



SecureIQlab®

REPORT

CyberRisk Validation Report – SonicWall

Product Version: SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG

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Report Contents

1. Introduction..... 2

2. Report Summary..... 3

3. ACFW Test Overview 4

 3.1 ACFW Deployment Overview 4

4. Security Efficacy Results..... 5

 4.1 Common Cloud Firewall Threat Categories (Standard Threats)..... 5

 4.2 Advanced Cloud Firewall Threat Categories 7

 4.3 Operational Accuracy Category..... 7

 4.4 ACFW SSL/TLS Support 8

5. Security Resiliency Results 10

6. Operational Efficiency Results..... 11

7. Key ACFW Solution Differentiators – Vendor Perspective 13

8. Conclusion 13

9. Contact Information 14

10. Copyright and Disclaimer..... 14

1. Introduction

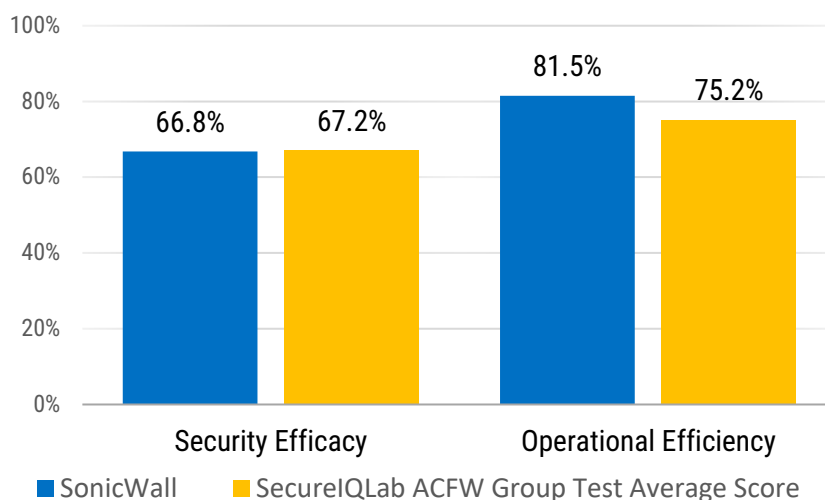


Figure 1. Summary Results for SonicWall vs the ACFW Group Test Scores

Advanced Cloud Firewalls (ACFW) protect the infrastructure that organizations depend on. These firewalls serve as a virtual shield. ACFWs use a proactive approach and are designed to simplify security.

SecureQLab conducted testing for 12¹ leading enterprise-class ACFW solutions. This test was conducted in accordance with the Anti-Malware Testing Standards Organization² (AMTSO) test Standard. The maps to version v1.6 of the SecureQLab Advanced Cloud Firewall CyberRisk Validation Methodology, AMTSO Test ID: AMTSO-LS1-TP070. It is the most comprehensive evaluation of its kind ever performed.

As part of this test, SecureQLab completed testing SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG. This report discusses the test results for the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) – PAYG, version 7.0.1-5119, and includes validation of the following security modules and components: Gateway Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, Intrusion Prevention & Detection, Geo-IP Filter, Botnet Filter, Application Control, DPI SSL, Content Filtering, and Advanced Protection.

This report offers empirical data points on what to expect from the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG, highlighting features and business considerations. SecureQLab's testing showcases the overall organizational value of the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG in security effectiveness and operational efficiency. Figure 1 highlights SonicWall's results in these two areas versus the group test averages.

As Figure 1 shows visually, SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was near average for Security Efficacy and better than average for Operational Efficiency.

In writing this report, SecureQLab has made extensive efforts to guarantee the accuracy of the results while straightforwardly presenting them. However, the test results are necessarily simplified to be presented for review in a summary format.

¹ Testing was attempted on a total of 12 Advanced Cloud Firewall solutions. Please [click here](#) for details.

² Standards <https://www.amtso.org/conducted-testing>.

2. Report Summary

This 2024 Advanced Cloud Firewall CyberRisk Validation Report provides test results for the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG. Table 1 summarizes the product's overall validation results around security effectiveness, resistance to false positives, operational efficiency, and SSL/TLS security efficacy of the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG solution validated against SecureQLab ACFW v1.6 methodology.

ACFW Test Categories	SonicWall ACFW Score	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Security Efficacy	66.8%	67.2%
Resistance to False Positives	100.0%	89.8%
Operational Efficiency	81.5%	75.2%
SSL/TLS Security Efficacy	88.0%	68.4%

Table 1. SonicWall ACFW Result Summary

Figure 2 presents the above table in visual format.

