

How To Change Host Alive Check In Nagios XI 2024 And 2026

Purpose

This document will describe how to change the host check command in Nagios XI. The host check command is what determines if a host is UP or DOWN.

An example of a host that is functional but is considered “Down” by Nagios XI can be seen in the following screenshot. The host has a firewall rule that does not allow ICMP and hence you can see the host object itself is considered down but the services are working OK:

Host	Service	Status	Duration	Attempt	Last Check	Status Information
Apache-Server-2	ncpa	Ok	6m 57s	1/5	2025-11-07 11:34:28	OK: ncpa is running
	httpd	Ok	6m 40s	1/5	2025-11-07 11:34:44	OK: httpd is running
	fprobe	Ok	N/A	1/5	2025-11-07 11:32:26	OK: Process count for processes named fprobe was 2
	firewalld	Ok	7m 13s	1/5	2025-11-07 11:34:12	OK: firewalld is running
	ens160 Bandwidth - Outbound	Ok	5m 58s	1/5	2025-11-07 11:35:28	OK: Bytes_sent was 0.00 MB/s

Contemplate Checks

If you are running a server that is not allowed to respond to ping, you will need to consider what method will be used to determine if a host is UP or DOWN. In the screenshot you can see that there is a working HTTP service, and that the host is being monitored using the NCPA (Nagios Cross Platform) agent. So, a couple options we could consider would be:

- Using the `check_host_alive_http` plugin
- Using the `check_tcp` plugin on port 5693 (this option would also apply to Windows hosts being monitored using the NCPA agent).

An alternate option suitable for any type of host is the `check_dummy` plugin. This approach is very simple to configure, but is designed to always show an OK status, so is only useful if the actual host status isn't something you need to accurately monitor.

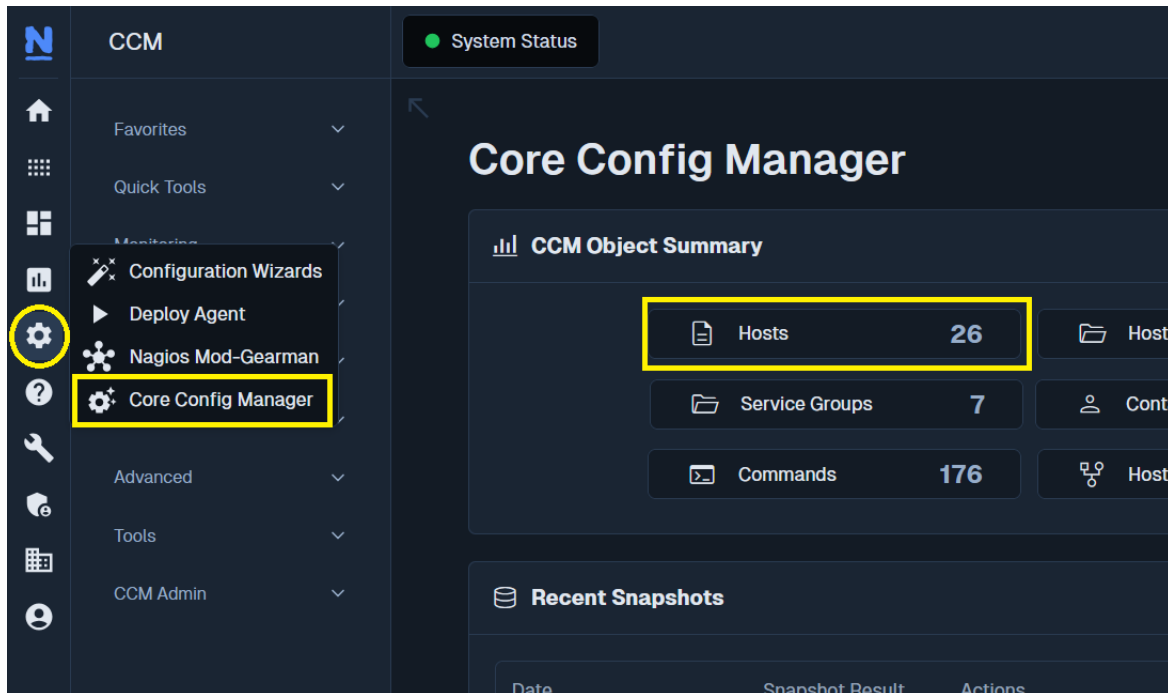
We'll outline setup for each of these options in the following pages.

