How To Understand Users And Contacts In Nagios XI 2024 And 2026

Purpose

This document describes the relationships between users and contacts in Nagios XI. Users and contacts are closely related, although slightly different, and it is important for Nagios administrators to have a solid understanding of the relationship between them when migrating from Nagios Core to Nagios XI.

Users and Contacts

Nagios XI users and contacts are closely related, although slightly different:

- **Users** correspond to user accounts that are used to login to the Nagios XI web interface.
    - A user is typically "connected" to contact for the purpose of both enabling notifications and obtaining permission to see and modify hosts and services.
- **Contacts** are definitions in Nagios Core that are normally used for directing host and service alerts to specific individuals.
    - While it isn't necessary for contacts to have a relationship with a user, they most often do to ensure the user can use the Nagios XI web interface.

Relation of Users to Contacts

In normal operation, Nagios XI users are directly associated to Nagios Core contacts with a one-to-one relationship. Admins create this relationship when they check the **Create as Monitoring Contact** option when adding new user accounts to Nagios XI.

This direct correlation allows Nagios XI to manage alert notifications from the Nagios Core monitoring engine on a per-user basis. Nagios XI users can easily manage their notification preferences and methods using the Nagios XI web interface without having to understand the complexities of the underlying Nagios Core contact definitions.

When a Nagios XI user account is related to a Nagios Core contact, the user account is automatically granted permission to see and modify all hosts and services for which the underlying Nagios Core contact receives notifications.

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Relationship Configuration Details

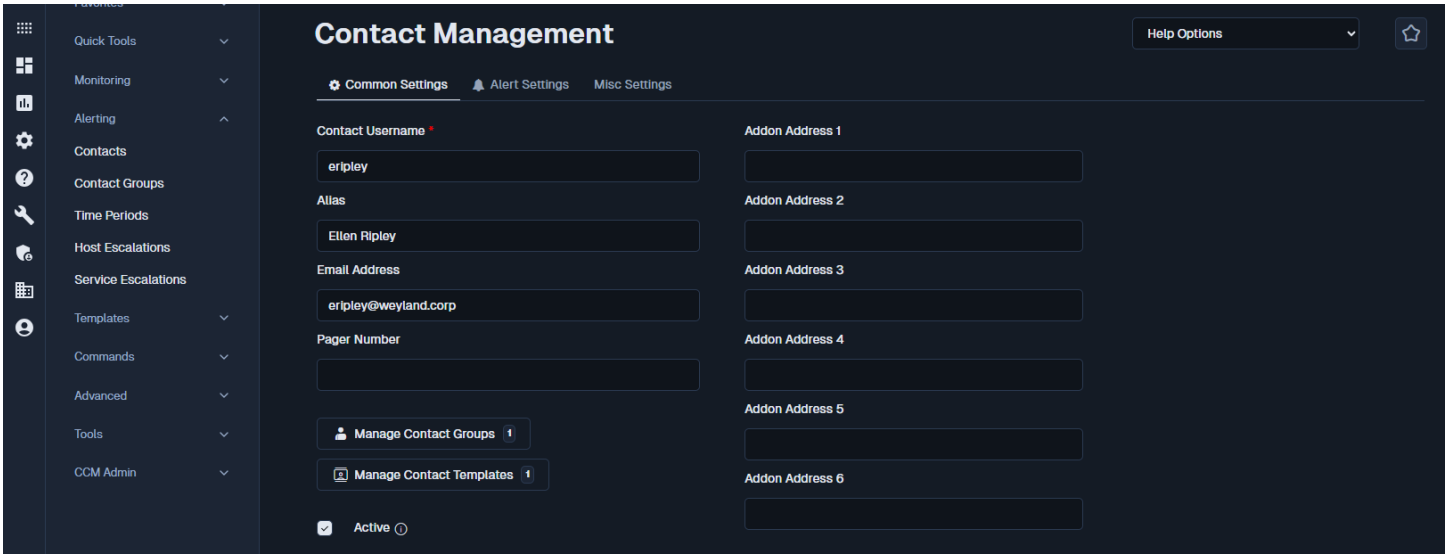
By default, Nagios XI allows users to manage their notification preferences, notification times, and notification messages through the XI web interface. This requires that each Nagios XI user has a direct relationship with a corresponding contact in Nagios Core.