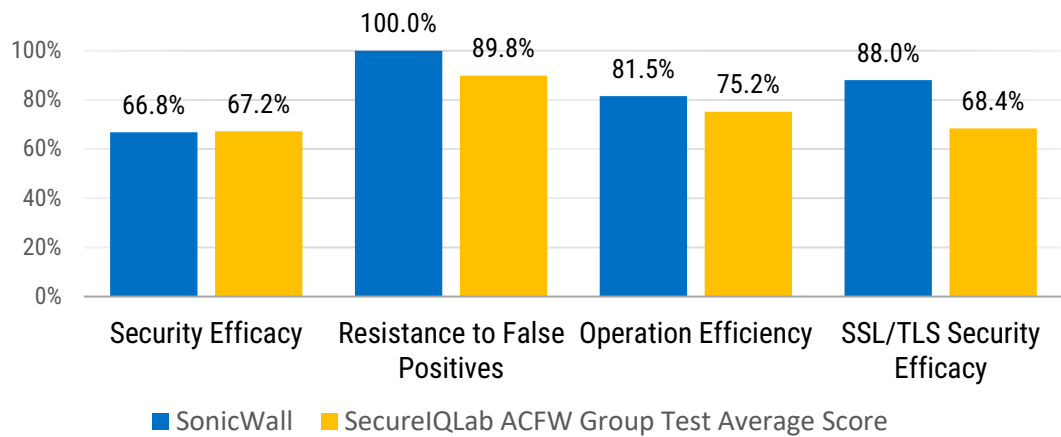


Figure 2. Overall Result Summary: SonicWallACFW vs SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average

Overall Result Summary: SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG did exceptionally well compared to the overall SecureQLab ACFW group test average in resistance to False Positives and also achieved a relatively strong showing for SSL/TLS Security Efficacy. SonicWall demonstrated near or above average scoring compared to all the primary enterprise categories as represented in the SecureQLab ACFW validation methodology selection criteria.³

³ [SecureQLab ACFW v1.6 methodology](#)

3. ACFW Test Overview

Advanced Cloud Firewalls (ACFWs) must effectively counter the emergence of advanced attack vectors, novel strategies, and new attack surfaces, thwarting threats that are complex and customized. Beyond merely being aware of application use of the internet, they should possess capabilities to inspect packet content and search for Indicators of Attack (IOA) within the data stream. This test was designed to confirm how well the tested ACFW was able to:

- Identify permitted applications and block prohibited applications.
- Identify and block threats attempting to use “known good” ports and protocols.
- Identify and block threats that attempt evasive tactics, such as non-standard ports or “port hopping.”
- Identify and block threats encrypted with SSL/TLS.
- Identify users, groups, and locations, and apply policy regardless of I.P. address.
- Identify and block outbound data leaks.
- Identify and block outbound Botnet Command and Control communications.
- Enable secure business workflow with a high detection rate and low Signal-to-Noise ratio.
- Provide global visibility and granular policy management.
- Provide all necessary alerts and configuration recommendations based on best practices.

SecureQLab defines prevention as a 24/7 automated response offering without human intervention. This can be achieved through various technologies and mechanisms, including signature-based models, policy-based models, behavior-based models, and machine learning (ML) or artificial intelligence (AI)-based models. This definition is technology-agnostic, focusing on outcomes of the various analyst workflows and scenarios rather than the specific prevention technology. ACFWs, when deployed in a stand-alone mode, are expected to prevent both initial and ongoing attacks while also providing robust reporting capabilities.

The SecureQLab ACFW v1.6 validation methodology was tailored towards the prevention and reporting capabilities for security and compliance. Configurations typically included multiple security and compliance applications such as Vulnerability Protection, Anti-Spyware, Antivirus, URL Filtering, and DNS Security. By default, when configuring, “detect” settings were set to “protect” or “block”. SecureQLab then performed any required tuning according to recommended vendor best practices for operational scenarios involving cloud deployments⁴.

3.1 ACFW Deployment Overview

Per SecureQLab's methodology, all ACFW vendors were requested to configure their products based on best practices that enterprises should implement when deploying the firewall in their organizations. The intent of this testing methodology is to mirror a successful customer experience during the deployment and management of the product.