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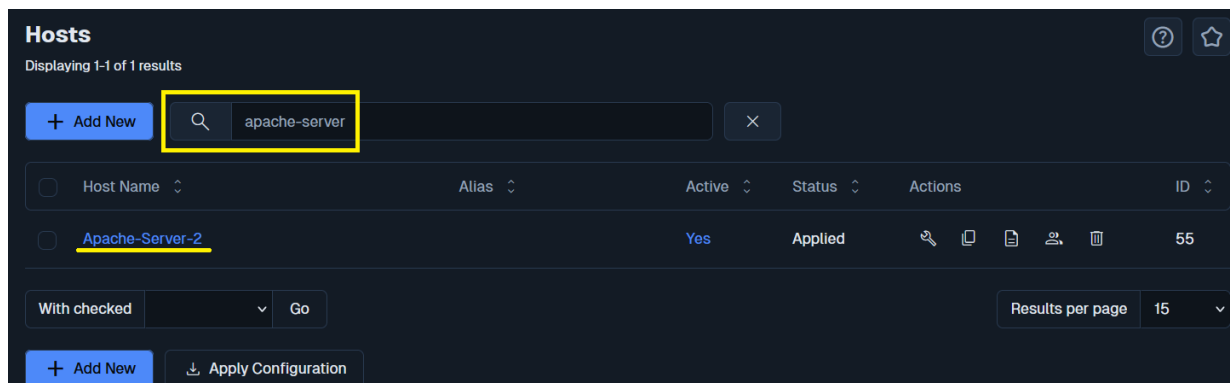
Edit the Host

To begin, we'll need to edit the host.

1. Navigate to **Configure > Core Configuration Manager (CCM)**.
2. In the left pane under **Monitoring**, or in the center **CCM Object Summary**, click **Hosts**:

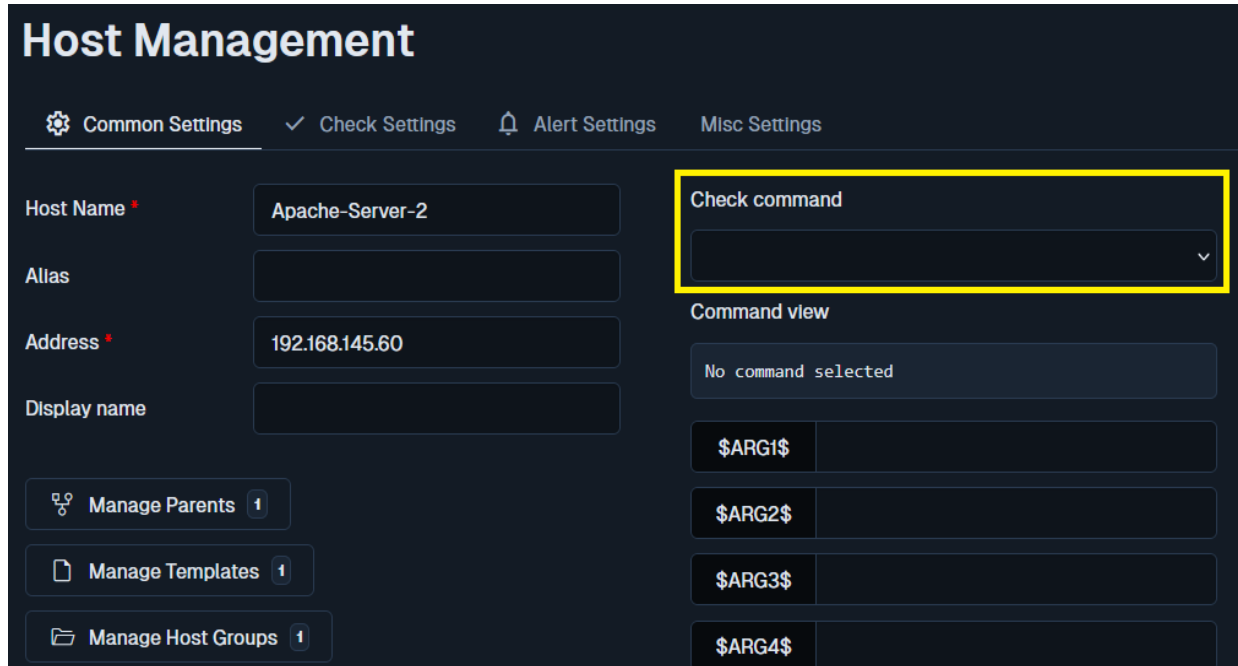


3. Search for the host, then click its Host Name:



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4. You will be presented with the **Host Management** screen as per the screenshot.



The screenshot displays the 'Host Management' configuration page for a host named 'Apache-Server-2'. The page is divided into several sections. On the left, there are input fields for 'Host Name', 'Alias', 'Address', and 'Display name'. Below these are three buttons: 'Manage Parents', 'Manage Templates', and 'Manage Host Groups'. On the right, there is a 'Check command' dropdown menu, which is highlighted with a yellow border. Below this is a 'Command view' section showing a list of command templates: '\$ARG1\$', '\$ARG2\$', '\$ARG3\$', and '\$ARG4\$'. The 'Check command' field is currently empty, indicating that the host is inheriting its check command from a template.

We are going to be changing the **Check command** however you may notice that it's currently empty. You may be wondering then, "how is the ping check being performed"? The host is using a Host Template and is inheriting the ping check from the template. The changes we will be making will overwrite what has been defined in the template.

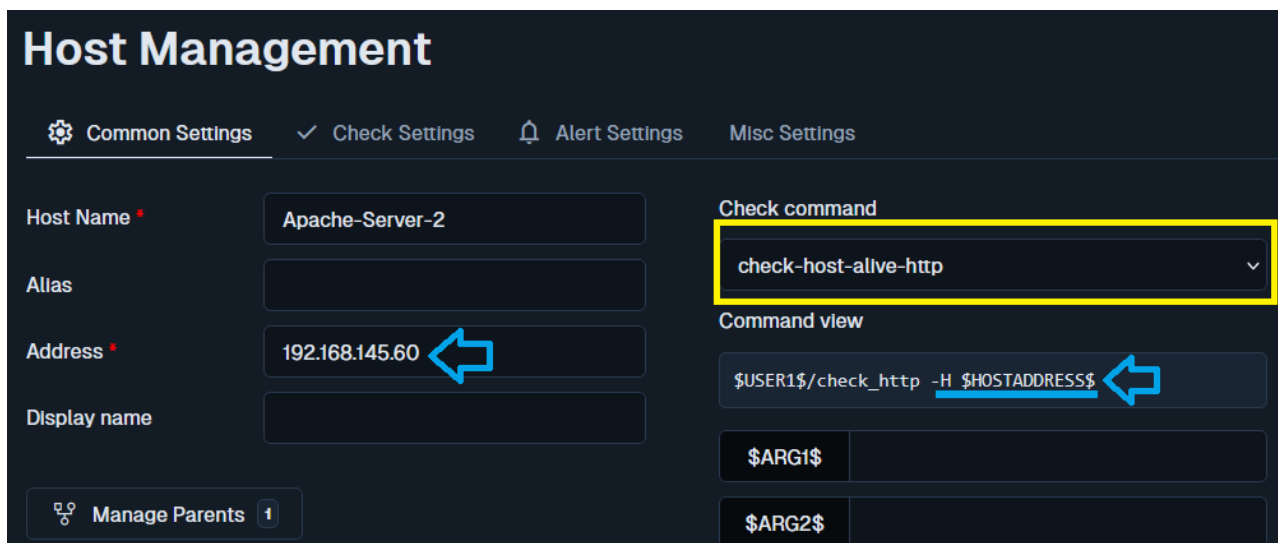
[Editing Templates](#) will be explained later in this document.

