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Software Lifecycle Support Statement - Next Generation Firewall (NGFW)

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What You Will Learn

This software lifecycle support statement describes the support timelines for the following Cisco Next Generation Firewall Product Line (NGFW Product Line) software: Cisco Firepower Threat Defense (FTD), FirePOWER Services (FPS), Firepower Management Center (FMC), Firepower Device Manager (FDM), and Adaptive Security Appliance (ASA) releases starting from FTD 6.4, and ASA 9.12 onwards. For information about earlier releases, see [Support Timelines for Earlier Releases](#).

This software lifecycle support statement describes the release and support timeline for Cisco NGFW Product Line software on the supported security appliances, as described in the NGFW Compatibility Guides:

- [Firepower Compatibility Guide](#)
- [ASA Compatibility Guide](#)
- [FXOS Compatibility](#)

Cisco NGFW Product Line software follows a time-based release model that delivers two releases each year. This approach enables Cisco to introduce stable and feature rich software releases in a reliable and predictable cadence.

Cisco NGFW Product Line Software Release Delivery

The Cisco NGFW Product Line Software Release Train provides two feature releases per year, approximately six months apart. This release cadence will be repeated every year, starting with FTD 6.4 and ASA 9.12 software releases

The releases use the following numbering scheme, as represented in Table 1:

- The Long Term Release (LTR) ships in the first half of the calendar year. An LTR is designated by an even number in the second digit of the series x.even, where x = major series and “even” represents a yearly increment for that series. This release is recommended for customers who desire longer support durations.
- The Extra Long Term Release (XLTR) is an LTR that has been chosen for government certification. An LTR is not shipped in a year when an XLTR is shipped. Like an LTR, an XLTR ships in the first half of the calendar year. An XLTR is designated by an even number in the second digit of the series x.even, where x = major series and “even” represents a yearly increment for that series. This release is recommended for customers who desire longer support durations in government certified vehicles.
- The Short Term Release (STR), which ships in the second half of the calendar year, is designated by an odd number in the second digit of the series x.odd, where x = major series, “odd” represents a yearly increment for that series. This release is recommended for customers who are looking for the latest set of feature releases.

Table 1. Release numbering scheme

	Release Number	Cadence
Long Term Release (LTR)	X.even.	First half of calendar year (12 months cycle)
Extra Long Term Release (XLTR)	Example; FTD 6.4 and ASA 9.12 (XLTR) FTD 7.0*and ASA 9.16 (XLTR)	
Short Term Release (STR)	X.odd. Examples; FTD 6.5, ASA 9.13 (STR) FTD 6.7 and ASA 9.15 (STR)	Second half of calendar year (12 months cycle)

* Firepower software skips from Version 6.7.0 to Version 7.0.0. This renumbering emphasizes Firepower's superior value due to the key new features and functionality introduced over the last several releases, in addition to the multiple performance and security enhancements. There are no unexpected incompatibilities with or limitations to upgrading to Version 7.0.0. Refer to [7.0.0 release notes](#) for specific details on compatibility, upgrade requirements, deprecated features and functionality, etc.

Release Number Versioning Scheme

The examples in these guidelines use the W.X.Y.Z format for release version numbers, for example 6.6.1.2 (Figure 1).

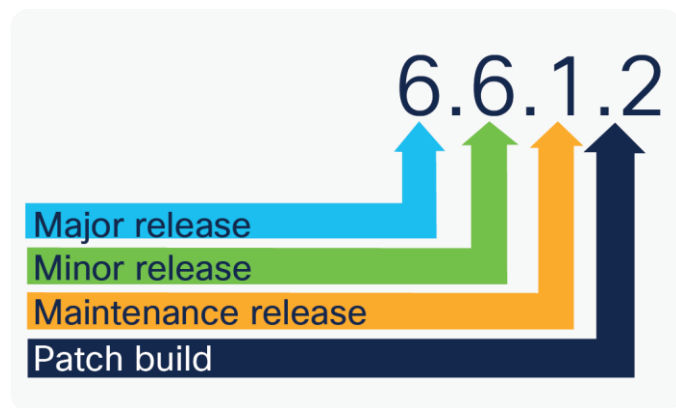


Figure 1. Cisco NGFW/ASA Software release numbering: W.X.Y.Z format

Cisco NGFW/ASA Software releases (W.X.Y.Z) are signified by a change to any of the four digits. In general, a change to W would indicate a larger change compared to a change in X, and similarly for the Y and Z digit as follows;

Feature releases are delivered for one or more of the following reasons:

Likely to cause a change to W:

- Introduce significant changes throughout the software, including infrastructure or architectural changes.