The relationship between a Nagios XI user and a Nagios Core contact is established with the following configuration:

- There is a Nagios Core Contact with the same short name (e.g., jdoe) as the Nagios XI User's username (e.g. jdoe).
- The Nagios Core contact that corresponds to the user account must have the following properties:
    - Host notification command is `xi_host_notification_handler`
    - Service notification command is `xi_service_notification_handler`
    - Host-service notification time periods are both set to `<username>_notification_times`
        - Example: `eripley_notification_times`

Creating or Breaking Relationships

If you wish to define a relationship between a pre-existing Nagios Core contact and a new Nagios XI user, you can modify the Nagios Core contact's configuration information using the Core Config Manager via **Configure > Core Config Manager > Alerting > Contacts**. This can be useful when constructing relationships after migrating from a Nagios Core setup.



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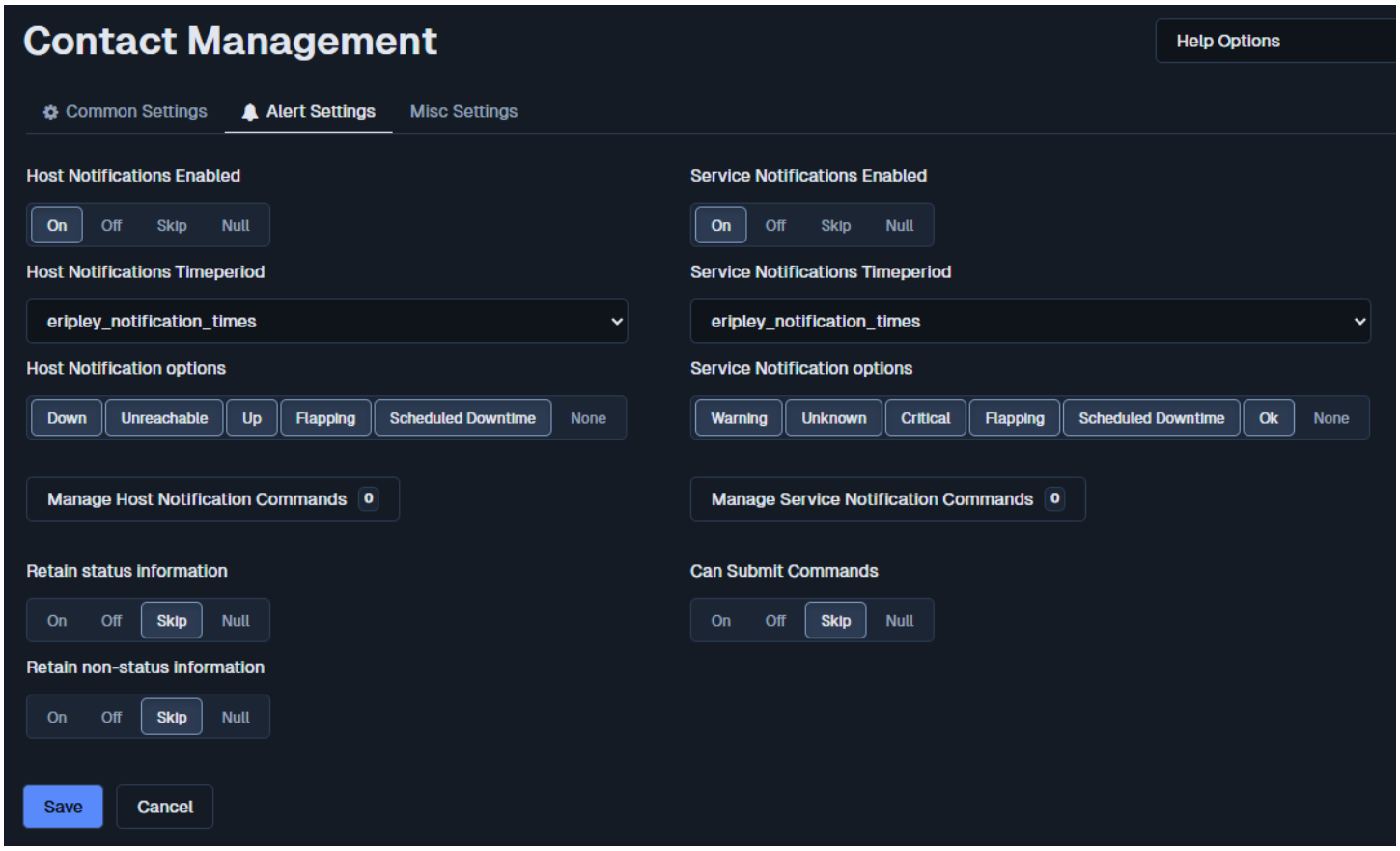

If you wish to break an existing user ↔ contact relationship, you can change the contact's configuration details to use values other than those described above.

