



SLTFS 2.4 Frequently Asked Questions

This document explains the changes to Scalar LTFS from release version 2.3 to version 2.4.

What is a Volume Group?

A volume group is a collection of one or more tapes which allows data to be read or written. In 2.3, the size of a single file was limited to the size of a single tape. In 2.4, if a volume group has the scratch pool enabled, a single file can now be larger than a single tape and can be spread across multiple tapes (file spanning). With 2.4, users should look at a volume group as simply one, potentially large, single piece of media.

Can I continue to use my system with single tape volume groups much like 2.3?

Yes, simply disable scratch pool on each volume group and the volume group will never grow beyond one tape unless a tape is specifically added to the volume group.

How do I get tapes into the system?

Tapes need to be placed into the IE station of the library and associated with the SLTFS controlled partition. Once SLTFS 2.4 identifies the media has come into its controlled partition(s) and it was not a tape from a vaulted volume group, it automatically places the media into the discovered pool where the user can either attach it as a single tape volume group or format it so it's part of the scratch pool. If the media was from a vaulted volume group, it will be placed into that volume group.

Why do I have to export a complete volume group?

Multi-tape volume group may share both metadata (directory/folders) and files. There are cases where SLTFS will cache up metadata changes and not update the tape until the volume group is **Prepared for Export**. Once this operation is complete, it is guaranteed that all tapes in that volume group are synced and consistent. As a result of the possibility of spanned files within the volume group, all media within the volume group must be exported because the user has no indication of what files are on what media or parts of a file are located on a specific piece of media.

What happens if I forget to disable the scratch pool on a volume group?

If the volume group has not spanned volumes, you can just disable scratch pool. If it has spanned volumes, you will need to copy the data back off the tapes and then recreate the volumes with scratch pool disabled.

Can I still use the library interface like I did in 2.3 to export tapes?

This is highly discouraged. With 2.4 and volume groups, metadata can be cached for media that may not be written to tape until the **Prepare for Export** is done. If media is pulled directly from the library without going through SLTFS, data can be at risk.

I just exported a volume group, where did my tapes go?

With 2.4, to complete an export, the media must be physically removed from the I/E station. Until the media are removed, the volume group and its media, will not appear in your file system browser. Once they are removed, the volume group will appear and all media will be **Vaulted**.

How many volume groups can I have?

The recommended maximum number of volume groups is 1000. This can mean a single volume group with 1000 media or 1000 volume groups with a single media each. It is possible to have more than 1000 volume groups if tapes are vaulted and you decide not to retain metadata for the volume group.

How do volume groups work compared to how I was writing to my tapes in 2.3?

A user should view 2.4 as the same as 2.3 with the difference being that the volume group can be a large virtual tape where as in 2.3 it was a single tape. The volume group should be treated as a single tape so when it's exported or imported all tapes associated to that volume group are co-located either in the library or out of the library.

What happens if I just keep doing what I was doing before?

With 2.3, the system was individual media based but with 2.4 it went to a volume group based system with the potential to contain multiple tapes in each volume group. However, the user can force each volume group to contain only a single tape (by disabling the scratch pool for **all** volume groups) which will cause the system to react much the same as it did with 2.3.

Do all tapes in a volume group have to be in the library?

It is highly recommended that all tapes be in the library for a volume group. Since a user really doesn't know which individual media of a volume group contains the data only having part of the media set in the library can cause IO errors and unexpected behavior.

Why was Partition Policy removed from the GUI?

Since SLTFS no longer auto attaches on import anymore, this feature became unnecessary. Per design, imported media shows up in the discovered media pool and is not attached to a volume group like in 2.3.

Why do I see single media volume group in my share when the tape is not even in the library?

This is most likely vaulted media, which isn't in the library, but is shown in the file system. This is because of the metadata retention policy which offers options for various retention periods of metadata. Once this retention period has expired, the vaulted media is removed from file system.