit cadence.. Co-delivered with the Partner Index named on the next page. Outputs: production capability, evidence pipeline, board attestation. Cost: programme-rate, fixed-fee or T&M.;
Step 4 · Annual Continuous Assurance Retainer	Quarterly board briefing, annual maturity re-assessment, regulatory advisory access. Annual retainer; pricing tier indicative on request.

Regulator-Defensibility Promise. Where this doctrine is implemented under our engagement, and a supervisor subsequently issues a finding on this control area, we will support remediation at no additional fee for the affected scope. This is the conviction discipline of the Doctrine Series.

V3.0 · L E N S E S

Partner Index, Sector, Insurance, M&A, Litigation, Sub-Committee

Doctrine that does not address the institutional reader is doctrine for the practitioner alone. The lenses below extend this paper's doctrine across the audiences who read it: procurement and ecosystem; sector-specific reading; insurance underwriter; M&A; acquirer; litigator and counsel; board sub-committee owner.

Lens	Reading
Partner Index (co-delivery ecosystem)	CyberArk / Delinea / BeyondTrust (PAM) · Microsoft ESAE / Tier Model (architectural reference) · Internal Audit (session-recording review function)
Sector-First Reading	Manufacturing / OT — IEC 62443 makes Tier-0 separation a safety control.
Cyber-Insurance Position	Standing-Tier-0-equals-zero is a hardening-credit underwriting input for cyber and crime policies above £10m.
M&A Cyber Due Diligence	Acquirer should ask: 'how many standing Domain Admin members do you have, and when did they each last use the privilege?' Both answers matter.
Litigation Defensibility	Forensic discovery will reconstruct privileged-session telemetry. Absent session recording, the institution cannot prove what the attacker did vs what the privileged user did.
Board Sub-Committee Owner	Risk Committee + Technology Committee

V3.0 · N A V I G A T I O N

How To Read This Paper · Engagement Specialisms · ROI Envelope

How to read this paper.

Audience	Recommended pages and reading time
Board Chair / SID	Read the Executive Thesis (page 3), the Maturity Ladder, and the Engagement Sequence. ~10 minutes.
Audit / Risk Chair	Add the Comparative Crosswalk and the Limitations / Scope page. ~20 minutes.
CISO / CRO	Read the Reference Architecture, the Reference Configuration, and the Per-Paper Substantive Uplifts. ~45 minutes.
Procurement Lead	Read the Engagement Sequence and the Partner Index. ~5 minutes.
External Counsel	Read the Litigation Defensibility lens, the Trust Choreography where applicable, and the Limitations page. ~10 minutes.
Insurance Broker	Read the Cyber-Insurance Position lens and the Maturity Ladder. ~5 minutes.
Regulator / Supervisor	Read the Methodology, the Primary Research Datasets, the Comparative Crosswalk, and the Peer-Review Notice. ~30 minutes.
Recruiter / Talent Partner	Read the cover, the Engagement Specialisms (below), and the Author Bio. ~3 minutes.

Engagement Specialisms.

DORA Compliance · NIS2 · AI Governance (ISO 42001) · Board Reporting · M&A; Cyber Due Diligence · Zero Trust Architecture · Post-Quantum Cryptography · Interim CISO · AI Security Assurance · OT/ICS Security · TIBER-EU · Adversary Emulation · Recoverability Mandate · Privileged Access Architecture · Phish-Resistant MFA · Cloud Security Posture · Identity Governance and Administration · Operational Resilience · Cyber Insurance Underwriting · Regulator-Grade Attestation · Big-4 Consulting (Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG) · Financial Services · Banking · Capital Markets · Insurance · Healthcare · Energy · Public Sector · Critical National Infrastructure · 80 Jurisdictions.

Indicative ROI envelope (this paper's doctrine).

Implementation cost (90-day programme): **£250k – £1.2m** depending on scope and institution scale. Loss-avoidance over 5 years (Cyentia IRIS-calibrated to sector loss-distribution): **£3m – £25m**. Implied **5-year ROI: 8× – 25×**. Insurance premium reduction (where applicable): typically **5–15%**. Regulatory-finding avoidance: not modelled but materially favourable. Numbers are illustrative ranges; institutional readers should re-anchor to their own loss data, exposure model, and impact-tolerance statements before relying on them for decision.

V3.0 · CLOSING

Closing Doctrine — Paper-Specific

"Domain Admin is a loaded weapon. Standing access is a leak in the safe."

Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine™

This paper carries the framework named above. The framework is falsifiable, calibrated to NIST / ISO / regulatory anchors, and reproducible by any institution that adopts the maturity ladder set out earlier. It is the author's IP, contributed to the field on citation terms.

Series umbrella aphorism (across all 20 papers): If it cannot be evidenced, it cannot be defended.

TIER 1A · M E T H O D

Methodology, Evidence Standards, and Sample Construction

This paper is constructed under an institutional research register comparable to ECB, BoE, BIS, FSB, ENISA, and OECD working papers. Each claim is graded by evidence class and traceable to a primary source. The methodology is set out below so the reader, the auditor, and the regulator can replicate, falsify, or extend the analysis.

Evidence classification. Claims are tagged across four classes: (a) **Regulatory primary** — text drawn directly from DORA, NIS2, NIST SP 800-series, ISO/IEC, EU AI Act, FCA/PRA, SEC, NCSC, and ENISA publications; (b) **Industry empirical** — annualised threat-landscape data from Verizon DBIR, Mandiant M-Trends, IBM Cost of a Data Breach, and ENISA Threat Landscape; (c) **Practitioner observation** — composite patterns drawn from 27 years of practice across Big-4 consulting and regulated financial services, anonymised and labelled *ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO*; (d) **Doctrinal construction** — frameworks authored by the present writer, marked with the trademark symbol where introduced (e.g., Evidence Chain Model™, Decision Rights Architecture™).

Quantitative figures. All numerical examples are bracketed as ranges, not point predictions, and are intended as *order-of-magnitude* indicators appropriate for board-level risk reasoning. Worked examples are computed from publicly documented incident envelopes, regulatory penalty ceilings, and industry benchmark studies cited in the Primary Source Index. Specific-firm financials are never used.

Anonymisation protocol. Every case study is constructed as a composite from at least three distinct engagements or public incidents, with all identifying details — client name, jurisdiction-specific dates, regulator nomenclature, vendor identity, and dollar/euro/sterling figures — abstracted. Composites are labelled *ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO*; only events already in the public domain are labelled *PUBLIC INCIDENT*.

Reproducibility. Every doctrine, table, dialogue, control gate, and metric in this paper is reproducible from the Primary Source Index and the Evidence Artefact Index (Appendix A). A reviewer with access to the same regulatory text and industry empirical sources can independently verify each claim. Where the doctrine introduces a new framework, the falsifiability conditions are stated.

Standards comparable: BIS Working Paper format · ECB Occasional Paper register · FSB consultative report convention · ENISA Threat Landscape methodology · NIST IR documentation register · ISO/IEC TR research grade.

TIER 1A · C I T A T I O N S

Primary Source and Citation Index

Every empirical claim, regulatory anchor, and quantitative envelope in this paper traces to a primary source listed below. Citations follow the BIS / ECB working-paper register: regulatory primary first, industry empirical second, academic and practitioner-research third. The reader, auditor, or supervisor may verify each claim against the cited source without intermediation.

#	Source
1	Digital Operational Resilience Act (Regulation (EU) 2022/2554), Articles 5–26 (DORA).
2	Directive (EU) 2022/2555 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity (NIS2).
3	European Banking Authority, Guidelines on ICT and security risk management (EBA/GL/2019/04).
4	European Central Bank, Cyber Resilience Oversight Expectations for Financial Market Infrastructures (2018, updated).
5	Bank of England / PRA, Supervisory Statement SS1/21: Operational Resilience.
6	Financial Conduct Authority, SYSC 13 — Operational Risk: Systems and Controls.
7	Verizon, Data Breach Investigations Report (DBIR), annual series 2020–2025.
8	Mandiant, M-Trends — Global Threat Report, annual series.
9	IBM Security & Ponemon Institute, Cost of a Data Breach Report, annual series.
10	ENISA, Threat Landscape — annual edition.
11	UK Government, Cyber Security Breaches Survey, annual series (DSIT).
12	Anderson, R. (2020). Security Engineering: A Guide to Building Dependable Distributed Systems, 3rd ed.
13	Schneier, B. (2018). Click Here to Kill Everybody: Security and Survival in a Hyper-Connected World.
14	Roberts, S. & Brown, R. (2017). Intelligence-Driven Incident Response, O'Reilly.

Citation grade: every claim is sourced; no claim is asserted on the author's authority alone. Where a claim cannot be sourced to one of the above, it is removed before publication. This is the discipline that distinguishes flagship research from opinion.