Contact Templates / Notification Commands

When you edit a contact in **Core Config Manager**, you may notice on the **Alert Settings** tab that there are no **Host** or **Service Notification Commands** defined on the contact directly. The screenshot below shows that there are 0 commands selected for either **Host** or **Service Notification Commands**.

When you create a user account with the **Create as Monitoring Contact** option checked (default), the contact that is created uses a template to define some default settings such as the notification commands `xi_XXXXX_notification_handler`.

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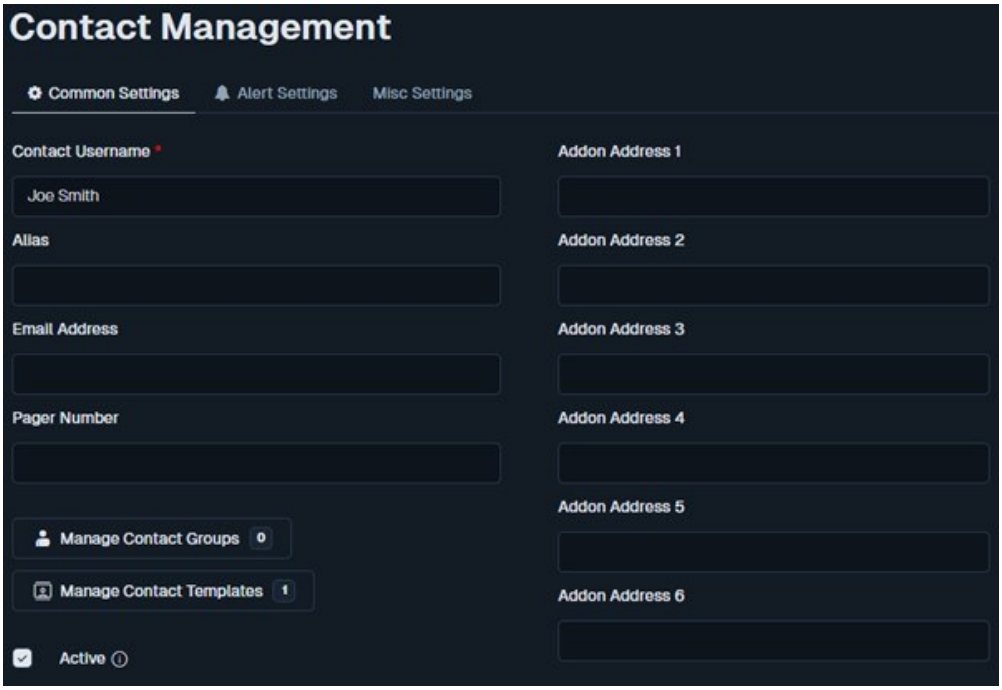
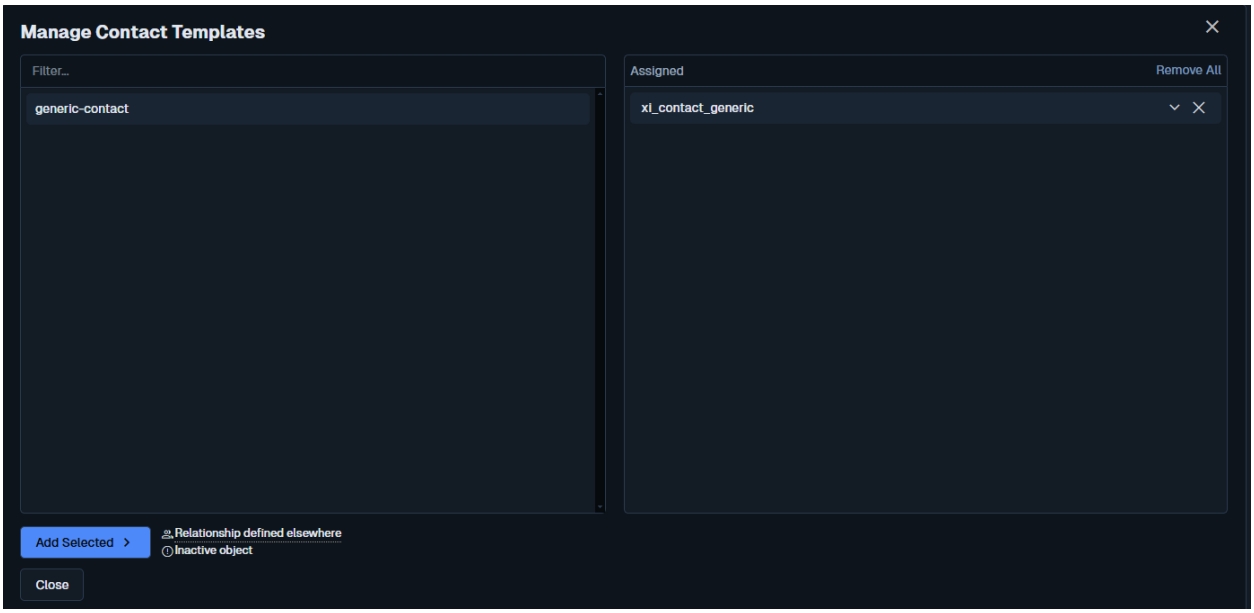
When editing a contact, on the **Common Settings** tab there is a **Manage Contact Templates** button. You can see in the screenshot that the **Manage Contact Templates** button has a **1**. This indicates that there is one contact template being used by this contact.



