OpenSSL Keys, certs, TLS

CONCEPTS

Usage is openssl <subcommand> <options>. Most subcommands read stdin and write stdout, so they pipe into each other. Files are PEM (base64 text) unless you ask for DER.

Private key genpkey / req -newkey
↓ req -new
CSR request with public key
↓ signed by a CA
Certificate x509 -text to inspect
↓ pkcs12 -export
Bundle .p12 / fullchain.pem

Passwords on the command line show up in ps and shell history. Use -passin/-passout with env:VAR, file:path or stdin instead of pass:.

KEYS

openssl genpkey -algorithm ED25519 -out *<key.pem>*
Generate a private key

openssl genpkey -algorithm RSA -pkeyopt rsa_keygen_bits:4096 -out *<key.pem>*
RSA key with chosen size

openssl genpkey -algorithm EC -pkeyopt ec_paramgen_curve:P-256 -out *<key.pem>*
Elliptic curve key

openssl genpkey -aes-256-cbc -algorithm ED25519 -out *<key.pem>*
Key protected by a passphrase

openssl pkey -in *<key.pem>* **-pubout -out** *<pub.pem>*
Extract the public key

openssl pkey -in *<key.pem>* **-text -noout**
Show key components

openssl pkey -in *<key.pem>* **-aes-256-cbc -out** *<enc.pem>*
Add a passphrase to a key

KEYS (cont.)

openssl pkey -in *<enc.pem>* **-out** *<plain.pem>*
Remove a passphrase

openssl rand -base64 *<num>*
Random bytes as base64

openssl rand -hex *<num>*
Random bytes as hex

REQUESTS AND CERTIFICATES

openssl req -new -key *<key.pem>* **-out** *<req.csr>*
CSR from an existing key

openssl req -new -newkey rsa:2048 -noenc -keyout *<key.pem>* **-out** *<req.csr>*
New key and CSR together

openssl req -new -key *<key.pem>* **-subj "/CN=***<name>***" -addext "subjectAltName=DNS:***<name>***" -out** *<req.csr>*
CSR with name and SAN, no prompts

openssl req -in *<req.csr>* **-noout -text**
Read a CSR

openssl req -x509 -newkey rsa:4096 -noenc -days *<num>* **-keyout** *<key.pem>* **-out** *<cert.pem>*
Self-signed certificate

openssl req -x509 -key *<key.pem>* **-days** *<num>* **-subj "/CN=***<name>***" -addext "subjectAltName=DNS:***<name>***" -out** *<cert.pem>*
Self-signed cert from a key

INSPECT CERTIFICATES

openssl x509 -in *<cert.pem>* **-noout -text**
Full certificate details

openssl x509 -in *<cert.pem>* **-noout -subject -issuer**
Subject and issuer

INSPECT CERTIFICATES (cont.)

openssl x509 -in *<cert.pem>* **-noout -dates**
Validity period

openssl x509 -in *<cert.pem>* **-noout -checkend** *<secs>*
Exit 1 if expiring within N seconds

openssl x509 -in *<cert.pem>* **-noout -ext subjectAltName**
Show the SAN list

openssl verify -CAfile *<ca.pem>* *<cert.pem>*
Verify against a CA

TEST A TLS SERVER

openssl s_client -connect *<host>***:443 -servername** *<host>*
Open a TLS connection

openssl s_client -connect *<host>***:443 -brief </dev/null**
Short connection summary

openssl s_client -connect *<host>***:443 -showcerts </dev/null**
Show the full chain sent

openssl s_client -connect *<host>***:443 </dev/null | openssl x509 -noout -dates**
Check remote cert expiry

openssl s_client -connect *<host>***:443** *</dev/null | openssl x509 -out <cert.pem>*
Save the server cert

DIGESTS AND ENCRYPTION

openssl dgst -sha256 *<file>*
SHA-256 of a file

CONVERT FORMATS

openssl pkcs12 -export -inkey *<key.pem>* **-in** *<cert.pem>* **-certfile** *<chain.pem>* **-out** *<bundle.p12>*
Bundle key and cert as PKCS#12