Cisco IOS XE Software Support Timeline for Cisco IOS XE Software Release Starting with 16.x.x and 17.x.x and Viptela SDWAN Software Release with 19.x.x and 20.x.x

Contents

Overview

This product bulletin describes the support timeline and End-of-Life (EoL) guidelines for Cisco IOS XE Software. The guidelines are also applicable for SD-WAN releases which also follow the same timeline as IOS XE release.

Note: IOS-XE based SDWAN release started from 16.9 release timeline.

Cisco IOS XE/IOS XE SDWAN Software release model

The Cisco IOS XE 16.x.x and 17.x.x Software releases are time-based, each with a fixed release date. The schedule specifies 3 individual software releases per year at 4 month intervals.

Figure 1. **Cisco IOS XE Software Release Versioning**

Release Naming Convention

The Cisco IOS XE Release examples in this document follow the Release Naming Convention (Figure 1)

- **Release Name:** Identifies a series of annual releases. The name changes after each Extended Maintenance release –for example, Denali, Everest, Fuji, Amsterdam, Bengaluru

- **Major release number:** Indicates a series of software releases–for example, 16 for a release from a Denali, Everest, or Fuji series and 17 for a release from Amsterdam or Bengaluru series.

- **Minor Release version number:** Increases by an increment of 1 for each release that introduces significant changes to the software, support for new hardware platforms, enhancements and bug fixes for existing features and functions. For example, the March 2020 release is Release 17.2.1, the July 2020 release is Release 17.3.1, and the November 2020 release is Release 17.4.1. This number also indicates whether a release is a standard or extended maintenance release, based on the time-based release cadence for the software. Please refer to the table 1 for additional information.

- **Maintenance Release number:** Increases by an increment of 1 for each release that integrates fixes for critical issues that exist in an individual release and should be addressed on a scheduled rebuild. The numbering starts with 1. For example, Release 17.3.1 is the first release from the Amsterdam 17.3 release train, and the first rebuild of Release 17.3.1 is Release 17.3.2.

- **Optional special release identifier:** This is an optional identifier and, if present, indicates that this is a special release that provides support for a specific hardware platform or integrates fixes for a select set of critical defects. This is identified by lowercase, English alphabetical letter(s) for each special release. A special release typically provides support for a hardware platform that was not available when the applicable release version was released, or it integrates fixes for critical defects or security vulnerabilities that should be addressed on an accelerated schedule.

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 Details**

  ◦ A sustaining support lifetime of 12 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds.

- **Extended-Support release Details**

  ◦ A sustaining support lifetime of 36 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds.

Cisco makes no commitment to introduce software fixes to the affected IOS XE Software release after the final planned rebuild release.

Optional Rebuilds

Software problems found after the final scheduled rebuild release will be fixed in a subsequent major Cisco IOS XE Software release. An exception may arise to address mission-critical, high-severity software fixes and security vulnerabilities, possibly resulting in an additional rebuild release, after the final scheduled rebuild date (but before the End-of-Software Maintenance milestone), on an as-needed basis at the discretion of Cisco. No software fixes will be introduced to the affected Cisco IOS XE Software release after the End-of-Vulnerability and Security (EoVS) milestone.

After EoVS, Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) will provide customer support on the affected Cisco IOS XE Software release, within the guidelines set by existing Cisco's EoL policies, at the End-of-Software Maintenance milestone.

Cisco IOS XE Software Release Schedule

Cisco IOS XE Software Release 16.9 is the first Extended-Support release under the 16.x series to support 36 months and Cisco IOS XE Software Release 17.3 is the first Extended-Support release under the 17.x series. Every subsequent third release (for example, Cisco IOS XE Software releases 16.12, 17.6, 17.9, etc.) will also be an Extended Maintenance release. Table 1 below defines the support models used by each of the Cisco IOS XE Software releases.

Table 1.   Cisco IOS XE Software Release Support

Support Model	Cisco IOS XE Software Release
Standard-Support	16.1, 16.2, 16.4, 16.5, 16.7, etc. 17.1, 17.2, 17.4, 17.5, 17.7, etc.
Extended-Support	16.9, 16.12, 17.3, 17.6, 17.9, etc.

End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Guideline Definition

The Cisco IOS XE Software End-of-Sale (EoS) and End-of-Life (EoL) guidelines have preset time intervals for each of the EoL milestones. These time intervals are based on the support model of the affected Cisco IOS XE Software version. Table 2 below summarizes the End-of-Sale (EoS) and End-of-Life (EoL) milestones for Cisco IOS XE Software releases.

