HashiCorp Vault Secrets management

CONCEPTS

The CLI is a thin wrapper over the HTTP API: everything lives at a path, and read/write/list/delete work on any of them.

Auth method userpass, token, oidc...
↓ issues
Token carries policies
↓ checked by
Policy path capabilities
↓ allows
Secrets engine kv, transit, database...

The server starts sealed. Unseal it with enough key shares before any request works; dev mode skips this.

Dev mode is in-memory and insecure. Never use it for real secrets.

CONNECT

export VAULT_ADDR=*<url>*
Set the server address

export VAULT_TOKEN=*<token>*
Authenticate via environment

vault status
Show seal and HA state

-format=json
Machine-readable output (also yaml)

-namespace=*<ns>*
Run inside a namespace (Enterprise)

-ca-cert=*<file>*
Trust a private CA

DEV SERVER

vault server -dev
Run in-memory, unsealed

vault server -dev -dev-root-token-id=*<id>*
Dev server with a known root token

vault server -config=*<file>*
Run with a config file

LOGIN AND TOKENS

vault login
Log in with a token (prompts)

vault login -method=*<type>* *<key>*=*<value>*
Log in with another auth method

vault token lookup
Show the current token

vault token create -policy=*<name>*
Create a token with a policy

vault token create -ttl=*<dur>* **-use-limit=***<n>*
Short-lived, limited-use token

vault token renew
Extend the current token

vault token revoke *<token>*
Revoke a token and its children

KV SECRETS

vault kv put -mount=secret *<path>* *<key>*=*<value>*
Write a secret

vault kv get -mount=secret *<path>*
Read a secret

vault kv get -mount=secret -field=*<key>* *<path>*
Print one field only

vault kv list -mount=secret
List paths under a mount

vault kv get -mount=secret -version=*<n>* *<path>*
Read an older version

vault kv patch -mount=secret *<path>* *<key>*=*<value>*
Change keys, keep the rest

vault kv put -mount=secret *<path>* **@***<file>***.json**
Write from a JSON file

vault kv put -mount=secret *<path>* *<key>*=-
Read a value from stdin

vault kv delete -mount=secret *<path>*
Soft-delete the latest version

KV SECRETS (cont.)

vault kv undelete -mount=secret -versions=*<n>* *<path>*
Restore a deleted version

RAW API PATHS

vault read *<path>*
GET any path

vault write *<path>* *<key>*=*<value>*
POST/PUT data to a path

ENGINES AND AUTH METHODS

vault secrets list
Show enabled secrets engines

vault secrets enable -path=*<path>* *<type>*
Enable an engine

vault auth list
Show enabled auth methods

vault auth enable *<type>*
Enable an auth method

POLICIES

vault policy list
List all policies

vault policy read *<name>*
Show a policy's rules

vault policy write *<name>* *<file>***.hcl**
Upload a policy from a file

Read-only policy

```
path "secret/data/app/*" {
  capabilities = ["read", "list"]
}
```

KV v2 policies need /data/ (and /metadata/) in the path, even though -mount hides it in the CLI.

OPERATE AND SEAL

vault operator init
Initialize a new server

vault operator unseal
Enter one unseal key (prompts)