Likely to cause a change to X:

- New functions, features, and enhancements.

Likely to cause a change to Y:

- General bug and security related fixes

Likely to cause a change in Z:

- On-demand updates limited to critical fixes with time urgency.
- Hotfixes addressing specific customers' issues

Software Support Lifecycle Guidelines

The Cisco NGFW Product Line Software Support Lifecycle guidelines have pre-set time intervals for each of the lifecycle milestones. These time intervals are based on the support model of the affected Cisco NGFW Product Line software version. Table 2 summarizes the Support Lifecycle milestones for these software releases.

Table 2. Cisco NGFW product line Software Support Lifecycle milestones by release

Milestone	Definition	Timing
First-Customer-Ship (FCS)	The date which the Product Line software release is made available to Cisco customers.	Begins Software Release lifetime
External Announcement Date (EA)	The date when the end-of-sale and end-of-life milestones for a Cisco product and/or service are communicated to the general public.	At FCS for STRs Eighteen (18) months after FCS for LTRs Thirty three (33) months after FCS for XLTRs
End-of-Sale (EoS) Date**	The last date to order the product through Cisco point-of-sale mechanisms.	Six (6) months after the External Announcement (EA) for all releases

Milestone	Definition	Timing
End of SW Maintenance (EoSW) Release Date	The last date that Cisco Engineering may release any final software maintenance releases or bug fixes. After this date, Cisco Engineering will no longer develop, repair, maintain, or test the product software.	Eighteen (18) months after FCS for STRs Thirty six (36) months after FCS for LTRs Fifty one (51) months after FCS for XLTRs
Last Date of Support	The last date to receive service and support for the product. After this date, all support services for the product are unavailable, and the product becomes obsolete.	Two (2) years after End-of-Sale (EoS) date for all releases.

EOS** --The product is no longer for sale as default on an appliance after this date. Product will be available for download from Cisco.com until the Last Date of Support.

Software Release Schedule

The Cisco FTD 6.4 and ASA 9.12 Releases are the first XLTRs that will adhere to the guidelines presented here, as shown in Figure 2.