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Define a Check Command

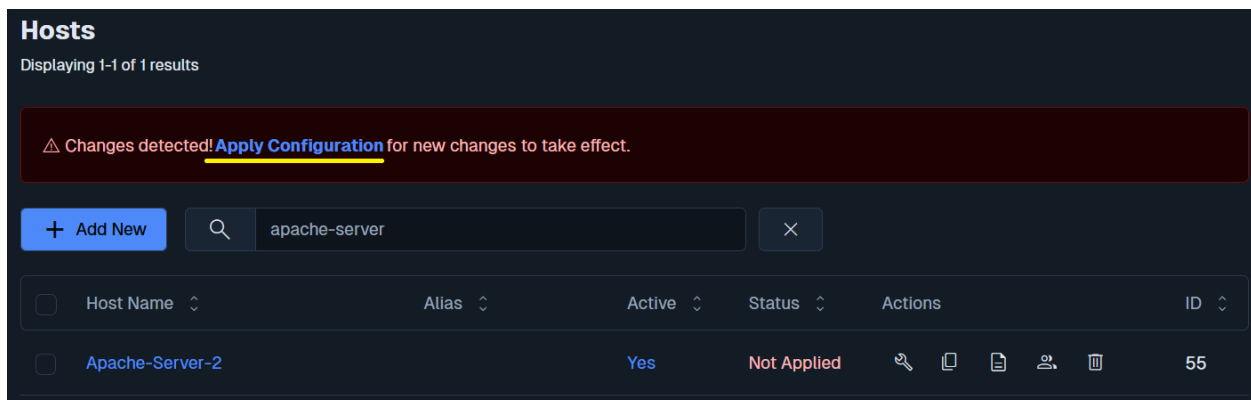
1. Defining the host UP / DOWN check is a simple matter of selecting an option from the **Check command** dropdown list. In this example we are using `check-host-alive-http` (we'll also cover `check_tcp` and `check_dummy` on the following page).

The Command view shows you the actual name of the plugin that is being executed along with what arguments are required. You will notice that this plugin uses the `$HOSTADDRESS$` macro, which means it will use the value stored in the Address field of the host object. The Command view shows that the plugin does not require any additional arguments so there are no further changes required.



The screenshot shows the 'Host Management' interface for a host named 'Apache-Server-2'. The 'Check command' dropdown is set to 'check-host-alive-http'. The 'Address' field is '192.168.145.60'. The 'Command view' shows the command: '\$USER1\$/check_http -H \$HOSTADDRESS\$'. A yellow box highlights the 'Check command' dropdown, and blue arrows point to the 'Address' field and the '\$HOSTADDRESS\$' macro in the command view.

2. Click the **Save** button at the bottom after making these changes. Click **Apply Configuration** to make these changes apply into the running configuration.