During the evaluation, SecureQLab ensured product updates and configuration changes were executed through a central management console: cloud or on-prem device portal. This approach aimed to cover all test scenarios from start to finish to the greatest extent possible.

For a more comprehensive understanding of our testing methods, refer to version 1.6 of the SecureQLab 2023 ACFW CyberRisk Validation Methodology (AMTSO Test ID: AMTSO-LS1-TP070).

⁴ [SonicWall deployment reference](#).

4. Security Efficacy Results

Advanced Cloud firewalls should be designed to protect cloud-based resources and applications, shielding them from unauthorized access and prevalent cyber threats.

Each ACFW solution evaluated in this test underwent scrutiny across multiple distinct enterprise-centric categories, involving attack vectors of more than 1000 real-world operational scenarios. These scenarios used real world attacks that have targeted small-to-medium size businesses, enterprises, and other organizations. The comprehensive testing performed by SecureQLab reflects our commitment to innovation and continuous improvement. Moving forward, SecureQLab plans to continue to augment attack libraries and incorporate additional relevant operational metrics as needed in future iterations of this test.

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested against 13 attack types within four primary standard threat categories. Table 2 below presents the results of these tests. Figure 3 below presents an overview of the SecureQLab findings during the security effectiveness validation and reporting of the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG. This includes the standard threat category score, the advanced threat category score, the operational accuracy score, and the SSL/TLS threat efficacy score from the methodology. These sections of the methodology were selected for presentation because these sections tested each ACFW against the four primary standard threat categories.

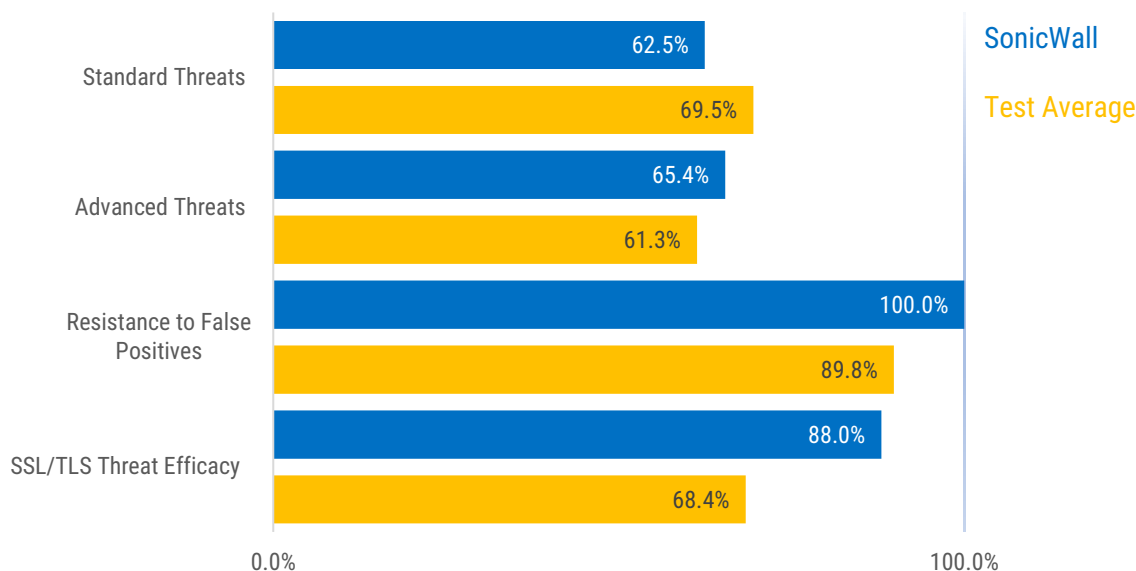


Figure 3. SonicWall Advanced Cloud Firewall Security Effectiveness

4.1 Common Cloud Firewall Threat Categories (Standard Threats)

The Common Cloud Firewall Threat (Standard Threats) average scores are calculated by averaging the scores for each threat type together within their respective attack category.