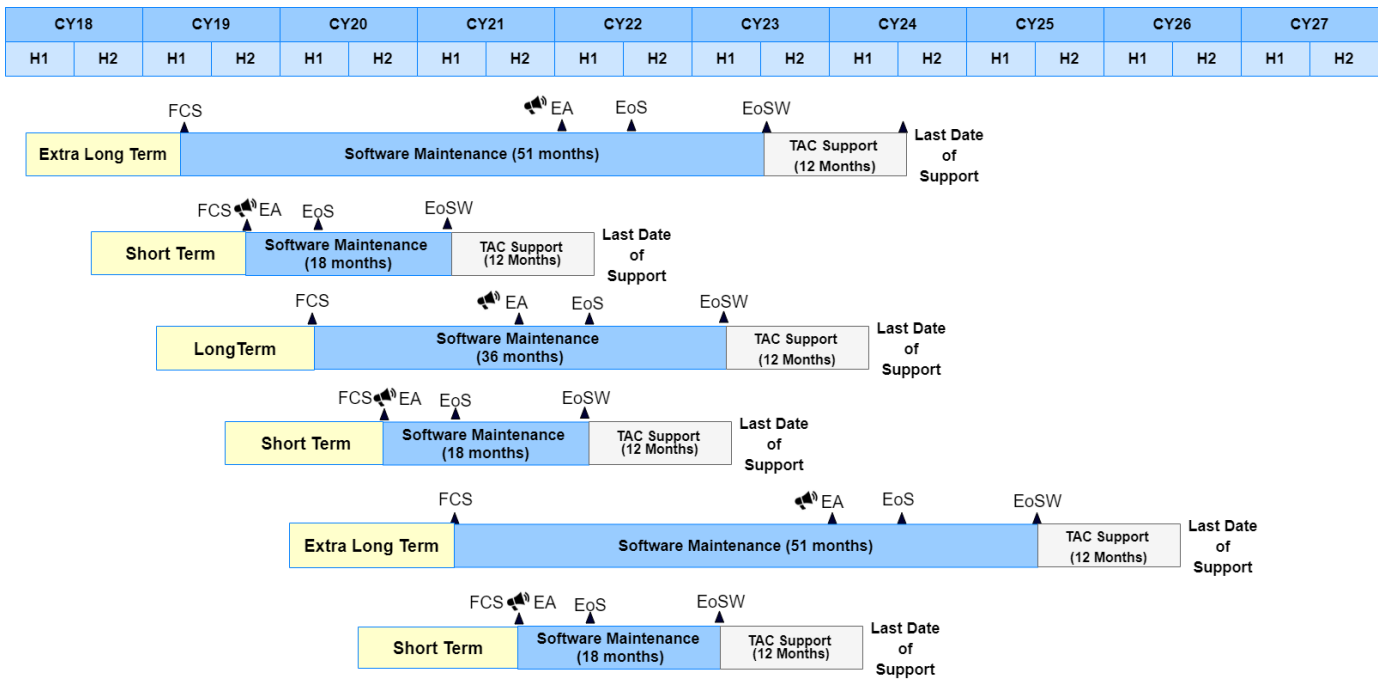


Figure 2. Cisco NGFW product line Software Release sustaining plan

Software Release and Support Milestones

The primary milestones that define the software feature release lifecycle for an STR, LTR and XLTR and the support durations are shown in Figure 3 below.