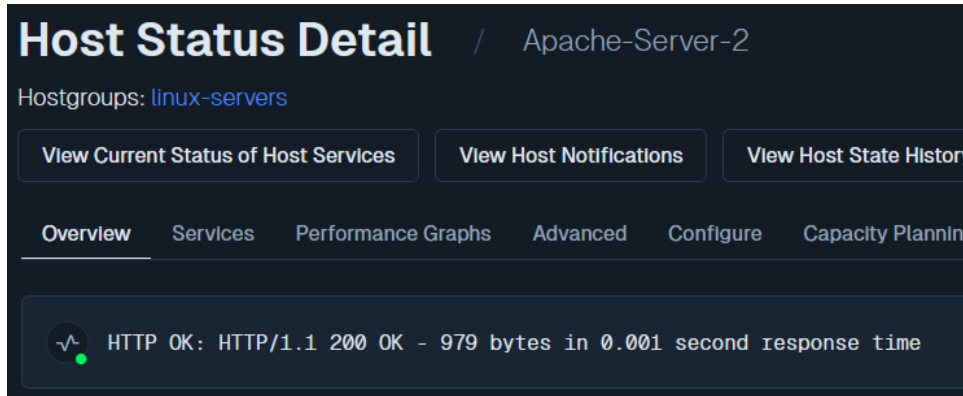


The screenshot shows the 'Hosts' interface with a notification: 'Changes detected! [Apply Configuration](#) for new changes to take effect.' Below the notification is a search bar with 'apache-server' and a table with one host entry: 'Apache-Server-2' with status 'Not Applied' and ID '55'.

Host Name	Alias	Active	Status	Actions	ID
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apache-Server-2	Yes	Not Applied		55

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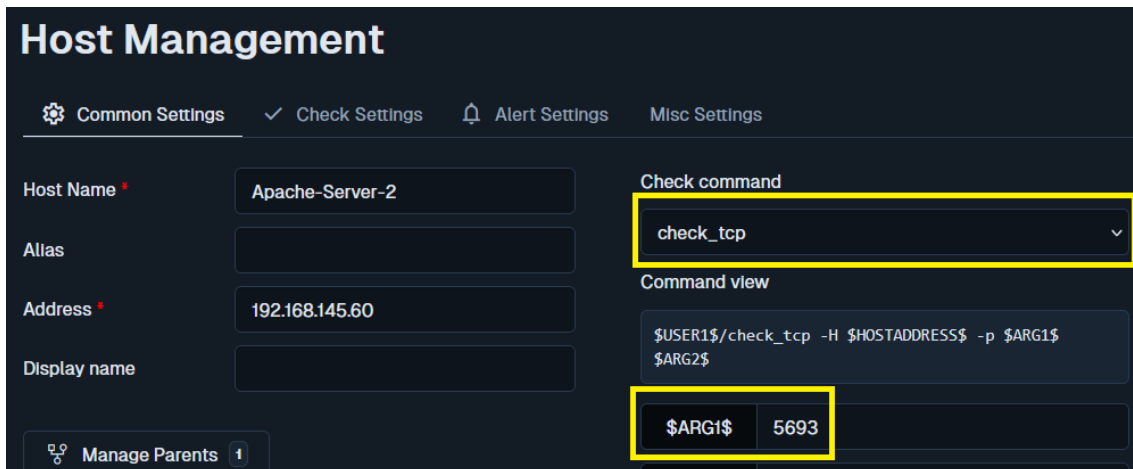
Here's an updated screenshot of the host object with an OK state after the check command was changed to `check_host_alive_http`:



The screenshot shows the 'Host Status Detail' page for 'Apache-Server-2'. The host is in an OK state, indicated by a green checkmark icon. The status message reads: 'HTTP OK: HTTP/1.1 200 OK - 979 bytes in 0.001 second response time'. The page includes navigation tabs for 'Overview', 'Services', 'Performance Graphs', 'Advanced', 'Configure', and 'Capacity Planning'. There are also buttons for 'View Current Status of Host Services', 'View Host Notifications', and 'View Host State History'.

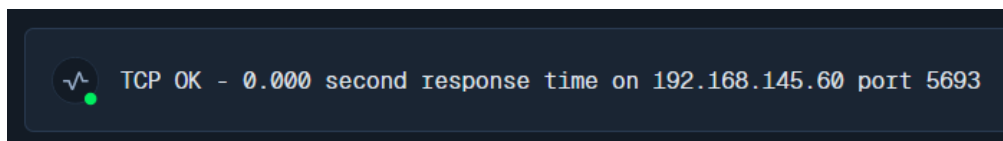
check_tcp

To employ `check_tcp` for our host alive check, we'll select the command from the dropdown, then enter 5693 in **\$ARG1\$** to specify port 5693. This is the default port that NCPA (the Nagios Cross Platform Agent) runs on, so provides a valid method whether the NCPA host is Linux or Windows. You can also use this option to check any other open port.