Standard Threat Types	SonicWall ACFW Inspection Score	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Application-Based Threats		
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attacks – HTTP	61.5%	75.5%
Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) Attacks – HTTPS	65.4%	67.1%
Malicious URL Attacks	96.7%	68.0%
Malware & Botnets		
Malware Download over HTTPS	67.3%	61.3%
Compressed Malicious Files	78.4%	60.2%
Botnets	21.6%	58.3%
Browser-Based Threats		
Browser Exploits	30.0%	74.0%
Cookie Stealing - HTTP	90.0%	85.0%
Cookie Stealing - HTTPS	100.0%	100.0%
Browser Version and Plugin-in Control	50.0%	60.0%
Obfuscated JavaScript	100.0%	90.0%
Data-loss and Leakage		
Phishing Site-Based Attacks	38.2%	56.6%
Adware Site Prevention	PASS	PASS
Standard Threats Average Score	62.5%	69.5%

Table 2. Standard Threats Protection Testing

The SonicWall ACFW demonstrates outstanding blocking capabilities for Cookie Stealing – HTTPS and Obfuscated JavaScript Attacks.

4.2 Advanced Cloud Firewall Threat Categories

Advanced Cloud firewalls must extend their protective capabilities to counter advanced threats, which are often sophisticated, highly evolved, and challenging to detect or neutralize. Such threats may employ various tactics and techniques to circumvent traditional security measures. As a pivotal component of any organization's cybersecurity infrastructure, a robust cloud firewall should possess threat detection capabilities, be able to identify suspicious network traffic patterns and have the capacity to block in real time.

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested against eight attack types classified as advanced threats. Table 3 below provides the results from these tests.

Advanced Threat Classification	SonicWall ACFW Inspection Score	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Advanced Evasive Techniques (Application-based)	96.6%	79.6%
Advanced Evasive Techniques (Network-based)	50.0%	75.0%
Known Malicious Files	46.3%	60.2%
Malicious Documents	55.5%	59.3%
Active Cloud-Based Threats (aka Active Threats)	100.0%	46.5%
Advanced Persistent Threats (APT)	100.0%	65.0%
Cloud-Centric Post Exploitation Techniques (Post-Exploitation – DNS Tunnelling)	25.0%	45.0%
Cloud-Centric Post Exploitation Techniques (Post-Exploitation – ICMP Tunnelling)	50.0%	60.0%
Advanced Threats Average Score	65.4%	61.3%

Table 3. Advanced (Non-Standard) Threat Protection Testing

The Advanced Cloud Firewall Threat average scores are calculated by averaging the scores for each threat type together within their respective attack category. SonicWall's Advanced Threat Average Score was better than average. SonicWall scored 100% in two of the Advanced Cloud Threat categories.

4.3 Operational Accuracy Category

False positive testing was included in the scope of this test because an Advanced Cloud Firewall that prevents 100% of malicious attacks but also prevents legitimate (non-malicious) actions can be vastly

disruptive. SecureQLab used appropriate tools and techniques to ensure that the tested firewall products do not generate significant numbers of alerts with legitimate applications and processes in an enterprise environment. This section of the methodology was performed at the same time as and as part of the validation workflow and other independent sections wherever feasible. The aim is to ensure that the firewall products did not prevent malicious traffic at the expense of operational accuracy.

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested for operational accuracy under real-world scenarios during the entire test cycle, and Table 4 below provides the results from these tests.

Operational Accuracy test	SonicWall ACFW Score	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Resistance to False Positive Test	100.0%	89.8%

Table 4. Operational Accuracy

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG performed above average in this test and achieved a perfect score.

4.4 ACFW SSL/TLS Support

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and its secure analogue HTTPS have long been crucial internet protocols. HTTPS uses encryption to enhance browsing safety by establishing secure connections between browsers, applications, and websites. To identify the attacks or threats in encrypted connections, the firewall must inspect the encrypted traffic using SSL/TLS ciphers and the associated techniques for managing encrypted connections. To detect a threat concealed within encrypted data, the firewall must decrypt packets, inspect the content, and take necessary action.

For each ACFW tested, SecureQLab tested 22 of the TLS v1.2 ciphers and 3 TLS v1.3 ciphers. The testing included combinations of ciphers between clients and servers to analyze firewall behavior with weak ciphers, to assess how the firewall behaved to communication using different ciphers, and to evaluate the ACFW's ability to fall back or enforce secure ciphers during communication.

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested for overall SSL/TLS threat efficacy and its ability to protect against attacks delivered through the supported ciphers in real-world scenarios. The SonicWallACFW successfully identified, detected, and prevented more than the test average for attacks throughout the entire SSL/TLS test cycle on all supported ciphers. Table 5 below presents the results of these tests.