Table 2.   Cisco IOS XE Software End-of-Sale and End-of-Life Milestones by Release

Milestone	Definition	Timing
First Customer Shipment (FCS)	The date at which the affected Cisco IOS XE Software release is made available to Cisco customers.	Begins affected Cisco IOS XE Software release lifetime
End-of-Life (EoL) Announcement Date	The date the document that announces the end-of-sale and end-of-life of a product is distributed to the general public.	3 months after FCS for Standard Support releases
		12 months after FCS for Extended Support releases
End-of-Sale (EoS) Date	The last date to order the product through Cisco point-of-sale mechanisms. The product is no longer for sale after this date.	3 months from end-of-life announcement date for Standard Support releases
		6 months from end-of-life announcement date for Extended Support releases
End-of-Software Maintenance Release Date	The last date that Cisco engineering may release a software maintenance release or scheduled software remedy for critical bug fixes in an affected Cisco IOS XE Software release. After this date, maintenance rebuilds, and software-fix support will be provided only through subsequent major Cisco IOS XE Software releases.	6 months after end-of-sale date for Standard-Support releases
		12 months after end-of-sale date for Extended-Support releases
End-of-Vulnerability and Security Support (EoVS) Date	The last date that Cisco engineering may release a software maintenance release or scheduled software remedy for a security vulnerability concern.	6 months after end-of-sale date for Standard-Support releases, occurring on the same date as the End-of-Software Maintenance Release date
		18 months after end-of-sale date for Extended-Support releases

Milestone	Definition	Timing
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.	Five years after end-of-sale date for either Standard-Support or Extended-Support releases

Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release model

The Cisco Viptela Software 19.x.x and 20.x.x releases are time-based, each with a fixed release date. The schedule specifies 3 individual software releases per year at 4 month intervals. The Cisco Viptela Software release follows the same timeline as that of Cisco IOS XE release.

Figure 2.   **Cisco Viptela Software release versioning**
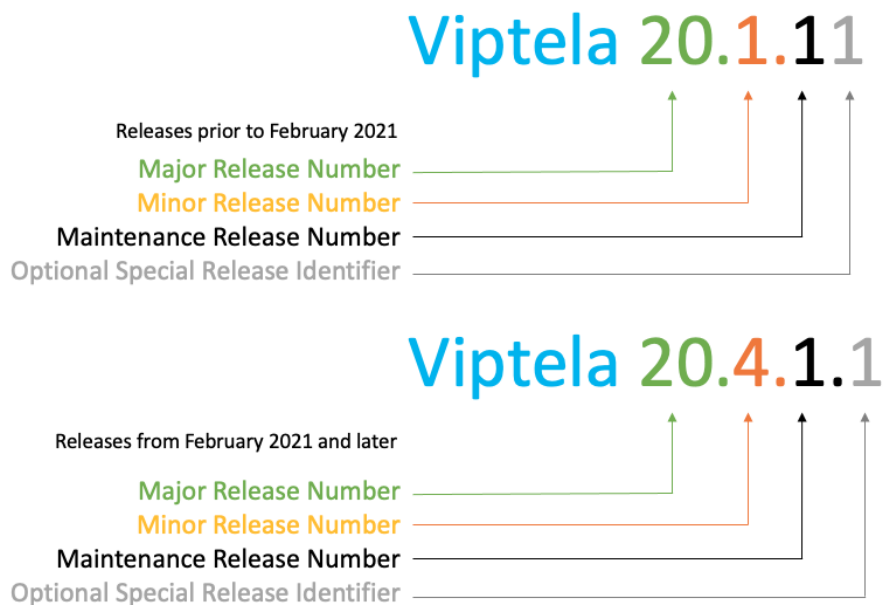
Release Naming Convention

The Cisco SD-WAN version examples in this document follow the Release Naming Convention (Figure 2)

- **Major release number:** Indicates the applicable software release family—for example, 19 or 20
- **Minor Release version number:** Increases by an increment of 1 for each release that introduces significant changes to the software, enhancements and bug fixes for existing features and functions. For example, the March 2020 release is Release 20.1.1, the July 2020 release is Release 20.3.1, and the November 2020 release is Release 20.4.1. This number also indicates whether a release is a standard or extended maintenance release, based on the time-based release cadence for the software. Note that a one-time change in the minor release numbering was done for the July 2020 release, where the Release version incremented from 20.1 to 20.3.

- **Maintenance Release number:** Increases by an increment of 1 for each release that integrates fixes for critical issues that exist in an individual release and should be addressed on a schedule rebuild. The numbering starts with 1. For example, Release 20.3.1 is the first release from the 20.3 train, and the first rebuild of Release 20.3.1 is Release 20.3.2.

- **Optional special release identifier:** Indicates whether the release is a special release that integrates fixes for a select set of critical defects and, if present, which special release it is. This value increases by an increment of 1. A special release typically integrates fixes for critical defects or security vulnerabilities that should be addressed on an accelerated schedule.

Note: For releases before February 2021, optional special releases utilize two versioning schemes.