The screenshot shows the 'Host Management' configuration page for 'Apache-Server-2'. The 'Check Settings' tab is active. The 'Check command' dropdown is set to 'check_tcp'. The 'Command view' shows the command: '\$USER1\$/check_tcp -H \$HOSTADDRESS\$ -p \$ARG1\$ \$ARG2\$'. The '\$ARG1\$' field is set to '5693'. The 'Host Name' is 'Apache-Server-2' and the 'Address' is '192.168.145.60'.

Here's the OK output when the check is run:

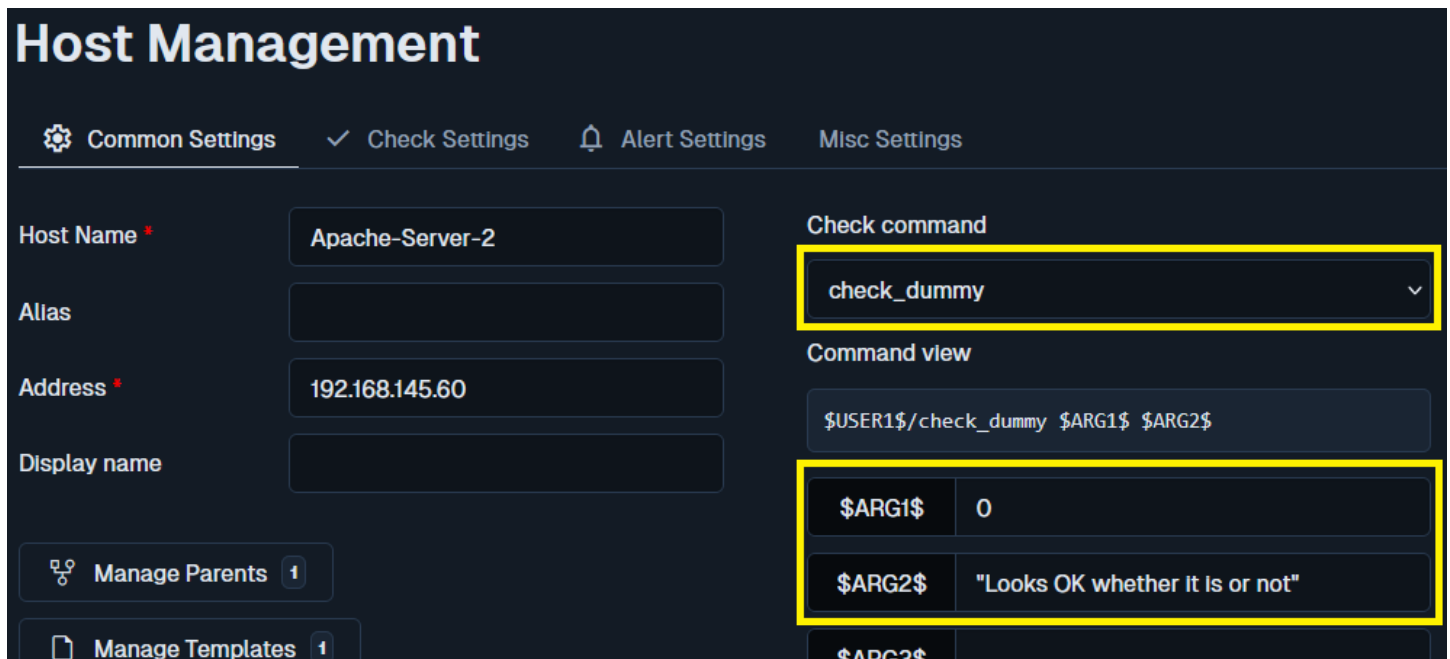


The screenshot shows the output of the check: 'TCP OK - 0.000 second response time on 192.168.145.60 port 5693'. A green checkmark icon is visible next to the text.