1. Click the **Manage Contact Templates** button to view the selected contact templates.

   Here you can see that the xi_contact_generic template is being used.



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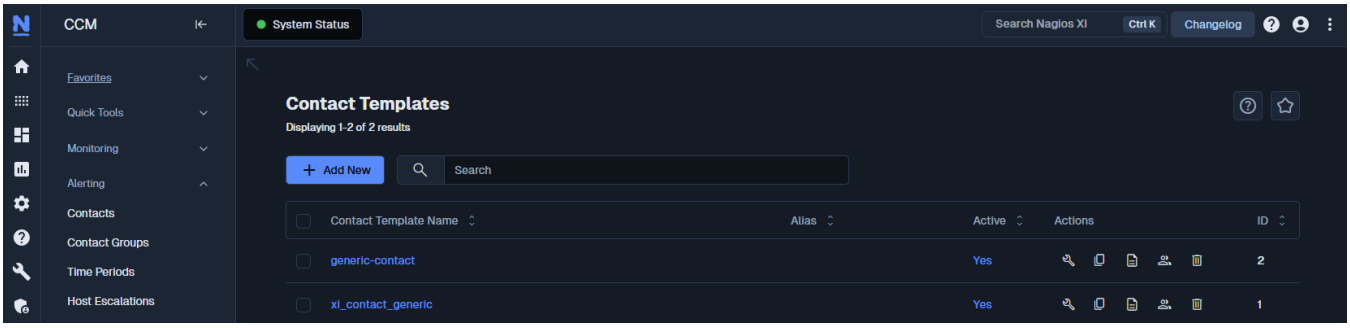
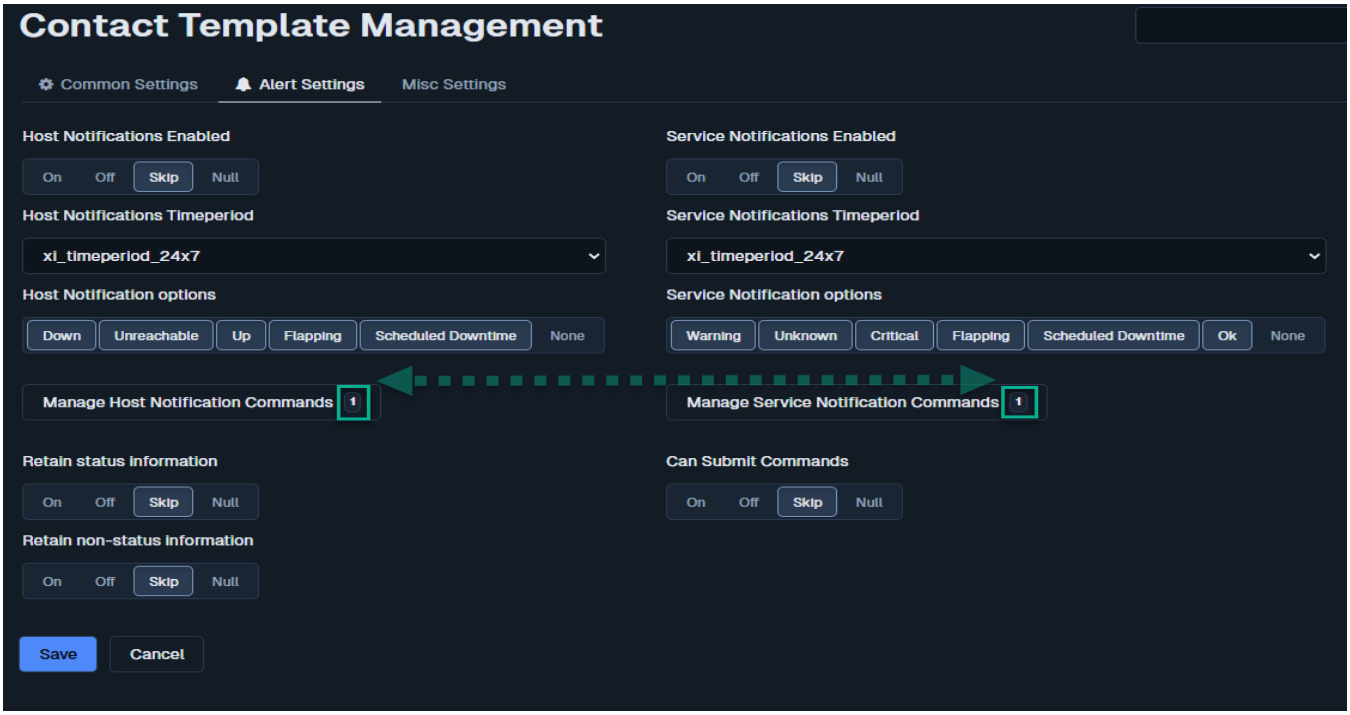
2. To view the settings of the template, navigate to **Configure > Core Config Manager > Templates > Contact Templates.**