- For vManage only optional rebuilds, the version uses four numbers separated by periods. The fourth number represents the optional rebuild.
  major.minor.maintenance[optional_rebuild] (example: 20.3.1.1 as an optional rebuild of 20.3.1)

- For all other optional rebuilds, the version uses three numbers separated by periods. The third number follows a decimal versioning scheme, with a progression such as 20.1.1, 20.1.11, 20.1.12, 20.1.2, and so on. major.minor.maintenance[optional_rebuild] (example: 20.1.11 as an optional rebuild of 20.1.1)

For releases after February 2021, all optional rebuilds will only use the four number versioning scheme.

- All optional rebuilds will use four numbers separated by periods. The fourth number represents the optional rebuild.
  major.minor.maintenance[optional_rebuild]

Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software Support

Each Cisco Viptela software release is classified as either a Standard-Support release or an Extended-Support release.

- **Standard-Support Release Details**

  ◦ A sustaining support lifetime of 12 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds.

- **Extended-Support release Details**

  ◦ A sustaining support lifetime of 36 months from First Customer Shipment (FCS) with scheduled rebuilds.

Cisco makes no commitment to introduce software fixes to the affected Software release after the final planned rebuild release.

Optional rebuilds

Software problems found after the final scheduled rebuild release will be fixed in a subsequent major Software release. An exception may arise to address mission-critical, high-severity software fixes and security vulnerabilities, possibly resulting in an additional rebuild release, after the final scheduled rebuild date (but before the End-of-Software Maintenance milestone), on an as-needed basis at the discretion of Cisco. No software fixes will be introduced to the affected Software release after the End-of-Vulnerability and Security (EoVS) milestone.

After EoVS, Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) will provide customer support on the affected Cisco Software release, within the guidelines set by existing Cisco's EoL policies, at the End-of-Software Maintenance milestone.

Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release schedule

Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software Release 19.2 is the first Extended-Support release under the 19.x series and Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software Release 20.3 is the first Extended-Support release under the 20.x series. Every subsequent third release (for example, Cisco Viptela Software release 20.6, 20.9 etc.) will also be an Extended Maintenance release. Table below defines the support models used by each of the Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software releases.

Table 3. Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release support

Support Model	Cisco Viptela Software Release
Standard-Support	19.1, 19.3 20.1, 20.4, 20.5, etc.
Extended-Support	19.2 20.3, 20.6, 20.9 etc.

End-of-Sale and End-of-Life guideline definition

The Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software End-of-Sale (EoS) and End-of-Life (EoL) guidelines have preset time intervals for each of the EoL milestones. These time intervals are based on the support model of the affected Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software version. Table 3 below summarizes the End-of-Sale (EoS) and End-of-Life (EoL) milestones.

Table 4. Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software End-of-Sale and End-of-Life milestones by release

Milestone	Definition	Timing
First Customer Shipment (FCS)	The date at which the affected Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release is made available to Cisco customers.	Begins affected Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release lifetime
End-of-Life (EoL) Announcement Date	The date the document that announces the end-of-sale and end-of-life of a product is distributed to the general public.	3 months after FCS for Standard Support releases
		12 months after FCS for Extended Support releases
End-of-Sale (EoS) Date	The last date to order the product through Cisco point of-sale mechanisms. The product is no longer for sale after this date.	3 months from end-of-life announcement date for Standard-Support releases
		6 months from end-of-life announcement date for Extended-Support releases

Milestone	Definition	Timing
End-of-Software Maintenance Release Date	The last date that Cisco engineering may release a software maintenance release or scheduled software remedy for critical bug fixes in an affected Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software release. After this date, maintenance rebuilds, and software-fix support will be provided only through subsequent major Cisco Viptela SDWAN Software releases.	6 months after end-of-sale date for Standard-Support releases 12 months after end-of-sale date for Extended-Support releases
End-of-Vulnerability and Security Support (EoVS) Date	The last date that Cisco engineering may release a software maintenance release or scheduled software remedy for a security vulnerability concern.	6 months after end-of-sale date for Standard-Support releases, occurring on the same date as the End-of-Software Maintenance Release date 18 months after end-of-sale date for Extended-Support releases
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.	Five years after end-of-sale date for either Standard-Support or Extended-Support releases

Upgrade Paths

Customers are encouraged to migrate to one of the Extended Maintenance releases when the release becomes available with appropriate features for the applications.

Customer Notifications

Cisco will issue individual EoL bulletins for each software release affected by an EoL plan. Standard Maintenance releases will have an EoS announcement published 3 months after FCS. Extended-Support releases will have an EoS announcement published 12 months after FCS.

Cisco Services

Cisco offers a wide range of services programs to support and 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 protect network investment, optimize network operations, and prepare the network for new applications to extend network intelligence and the power of business.