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check_dummy

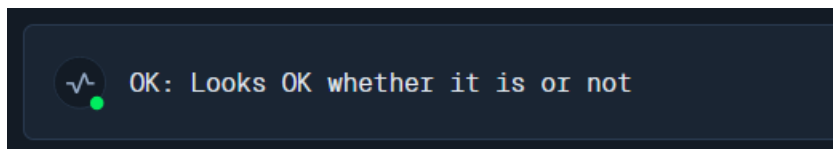
To use `check_dummy`, select the command from the dropdown, then enter `0` in **\$ARG1\$** (to make the check always return Nagios status code 0, which equates to an OK status), and some text in **\$ARG2\$**. The text can be as simple as `OK`; if you'd like to include multiple words, wrap them in quotation marks as we have in the example:



The screenshot shows the Nagios XI Host Management interface. The 'Check Settings' tab is active. The 'Host Name' is 'Apache-Server-2' and the 'Address' is '192.168.145.60'. The 'Check command' dropdown is set to 'check_dummy'. The 'Command view' section shows the command template: `$USER1$/check_dummy $ARG1$ $ARG2$`. Below this, a table shows the arguments: **\$ARG1\$** is set to '0' and **\$ARG2\$** is set to '"Looks OK whether it is or not"'. The **\$ARG3\$** field is empty.

Argument	Value
\$ARG1\$	0
\$ARG2\$	"Looks OK whether it is or not"
\$ARG3\$	

Here's the OK output when the check is run:

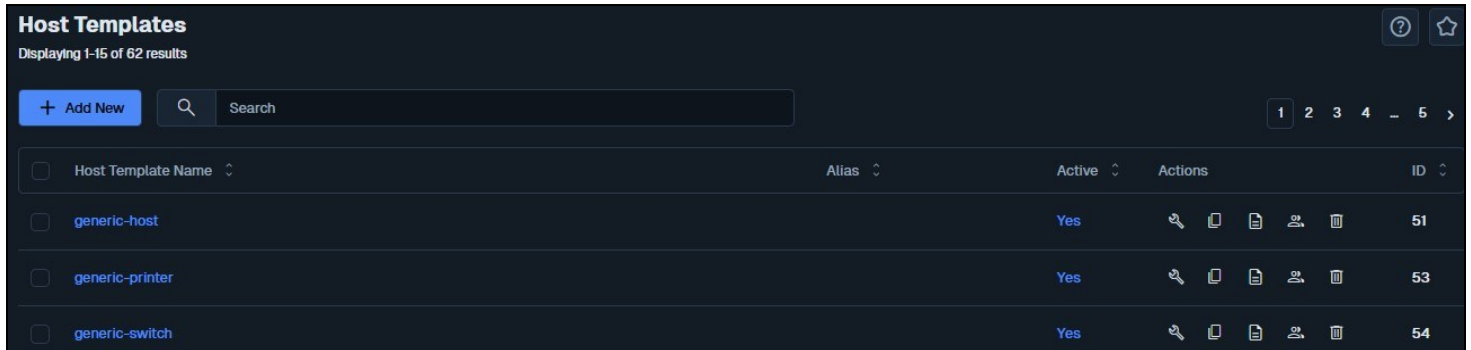











Keep in mind that `check_dummy` is only suitable for hosts that you wish to always assume an OK status for.

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Editing Templates

1. If you wish to change a template (for instance, if you are implementing public facing Linux servers that will not accept ICMP requests) you will need to navigate to **Templates > Host Templates** in **Configuration Manager**.



<input type="checkbox"/>	Host Template Name	Alias	Active	Actions	ID
<input type="checkbox"/>	generic-host		Yes	  	51
<input type="checkbox"/>	generic-printer		Yes	  	53
<input type="checkbox"/>	generic-switch		Yes	  	54

2. Find the template in the list that you wish to edit and click it. The steps for changing the check command in a **Host Template** are identical to the steps provided for changing the host object above.

Finishing Up

This completes the documentation on changing host alive check in Nagios XI. If you have additional questions or other support-related questions, please visit the Nagios Support Forum, Nagios Documentation Hub, or Nagios Library:

[Visit Nagios Support Forum](#)

[Visit Documentation Hub](#)

[Visit Nagios Library](#)