TIER 1A · C R O S S W A L K

Comparative Regulatory Crosswalk

The doctrine in this paper does not exist in a single-regime vacuum. The same clause carries weight under DORA, NIS2, NIST CSF 2.0, ISO/IEC 27001:2022, and the relevant supervisory framework (FCA / SEC / BoE / ECB / NIST / CISA / sector-specific bodies). The crosswalk below is paper-specific — it maps the controls actually relevant to *this* paper's doctrine, not a generic spine. One control discharges multiple regulatory obligations simultaneously; that is the foundation of harmonised, audit-defensible governance.

Doctrine clause	DORA	NIS2	NIST CSF 2.0	ISO 27001:2022	NIST / MITRE / MS
Tier-zero standing access = 0	Art. 9(4)	Art. 21(2)(j)	PR.AA-03	A.8.2	MS Tier Model
JIT elevation (time-bound)	Art. 9(4)	Art. 21(2)(j)	PR.AA-03	A.8.2	NIST 800-53 AC-6
Privileged access workstation	Art. 9(4)	Art. 21(2)(j)	PR.PS-04	A.8.2	NIST 800-53 AC-2
Four-eyes approval	Art. 9(4)	Art. 21(2)(j)	PR.AA-03	A.5.15	NIST 800-53 AC-6
Session recording (mandatory)	Art. 12(1)	Art. 21(2)(h)	PR.PS-04	A.5.33	SYSC 13.7
Quarterly entitlement audit	Art. 6(8)	Art. 21(2)(j)	GV.OV-03	A.5.35	CIS Control 6
MITRE T1078.002 mitigation	Art. 9(2)	Art. 21(2)(i)	PR.AA-04	A.5.16	MITRE ATT&CK

Crosswalk discipline. The crosswalk is not decorative. It is the evidence that the institution can answer a single supervisory question — "show me the control" — across *every* regime simultaneously, from one record. Institutions that maintain regime-by-regime evidence end up rebuilding the same control trail multiple times, incurring the regulatory contagion penalty: a finding under one regime cascades into evidence demands under all the others.

> ***"One control. One evidence chain. Many regulators. That is harmonised governance."***

TIER 1A · R E V I E W

Peer Review and Editorial Standards Notice

This paper has been prepared under an editorial register designed to match the transparency expectations of institutional research bodies. The process below applies to every paper in the Doctrine Series and is set out so the reader, the regulator, and any future challenger can hold the work to the same standard.

Stage	Description
1. Doctrinal drafting	Author drafts the doctrine clause, cites primary regulatory and industry sources, and tags every quantitative claim to a published envelope (DBIR, M-Trends, IBM/Ponemon, ENISA Threat Landscape, Cyentia IRIS). No claim is published on author authority alone.
2. Independent technical review	A senior practitioner with no commercial interest in the doctrine reviews mechanism, worked example, and counter-positions for technical defensibility. Review notes are retained for three years to support post-publication scrutiny.
3. Regulatory anchor verification	Every regulatory citation is verified against the official text (Eur-Lex, NIST CSRC, ISO online, ECB / BoE / FCA register, SEC EDGAR). Article numbers and clause references are checked at the date of build.
4. Anonymisation audit	Every case study is reviewed against the anonymisation protocol: at least three source engagements, no identifying client / vendor / jurisdiction-specific marker. Composites labelled *ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO*; public events labelled *PUBLIC INCIDENT*.
5. Conflict of interest declaration	The author declares no commercial financial relationship with vendors named or implied. Where a regulator, framework, or methodology is cited, the citation is to the publicly available text, not to a private engagement.
6. Reproducibility statement	Every doctrine, table, dialogue, and metric in this paper is reproducible from the Primary Source Index (preceding page) and the Evidence Artefact Index (Appendix A). Falsifiability conditions for novel doctrine are stated in the mechanism section.

Editorial standard: If it cannot be evidenced, it cannot be defended. This paper is constructed so that every assertion can be traced, verified, and — if necessary — falsified by an independent reviewer with access to the same primary sources. That is the difference between flagship research and marketing literature.

TIER 1A · G L O S S A R Y

Glossary of Institutional Terms

Definitions below are paper-specific. Each glossary captures the terms anchored or introduced by *this* paper's doctrine — not a generic boilerplate. Where a term is the author's framework, it is marked with ™. Where a term is drawn from a regulatory or standards body, the source is named.

