Support Statement
Cisco Public

Software Lifecycle Support Statement – Cisco NX-OS on Cisco N9000

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What you will learn

A comprehensive Cisco NX-OS Software release methodology has been developed both to preserve the integrity and stability of mission-critical networks and to have the flexibility to respond to market needs for timely delivery of advanced networking features with multilayer intelligence.

This document is a guide to understanding the Cisco NX-OS Software release lifecycle. It describes the types of releases, their functions, and their timelines. It also describes the Cisco NX-OS Software release and image-naming conventions.

Types of Cisco NX-OS Software releases

Table 1 lists the Cisco NX-OS Software release variants: major+, major releases or trains, feature releases, and maintenance releases.

Table 1. Cisco NX-OS Software release types

Cisco NX-OS Software release type	Description
Major+ release	A major+ release is considered a superset train, which carries all the attributes of a major release but can also have additional key changes (for example, 64-bit kernel) or other significant changes that require increasing the release numbering. A major+ release consists of multiple major releases. **Example: Release 10.x(x)**
Major release	A major release or software train introduces significant new features, functions, and/or hardware platforms. Each major release consists of multiple feature releases and maintenance releases and is its own train. **Examples: Release 10.3(x), 10.4(x), 10.5(x)**
Feature release	Each major include will receive new features, functions, and hardware platforms in the first few releases (typically 3 releases) of the major train. These are designated as feature releases. **Examples: Release 10.5(1)F, 10.5(2)F, 10.5(3)F**
Maintenance release	Once a major train has reached maturity through the first few feature releases, it will then transition to the maintenance phase, where it will receive bug fixes and security enhancements only. No new features will be developed on a maintenance release, to ensure the integrity and stability of the overall major release train. **Examples: Releases 10.5(4)M, 10.5(5)M, 10.5(6)M**

Each Cisco NX-OS Software release is uniquely numbered as A.B(C)x, where A is the major+ release or train, B is a major train that enhances a major+ release, C is the numerical identifier of the sequence within the major train and x represents if this release is a Feature release or a Maintenance release.

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Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the taxonomy of Cisco NX-OS Software releases, based on the example of the NX-OS 10.5(x).

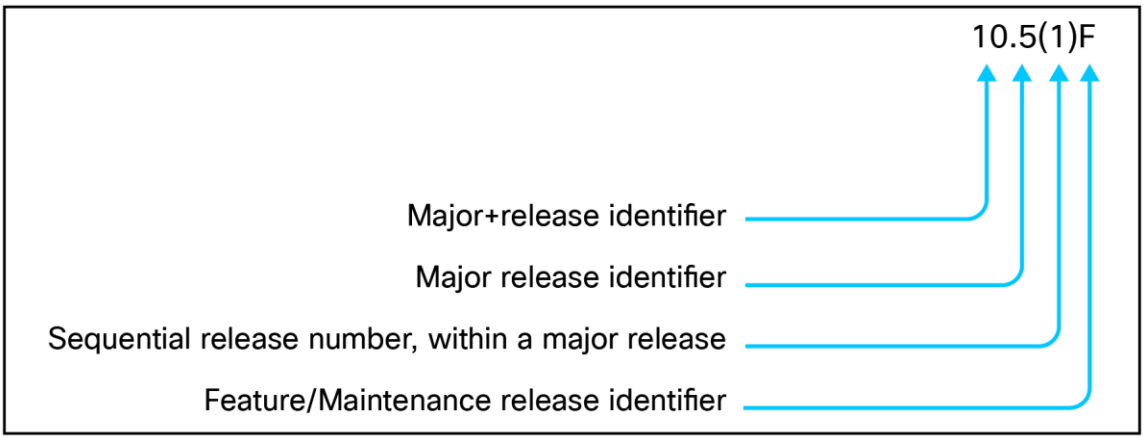


Figure 1.
Cisco NX-OS Software

Lifecycle of a Cisco NX-OS Software release

Previously, Cisco NX-OS releases were designated as either a long-lived or a short-lived release. Now all major releases will be treated equally, and all major release trains will be designated as the recommended release within their lifecycle. Figure 2 represents the lifecycle of the Cisco NX-OS 10.5(x) release.