SSL/TLS Threat Efficacy Test	SonicWall ACFW Overall Metric	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Overall SSL/TLS Security Efficacy	88.0%	68.4%

Table 5. SSL/TLS Threat Efficacy

The SonicWall ACFW performed better than the average ACFW tested for SSL/TLS Threat Efficacy.

The cipher suites for TLS v1.2, as highlighted in Table 6 below, were tested for the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG.

TLSv1.2 Ciphers	TLS Support	TLS Handshake Result	Attack Traffic Prevention within TLS Session	Operational Validation with Operational TLS Traffic
AES128-GCM-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
AES128-SHA	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
AES256-GCM-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
AES256-SHA	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
AES256-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
DHE-RSA-AES128-SHA	Cipher Not Supported by ACFW Vendor Solution			
DHE-RSA-AES256-SHA	Cipher Not Supported by ACFW Vendor Solution			
DHE-RSA-AES256-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
DHE-RSA-CHACHA20-POLY1305	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-AES128-GCM-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-AES128-SHA	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-AES128-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-AES256-GCM-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-AES256-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-ECDSA-CHACHA20-POLY1305	Cipher Not Supported by ACFW Vendor Solution			
ECDHE-RSA-AES128-GCM-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-AES128-SHA	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-AES128-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-AES256-GCM-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-AES256-SHA	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-AES256-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
ECDHE-RSA-CHACHA20-POLY1305	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass

Table 6. TLS v1.2 cipher Support

The SonicWall ACFW passed all TLS v1.2 ciphers tested that it supported.

The cipher suites for TLS v1.3, as highlighted in Table 7 below, were tested for the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG.

TLSv1.3 Ciphers	TLS Support	TLS Handshake Result	Attack Traffic Prevention within TLS Session	Operational Validation with Operational TLS Traffic
AES256-GCM-SHA384	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
CHACHA20-POLY1305-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass
AES128-GCM-SHA256	Yes	Successful	Pass	Pass

Table 7. TLS v1.3 cipher Support

As can be seen from the above, the SonicWall ACFW was able to successfully handle packet decryption and inspection for all tested TLS v1.3 ciphers.

5. Security Resiliency Results

Security products must demonstrate overall resiliency, as failure to do so can have significant consequences. The Department of Defense (DoD) defines security resilience as *“The ability of systems to resist, absorb, and recover from or adapt to an adverse occurrence during operation that may cause harm, destruction, or loss of ability to perform mission-related functions.”*

SecureQLab has adopted a novel approach to define the firewall resiliency metrics. Our security resiliency rating combines security efficacy with key operational and cloud-based performance metrics based on a real-world scenario. This holistic approach considers the firewall’s security efficacy (threat protection) and operational efficiency metrics mapped to crucial capabilities and ACFW workflows relevant to enterprise use cases subjected to real-world traffic.

The security resiliency test used a simulated real-world cloud-based traffic mix. The traffic mix was based on internet use by eight specific industry verticals: Enterprise, Small-to-Medium Businesses (SMB), Remote Office Branch Office (ROBO), Healthcare and Educational organizations, Media and Entertainment, and Financial and Retail organizations. As outlined in v1.6 of the SecureQLab Advanced Cloud Firewall CyberRisk Validation Methodology, the primary objective of the security resiliency-based test is NOT to push the cloud security solution under test to its maximum limits but to ensure it remains operationally and functionally viable up to at least at 50% of its throughput.

The ability of the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG to pass each stage of the security resiliency test was based on the following criteria:

- **PASS** = Security resiliency protection rate (%) must be ≥ 95% against all attacks under load.
- **PASS** = Overall solution throughput (%) must be ≥ 95% (at steady state) of the maximum tested ACFW cloud throughput numbers.

- **PASS** = Overall application traffic success rate (%) must be $\geq 95\%$ of all real-world application traffic validated against a specific cloud-based scenario.

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested for security resiliency under real-world scenarios during the entire test cycle, and Table 8 below provides the results from these tests.

Real World Cloud-based Traffic Scenario Mix	Security Resiliency Protection Rating	Overall Solution Throughput	Overall Application Traffic Success Rate
Media and Entertainment Companies	Pass	Pass	Pass
Healthcare Organization	Pass	Pass	Pass
Financial Institution	Pass	Pass	Pass
Enterprise	Pass	Pass	Pass
Small-to-Medium Business (SMB)	Pass	Pass	Pass
Educational Institution	Pass	Pass	Pass
Retail Companies	Pass	Pass	Pass
Remote office Branch Office (ROBO)	Pass	Pass	Pass

Table 8. Security Resiliency

The SonicWall ACFW passed all Security Resiliency tests.