3. Click the edit icon for the **xi_contact_generic** template to view its settings.
4. Click the **Alert Settings** tab and you will see that there are **Host** and **Service** N**otification Commands** defined on the contact template.



The screenshot shows that there is 1 command selected for both the **Host** and **Service** N**otification Commands**.

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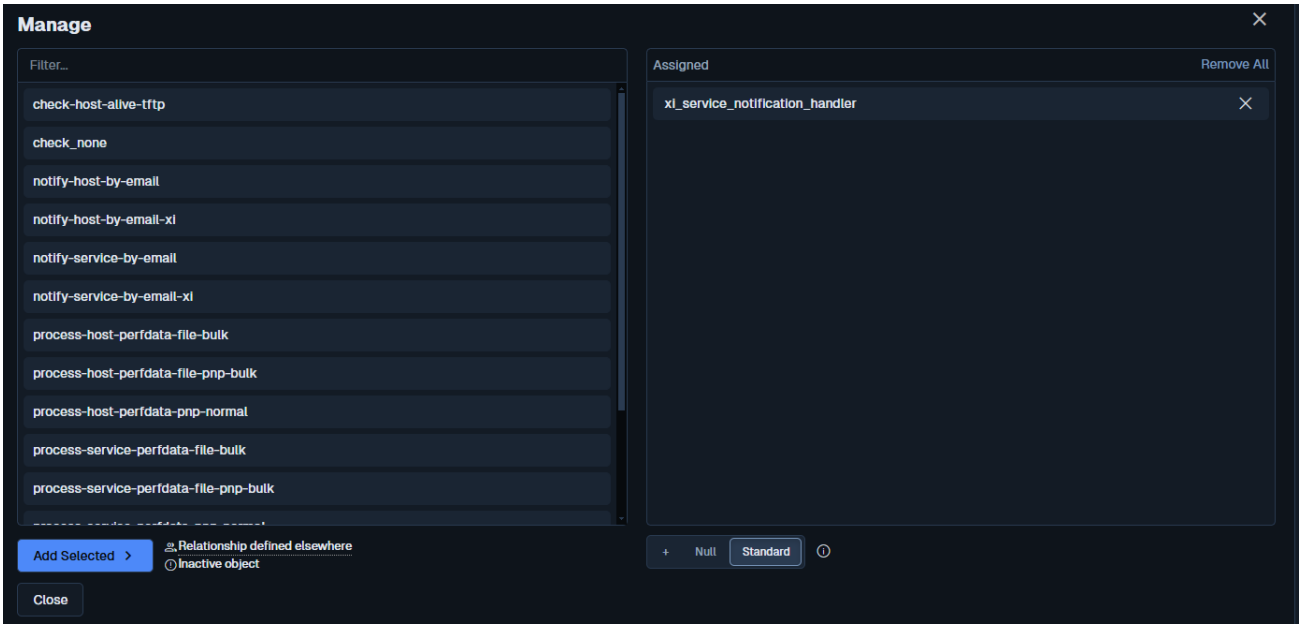
5. If you click either button, you will see the command that has been assigned.

