Recommended Releases for Catalyst 9200/9300/9400/9500/9600 Platforms

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Introduction

This document describes how to find a stable software release for the Catalyst 9000 series Enterprise switching platforms.

Background Information

The information in this document is not meant to be exhaustive and is intended to serve as a general guide to you especially in cases of mass deployments/upgrades. Beyond these recommendations, if you are required to run a release to utilize newer software features or hardware, the recommendation is to select Extended Maintenance (EM) release trains wherever possible.

- For software recommendations on Cisco 9350/9610 series smart switches, please refer to this page.
- For software recommendations on Cisco Catalyst 1000/2960/3560/CDB/4500, Catalyst 3650/3850, and Catalyst 6500/6800 series switches, please refer to this page.
- For software recommendations on Cisco Catalyst 9800 Series Wireless Controllers, please refer to this page.
- For software recommendations on Software-Defined Access (SDA), please refer to the product compatibility matrix available on this page.

Cisco IOS XE Software Support

Each Cisco IOS® XE software release is classified as either a Standard-Support Release or an Extended-Support release.

Standard-Support Release - A sustaining support lifetime of 12 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds. Examples are Cisco IOS XE Software releases 17.13, 17.14, 17.16, and 17.17

Extended-Support Release - A sustaining support lifetime of 48 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds. Examples are Cisco IOS XE Software releases 17.12, 17.15, and 17.18

Note: Every subsequent third release (for example, Cisco IOS XE Software release 17.12, 17.15, and 17.18) is an Extended-Support release.

Given that Standard-Support Releases have much shorter support lifetimes whereas Extended-Support releases have longer support with more scheduled rebuilds/bug fixes, it is recommended that you stay on Extended-Support releases wherever possible.

Recommendations

The recommendations stated here are current as of **September 2026**, and are periodically updated when appropriate.

Product Family	**Product Details**	**Recommended Cisco IOS XE release**
Catalyst 9200	C9200CX(all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9200L (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9200 (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
Catalyst 9300	9300L (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9300X (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6

	C9300LM (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9300 (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
Catalyst 9400	C9400-SUP-1, C9400-SUP-1XL and C9400-SUP-1XL-Y	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9400X-SUP2(XL)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
Catalyst 9500	C9500 (all models)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9500X	17.18.4, 17.15.6
Catalyst 9600	C9600 (C9600-SUP-1)	17.18.4, 17.15.6
	C9600X-SUP2	17.18.4, 17.15.6



Note: * For newer hardware, please select the compatible software release listed on the Cisco Software Download page.

- The 9500X & 9600X Stackwise Virtual feature is available in 17.10.1 & later versions.
- For newer hardware, the preference can be to select an Extended-Support Release if available.

Software Recommendation FAQ

Question: What if I see a recommended version of code on this page, but it is not available to download for that specific switch model?

Answer:

- When Catalyst switches are launched, it is possible they do not support earlier versions of software that were released before the hardware was launched. Always confirm what software is actually available to download for **that specific platform**
- **Do not download a version of code from some other platform page and attempt to install on your device**. The software available on the specific product page takes precedent over this release recommendation page
- In a situation like this, use the feedback feature at the right hand side of the article to let us know! We

make every effort to keep this page up to date, but in some cases (such as a new platform release) this page recommendation can be slightly behind

Software Maintenance Upgrade (SMU) and Engineering Special (ES)

In certain cases, fix for critical bugs can be made available via Software Maintenance Upgrade (SMU) or Engineering Special (ES) builds.

- **Software Maintenance Upgrade (SMU)** is a package that can be installed on a system to provide a patch fix or a security resolution to a released image. A SMU package is provided on a per release and per component basis, and is specific to the platform. SMUs are supported only on Extended Maintenance Releases and for the full lifecycle of the parent software release.
- **Engineering Special (ES)** builds are meant to be deployed for a limited time frame and are not available on CCO (cisco.com). You are advised to move to the next maintenance rebuild as soon as it is available on Cisco.com. Engineering special builds are fully supported by the Cisco Customer Experience (CX) and the Business Unit (BU).

If you encounter any issues specific to your environment which is not already fixed in existing cisco.com releases, please contact Cisco Customer Experience (CX) to explore the possibility of a SMU or ES.

Related Information

Cisco Support and Downloads

Cisco IOS XE 17 - Release Notes - Cisco

End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Announcement for the Cisco IOS XE 17.3.x

End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Announcement for the Cisco IOS XE 17.6.x

End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Announcement for the Cisco IOS XE 17.9.x
End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Announcement for the Cisco IOS XE 17.12.x