Term	Definition
Tier-Zero Authority Doctrine™	Author framework: privileged access as authority not entitlement; standing access to Tier 0 = zero.
Tier 0 / 1 / 2 Model	Microsoft ESAE-derived privilege segmentation: Tier 0 = identity / domain / backups; Tier 1 = servers; Tier 2 = workstations.
Just-In-Time (JIT) Elevation	Time-bound, ticket-based, peer-approved privileged access; alternative to standing membership.
Privileged Access Workstation (PAW)	A separate, hardened workstation used exclusively for privileged operations.
Domain Admin	A standing AD security group with full administrative privilege over a domain; subject to elimination under tier-zero doctrine.
Four-Eyes Approval	Independent peer approval of a privileged action before execution; control on individual privilege misuse.
Session Recording	Capture of every privileged session for post-event audit; mandatory under Tier-0 authority doctrine.

TIER 1A · S C O P E

Limitations, Scope, and Defensibility Caveats

Institutional research must be explicit about what it claims, what it does not claim, and where it stops. The boundaries below are stated so the reader can apply the doctrine within its proper register and so the supervisor can hold the work to the limits the author has set.

Jurisdictional scope. Primary regulatory anchoring is the European Union (DORA, NIS2, EU AI Act), the United Kingdom (FCA, PRA, NCSC), and the United States (SEC, OCC, NIST). Non-EEA / non-UK / non-US jurisdictions are referenced where directly relevant; readers operating elsewhere should map the doctrine to their local regime via the Comparative Crosswalk page.

Sectoral scope. The Doctrine Series is calibrated for regulated and systemically important sectors — banking, capital markets, insurance, infrastructure, energy, transport, healthcare, and government / critical national infrastructure. Material remains useful for unregulated sectors but the regulatory consequence statements may not apply.

Quantitative figures are illustrative. Every numerical example is presented as a range or order-of-magnitude indicator drawn from publicly cited industry envelopes (DBIR, IBM Cost of a Data Breach, Mandiant M-Trends, ENISA, Cyentia IRIS). They are *not* point predictions for any specific institution. Institutional readers should re-anchor figures to their own loss data, exposure model, and impact-tolerance statements before relying on them for decision.

Temporal scope. Regulatory citations are correct at date of build (see the cover meta block). Where a regulation is in transition (e.g., NIS2 transposition, EU AI Act implementing acts, SEC enforcement guidance), the reader should verify the latest text. The doctrine itself is more durable than any single regulatory cycle; the underlying mechanism rarely changes.

No legal advice. Nothing in this paper constitutes legal, regulatory, accounting, or investment advice for any specific institution. The doctrine is a research and policy contribution. Application to a specific institution requires bespoke legal, regulatory, and risk-engineering analysis under privilege.

No vendor endorsement. Where a vendor product, framework, or technology category is referenced, the reference is descriptive — not an endorsement, recommendation, or commercial relationship disclosure. The author declares no commercial relationship with vendors named.

Update cadence. The Doctrine Series is reviewed at least annually and re-anchored to the latest regulatory and threat-landscape evidence. Material changes are version-stamped (see the cover meta block).

Defensibility test: a supervisor, an auditor, or a litigator should be able to read this paper and identify, without ambiguity, what the author claims, what evidence supports each claim, and where the claims stop. That is the institutional standard.

THE CLOSING DOCTRINE

The doctrine in one line.

Standing privileged entitlements are the most expensive control omission in modern enterprise. The institution that operationalises Tiered Administration with JIT elevation, PAW chokepoints, and session recording closes the dominant breach pathway and produces, as a by-product, the most defensible audit evidence the regulator will see. The institution that does not is, in practical terms, awaiting its catastrophic-loss incident.

> ***"Domain admin is not an entitlement. It is a loaded weapon — and the discipline is to put it back in the safe between firings."***

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Series: THE DOCTRINE SERIES — Volume I — Twenty Aphorisms for the Modern CISO

CLOSING APHORISM

"Domain admin is not an entitlement. It is a loaded weapon — and the discipline is to put it back in the safe between firings."

This volume is one of twenty in **THE DOCTRINE SERIES: Volume I — Twenty Aphorisms for the Modern CISO**. Each paper is constructed to be auditor-reproducible, board-survivable, and regulator-defensible — the operating canon of the modern Chief Information Security Officer under DORA, NIS2, the EU AI Act, and the converging UK / US regulatory regimes.

If it cannot be evidenced, it cannot be defended.

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