6. Operational Efficiency Results

ACFW operational efficiency measures the tested ACFW's operating burden and complexity of setup and use. As such, the Operational Efficiency Score measures both the ability of the ACFW to detect and respond to cyber-attacks appropriately and ease of use. The operational efficiency was evaluated by considering factors such as:

- The ease of tuning the ACFW security policy and configuration (pre-and-post deployment)
- The solution's incident response and management intuitiveness from a policy and security configuration perspective
- Compliance check
- Risk assessment and mitigation capabilities
- Enhanced security metrics reporting capabilities
- The ease of managing and controlling assets and business continuity with appropriate configuration and policy backup (with restoration)

In the analysis, the SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was rated high, medium, or low across 12 operational efficiency categories, as identified in Table 8 below. For more details on each of the categories, please [contact SecureQLab](#).

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG was tested for operational efficiency, considering real-world enterprise procurement, deployment, and active scenarios throughout the test life cycle. Table 9 below presents an above average overall operational efficiency score of 81.5%.

Operational Efficiency	SonicWall ACFW Score	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Overall Operational Efficiency Score	81.5%	75.2%

Table 9. Overall Operational Efficiency Score

SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG solution had high operational efficiency capabilities in 10 of the 12 validated categories of operational efficiency, as shown in Table 10 below.

ACFW Operational Efficiency Metrics	SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) - PAYG	SecureQLab ACFW Group Test Average Score
Security Policy Configuration	Med	Med
Security Policy Management	High	High
Asset Management	High	High
Access Control	High	High
Compliance Management	High	High
Business Continuity Management	Low	Med
Risk Assessment & Mitigation	High	Med
Security Metrics Reporting	High	High
Backup & Restore	High	Med
Analytics	High	Med
Customer Support	High	Med
License Management	High	High

Table 10: Operational Efficiency Results.

Table 10 shows that the SonicWall ACFW performed equal to or better than the test average ranking in 11 of the 12 validated operational efficiency categories.

7. Key ACFW Solution Differentiators – Vendor Perspective

SonicWall provides the following information for why customers choose SonicWall security solutions:

SonicWall, a renowned leader in the cybersecurity industry, offers a comprehensive suite of robust security solutions designed to protect businesses of all sizes from the ever-evolving landscape of cyber threats. With over 30 years of innovation, SonicWall's mission is securing the long-term success of its customers, partners and employees.

SonicWall's broad portfolio includes next-generation firewalls (NGFWs), endpoint detection and response, email security solutions, zero-trust security, distributed security, software defined networking, and remote workforce access. SonicWall's products are engineered to detect and prevent breaches, malware, ransomware, and other cyberattacks, utilizing real-time threat intelligence from the SonicWall Capture Labs. This global network provides continuous communication and feedback on the threat landscape, allowing SonicWall to adapt and update its defenses swiftly.

One of the hallmarks of SonicWall's approach is its emphasis on ease of use and management, making enterprise-grade security accessible to businesses without extensive IT resources. The SonicWall Capture Advanced Threat Protection (ATP), a cloud-based multi-engine sandbox, offers another layer of security through SonicWall's patented Real-Time Deep Memory Inspection™ (RTDMI) which blocks zero-day and unknown threats at the gateway – even those that hide via encryption or don't exhibit malicious behavior.

For organizations looking to simplify their security management while maximizing protection, SonicWall's Global Management System (GMS) provides a unified platform to holistically monitor, manage, and report on network security devices and services.

8. Conclusion

The SonicWall NSv (Firewall/Security/VPN/Router) – PAYG, version 7.0.1-5119 Gateway Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, Intrusion Prevention & Detection, Geo-IP Filter, Botnet Filter, Application Control, DPI SSL, Content Filtering, and Advanced Protection performed better than average for Operational efficiency and near average for Security Efficacy. SonicWall ranked equal to or better than the test average ranking in 11 of the 12 operational efficiency categories validated. SonicWall performed exceptionally well in protection against Obfuscated JavaScript attacks, Active Cloud-Based Threats, and Advanced Persistent Threats (APT) where they scored 100.0% block rates. SonicWall was one of four vendors tested that generated 0.0% false positives throughout the test.

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For more information about SecureQLab and the testing methodologies, please visit our website.

SecureQLab (March 2024)