Guide to Using VPN Connection

1.3.6. Use of VPN

The Cisco VPN software is primarily used for mobile users. This allows a user to create a secure connection into the USDA network, while connecting from an outside network. An example would be connecting your laptop from home, or a hotel. While your network access at home or in the hotel gives you access to the internet, you do not have access to the USDA network. Creating a secure connection using your VPN Client allows you to access internal websites, mapped drives, internal servers, etc. The VPN client will allow you to work, as if you are in an office directly connected to the USDA network.

Connecting in a USDA Office

If you are working in a USDA office, the VPN Client logon screen appears when you first boot up, you do not have to login to the VPN Client. Simply slide the VPN client logon window out of the way, and logon to your workstation as normal.

You should not go into the Logon Properties and change any of the settings unless instructed to do so by Help Desk support. You should not change any of the VPN Logon settings, as it is necessary for the Cisco VPN client to allow you to logon first, before windows, even if you don't need to use it (ie. In an Office Setting).

NOTE ! If you are in an USDA Office, connected to the network, you should not log into your VPN client also. This will cause problems as it'll conflict with your regular login through the office network. In most cases the network connection in the USDA Office will provide you the access you need to get your work done.

There may be a situation, where you are visiting another office and you don't have access to your files or drives from your home office. In this case you can use the VPN Client, utilizing the INTERNAL profile to connect through the VPN. That should give you access to your files and drives. You should always try to access these prior to connecting through the VPN to make sure you need to use the VPN access.

Connecting Outside a USDA Office

If you are outside a USDA Office, trying to connect through a Network, you should always connect through your VPN to make sure you have a secure connection into the USDA network.

The INTERNET profile that you see will allow you to complete this type of connection.

In some cases, like from a home network, you'll be able to connect your VPN prior to logging onto your computer. In other cases, like from a Hotel (Where you have to establish network access through a web browser), you won't be able to connect through your VPN until after you've logged in and established the Network connection first.

3. First Time Usage

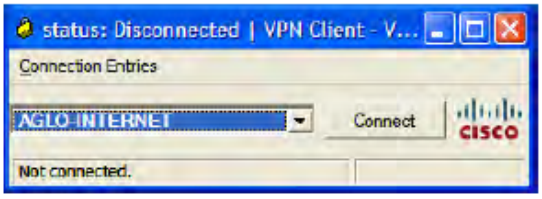
First Time Usage:

Each time your workstation is rebooted or started, you will get your typical "Welcome to Windows" dialog box. When you press **Ctrl + Alt + Del** to logon, the Cisco VPN Client will automatically appear on the screen also. (Refer to Section 1.3.6 for more Usage Info)

The first time you use the new VPN Client, you'll notice several differences.

- The Client is automatically configured to start before Login.
- The Cisco Logo is different
- You will only have 2 Profiles for the specific domain of the machine.
- The Username field will not have the domain name prefilled, but you should use your **domain\FirstName.LastName** to login
- Your **FirstName.LastName** login now matches your regular Windows Login Account
- You will see a dialog box as a VPN connection is made (for Troubleshooting)
- If you log off, the Cisco VPN client will not automatically disconnect (this is to allow patches, upgrades and other SMS activity to occur while you are logged off)

Click on Connect



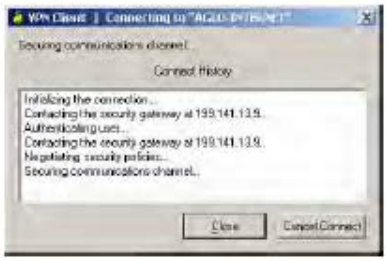
This Appears….

When logging in, always use **domain\User.Name**

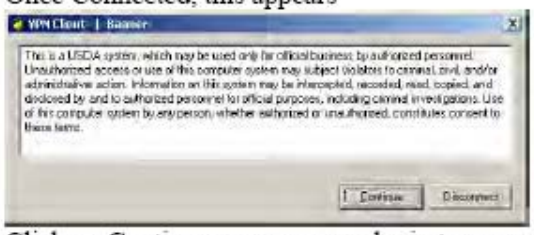
The valid domains are: **Aglo**, **Agwest**, **Ageast** and **Agcentral**

If you are not sure which domain your account is in, you can press **Ctrl + Alt + Del**
This will provide you login information that will show your domain and User account.

This diagnostic Dialog Box appears, and remains until connected…..



Once Connected, this appears



Click on Continue, now you can login to your workstation.

Advantages to connecting to VPN before logging in

- User is authenticated into Active Directory
- Mapped Networked Drives are automatically connected
- Group Policy is applied against the workstation
- Workstation is more secure
- Network connection (ie. Email, Agency Web Apps) work immediately
- SMS processes begins immediately, keeping workstation updated
- Workstations can be built over VPN easier

How can the End user help Maintain Workstation Updates

Updates are sent out periodically to all workstations; new applications, security patches, etc. A VPN user will not always get these because of the inconsistent connection to the network. Occasionally (i.e. weekly), the End-User should log-off their workstation, but leave it connected to whatever network connection is being used (Cable Modem, Satellite, Dialup, etc..) This will allow for programs and updates that only apply when a user is logged off, to come down to the workstation.

ITS Alerts are sent out to users letting them know about upcoming Security Patches and Applications that affect the users. It is recommended that you leave your workstation connected for a period of time (several hours if possible), to pick up these new releases.

Dialup Use with new VPN

Dialup access is now tied into the Domain access with the new VPN ACS servers.
Once the Cisco 4.8 version has been installed on your machine, dialup users will log on as:

domain\user.name@one

You will continue to use the same dialup connection and phone number.