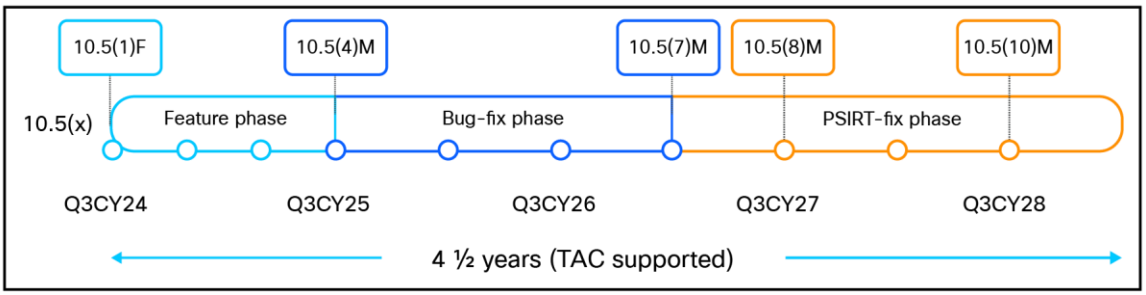


Figure 2.
Lifecycle of a Cisco NX-OS software release

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The lifecycle of a Cisco NX-OS release goes through three phases. These phases also align with various stages in the End-of-Life (EOL) process.

1. The lifecycle of a major release starts with a feature development phase. This phase starts with First Customer Shipment (FCS) or the first release, on the major train. It represents the date of the first shipment of a software release to customers. There are two additional releases over the subsequent 12 months on this major train, where new features and enhancements are introduced.
2. At 12 months post FCS, the major release then enters the maintenance phase. This maintenance phase extends over 18 months, with regular software releases, where any potential defects or security vulnerabilities (PSIRTs) are addressed. No new features or enhancements are introduced during this phase, to ensure software stability.
3. At 30 months post FCS, it enters the extended support phase, under which it receives only PSIRT fixes. This date aligns with the End of Software Maintenance (EoSWM) milestone in the EOL process. An upgrade to a subsequent major release will be required for receive defect fixes.
4. At 54 months post FCS, it reaches the End of Software Vulnerability/Security Support (EoVSS) milestone in the EOL process. This milestone also aligns with the LDoS. Beyond this date, no support will be provided for this major release.
5. For Nexus products running NX-OS software, customers will receive vulnerability (PSIRT) support through the hardware Last Day of Support (LDoS) milestone, on the final supported NX-OS release, Please see the hardware End of Life (EoL) announcement for specific milestones.

Upgrade and migration

Cisco NX-OS will continue to innovate across major releases while providing reliable and stable versions of NX-OS to our customers.

A new major release will be launched in Q3 of each calendar year, enabling customers to take advantage of new features and hardware in this new major release while allowing other customers to remain on the previous major and recommended release, for those who want the reassurance of regular releases focused solely on defect fixes.

The major release timelines and milestones are outlined below in Figure 3.

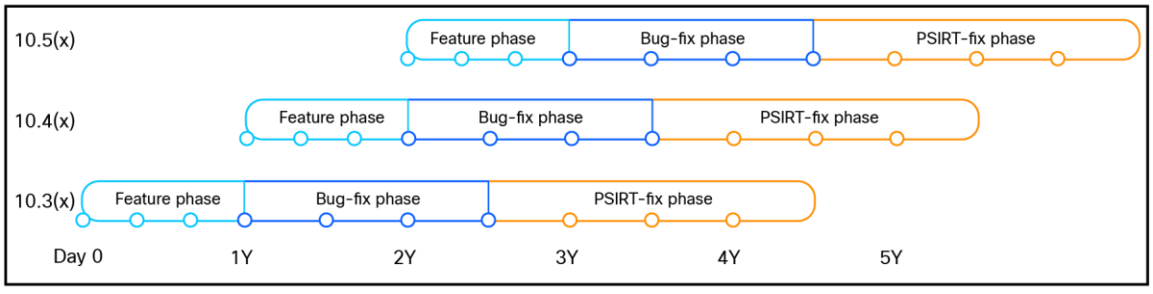


Figure 3.
NX-OS timelines across multiple releases

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NX-OS EoL Milestones

Table 2. NX-OS EoL Milestones

NX-OS Major Release	EoSWM Date	EoVSS/LDoS
10.2(x)	Nov 30 2023	Feb 28 2025/Aug 31 2025
10.3(x)	Nov 30 2024	Feb 28 2027*
10.4(x)	Feb 28 2026	Feb 29 2028
10.5(x)	Feb 28 2027	Feb 28 2029
10.6(x)	Feb 29 2028	Feb 28 2030

* 10.3.x release will be extended to support EX platforms till their Last Date of Support (LDOS). The extension on 10.3.x will only support EX platforms and not any other platforms that are supported on other 10.x.x releases.

Conclusion

The Cisco NX-OS cadence-based software release methodology preserves the integrity, stability, and quality of customers' mission-critical networks. It has the flexibility to respond to market needs for timely delivery of innovative features. The primary attributes of this release methodology include the following:

- Major releases introduce significant new features, functions, and platforms.
- Feature releases enhance NX-OS features and functions.
- Maintenance releases address product defects.

For more information

- Cisco N9000 Series Switches release notes.
- Cisco N9000 Series Switches minimum recommended Cisco NX-OS releases.
- Cisco N9000 Series Switches End-of-Life (EOL), End-of-Sale (EOS) notices.

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