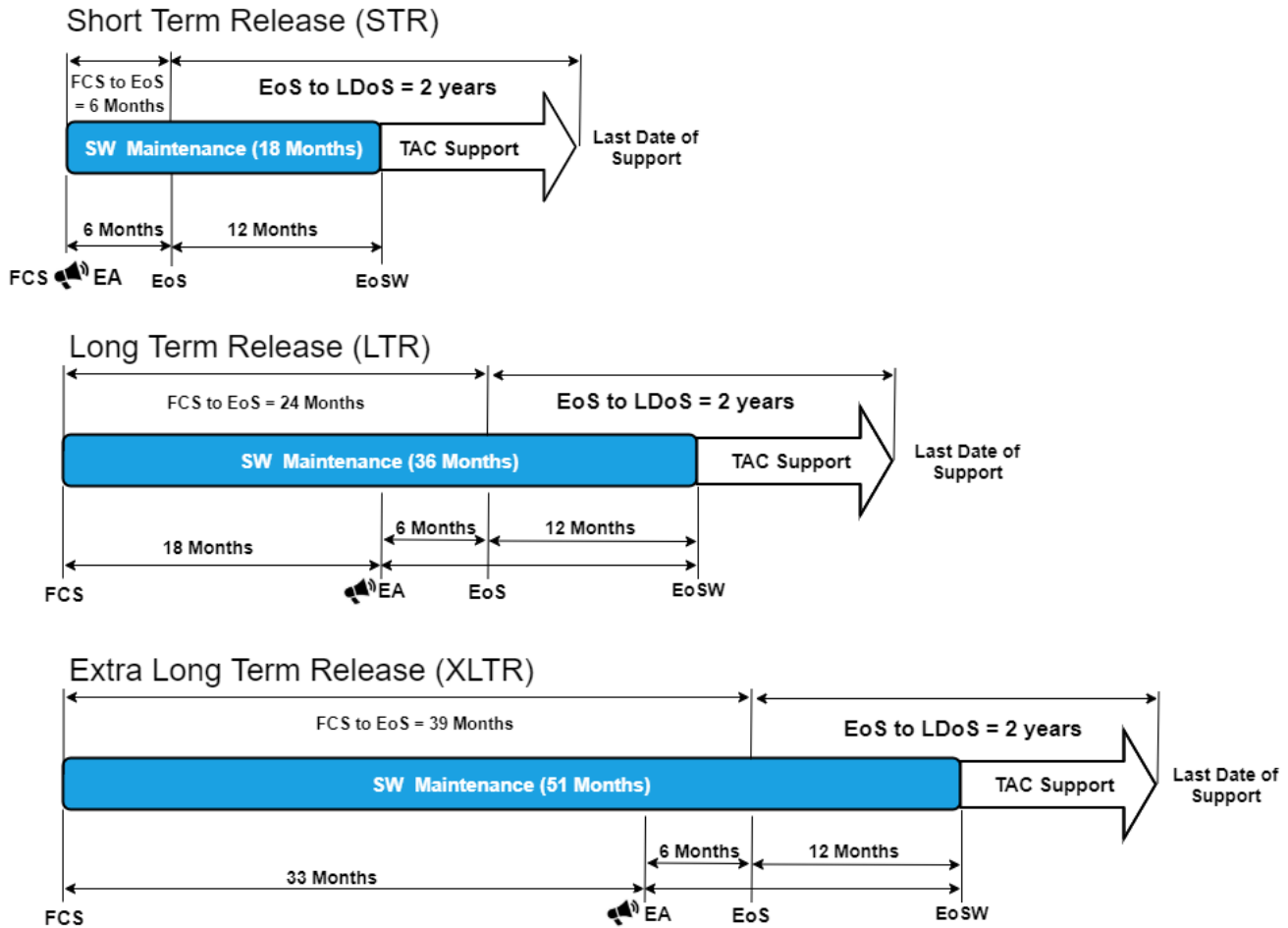


Figure 3.
Cisco NGFW product line software lifecycle for STRs, LTRs, and XLTRs (Not to Scale)

During the last six (6) months of the software maintenance phase for an STR and 12 months for an LTR and XLTR, the primary focus will be on End of Vulnerability Support (EoVS) (PSIRT fixes).

Cisco communicates fixes for current software trains for individual bugs through the bug search tool and provides additional communication for PSIRT announcements with the respective releases fixing those security vulnerabilities. Customers might be required to perform an upgrade to a recent release train to benefit from fixes

Throughout the software maintenance cycle, representatives from Cisco TAC and Cisco Engineering evaluate the priority of bug fixes and determine which ones should be included in each maintenance release. Cisco encourages Cisco NGFW Product Line software customers to include maintenance releases in their software maintenance plan to avoid possible operational effects from known software bugs.

Following the End of Sale (EoS) milestone for all releases, for a two (2) year period, TAC will provide phone support to customers and guide them through the process of migrating to recommended releases which provide stability and longevity of the application software.

Upgrade Paths

Customers are encouraged to migrate to the current LTR, XLTR, or STR when the release becomes available with appropriate features for the applications, as shown in Figure 3.

Maintenance releases are cumulative for the feature release they support. At the time it is published, the latest maintenance release includes all critical fixes published since the feature release was introduced. Cisco may recommend a release that provides the best stability and quality to customers at the time. Cisco also encourages all Cisco software customers to actively migrate to the latest maintenance release at their earliest convenience. If a bug is encountered which has been fixed in a maintenance release, Cisco's support policy is to recommend an upgrade to the latest available maintenance release.

For the upgrade path of a feature release, customers may have unique requirements, and they are encouraged to work with local Cisco customer representatives to find the optimal release for their network.

Customer Notifications

Cisco notifies customers of the lifecycle and major milestones of a particular release by the following methods:

- **Compatibility Guide:** When a feature release is introduced, Cisco updates the product Compatibility Guide on Cisco.com with compatibility information for that particular feature release. When announced, this document is updated with the end-of-sale, end-of-software maintenance, and end-of-life dates for that release:
 - [Firepower Compatibility Guide](#)
 - [ASA Compatibility Guide](#)
 - [FXOS Compatibility](#)
- **External Announcement:** Cisco issues an official End-of-Sale bulletin for the software release, which includes all End-of-Sale milestones affected including end of maintenance and last date of support. External announcements for all Cisco products are listed here: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/eos-eol-listing.html>

All of these documents are intended to provide advanced notification to Cisco NGFW Product Line software customers of the pending End-of-Sale and End-of-Life milestones.

Cisco Services

Cisco offers a wide range of services programs to accelerate customer success. These innovative services programs are delivered through a unique combination of resources, processes, tools, and partners, resulting in high levels of customer satisfaction. Cisco Services help you protect your network investment, optimize network operations, and prepare your network for new applications to extend network intelligence and the power of your business. For more information about Cisco Services, refer to:

<http://www.cisco.com/go/services>.

Support Timelines for Earlier Releases

The following links provide information about the support timelines for releases prior to Cisco FTD/FPS/FMC 6.4 and ASA 9.12:

- Firepower versions for 7000/8000 Series: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/security/firepower-8000-series-appliances/eos-eol-notice-listing.html>
- All other Firepower Appliances: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/security/firepower-ngfw/eos-eol-notice-listing.html>
- ASA Appliances: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/security/asa-firepower-services/eos-eol-notice-listing.html>
- FXOS for FPR-4K/9K Series: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/security/firepower-9000-series/eos-eol-notice-listing.html>

For More Information

For more information about the Cisco FTD and ASA product line visit the following page: <https://www.cisco.com/site/us/en/products/security/firewalls/index.html>

or contact your local Cisco account manager.

For information about Cisco service and support programs and benefits, visit: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/services/technical/software-support.html>

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