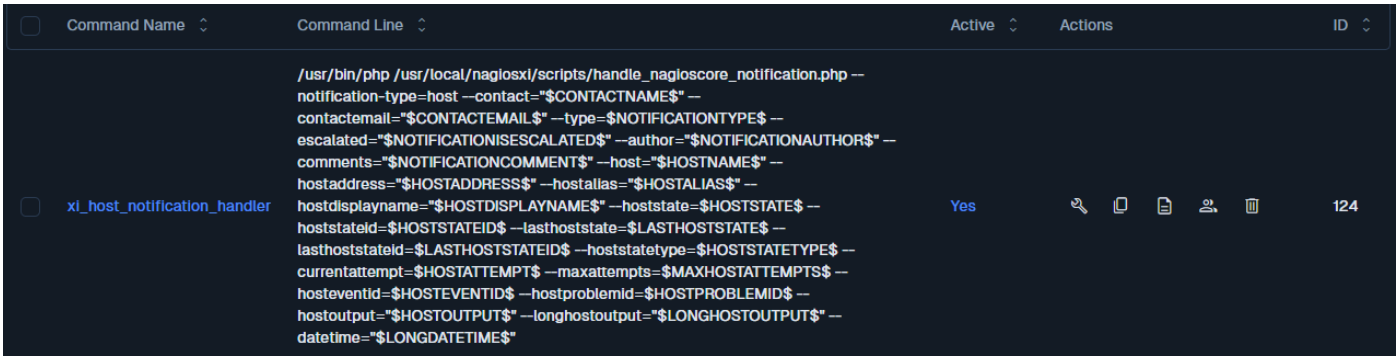


The point of these steps was to help explain how settings can be defined in templates. Templates are very helpful for common settings that will rarely change. If you do change a setting in a template, it will affect all objects (contacts in this case), so keep this in mind. Changing the common templates such as `xi_contact_generic` is not recommended, however making a copy of those templates and then modifying/using the copy is a great way to deviate from the templates if required.

Notification Commands Explained Briefly

This topic can get very complicated, however a brief explanation can help you understand how things work in the back end (which may help understand some other Nagios XI configuration concepts).

Navigate to **Configure > Core Config Manager > Commands > Commands**. Use the search field to narrow down the results to `notification_handler`.



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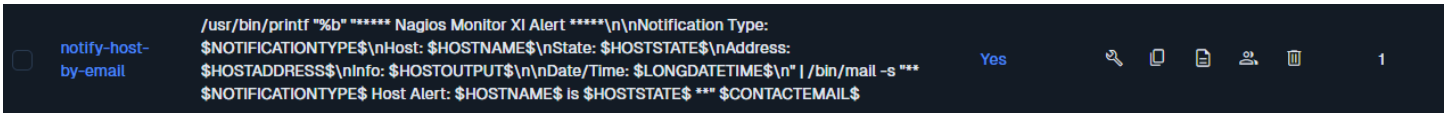
The `xi_host_notification_handler` command is used when you create a user account with the **Create as Monitoring Contact** option checked (default). A contact that uses this notification command will be handled through our internal script `/usr/local/nagiosxi/scripts/handle_nagioscore_notification.php`

Here is a broad description of what it does:

- Checks the **Manage Email Settings** page for your mail settings, if it is sendmail then it will end up sending it out through the `bin/mail` command, and if it's SMTP it will use PHP mailer to send outbound.
- The script respects the individual user settings that each XI user has. These can be configured by clicking your logged in username in the top right, and looking at the **Notification Preferences**, **Notification Methods**, and **Notification Messages** page.
- This allows a user to be able to configure their own settings on top of what the global Nagios settings are, without the need to have administrative access to the Configuration Manager

In the following screenshot, the `notify-host-by-email` command is shown. This notification command can be used when you do not have a user account created in Nagios XI and you require notifications to be sent to a contact that you have manually created.



Here is a broad description of what it does:

- The `/usr/bin/printf` command prints all the data in the format required to send an email, it is just one long text string
- This string of text is then piped (using the pipe | symbol) to the `/bin/mail` command
- The `/bin/mail` command will then attempt to send the email
- This method is much simpler and provides a generic message format to be used for notifications. It does not allow end user customization and requires an Admin to make changes in CCM and then apply configuration

Finishing Up

This completes the documentation on understanding users & contacts 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:

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