RED HAT® ENTERPRISE LINUX®

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LIFE CYCLE EXTENSION FAQs
for Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6

GENERAL PRODUCT QUESTIONS:
EXTENDED LIFE CYCLE SUPPORT FOR RED HAT ENTERPRISE LINUX 5 AND 6

Q: What are we announcing today?

A: Effective immediately, the production life cycle for Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6 is extended from 7 years to a full 10 years. See https://access.redhat.com/support/policy/updates/errata/ for details.

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: Since the introduction of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 in 2007, Red Hat has experienced great success in attracting and serving customers. Enterprises choose Red Hat as the strategic provider of their operating system infrastructure for many reasons including the support we deliver through the Red Hat Enterprise Linux life cycle, the overall product stability, and the broad ecosystem of supported hardware platforms and ISVs. Customers value the relationship they have with Red Hat, and they want to enjoy it for a longer period of time.

This move to a longer life cycle is in response to demand from end user customers and Red Hat's hardware OEM partners. For many customers, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 is the first Linux product that they have deployed in their infrastructure. The market adoption of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6 has accelerated over the past two years. For example, many of our customers have adopted Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 well into its previous 7 year life cycle (i.e., first deploying Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.4 in March 2010, or Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.6 in January 2011).

Upgrading to a new version of an operating system often requires detailed advance planning. Red Hat extends the Red Hat Enterprise Linux life cycle well ahead of the end-of-life of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6 to enable customers to stay on their current version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux for longer if they choose.

We have decided to extend the Red Hat Enterprise Linux life cycle by three additional years of production support to give our customers the best experience possible and enable them to enjoy additional value of their recent deployment. During this extended life cycle, customers benefit from continued enhancements as well as stability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux through ABI and API compatibility. They can also realize the value from support of the latest hardware platforms. By extending the lifetime of existing deployments, customers can plan their upgrades to newer releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux with greater flexibility.

Q: How does this impact customers?

A: This is a very positive outcome for customers. It extends the value they receive from Red Hat, and provides them with additional choices and overall flexibility.

Customers with existing Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 deployments can now confidently keep their existing hardware and software investments intact until March 2017.

Customers who prefer to deploy the most current version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux and plan to run hardware and software already certified for use with Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6 should choose this version over Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 to take full advantage of its enhanced features and performance improvements. With the 10-year life cycle extension, customers can use Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6 until November 2020.

Q: Red Hat Enterprise Linux already has a 10-year life cycle, so how is this any different?

A: The former 10-year life cycle for Red Hat Enterprise Linux was comprised of 7 years of a regular life cycle, and three years of an extended life cycle. For Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6, we are announcing an extension of the regular life cycle to 10 years.

Q: Will the Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4 life cycle also extend to 10 years?

A: We already have a 10-year life cycle available for Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4. For customers who require a 10-year life cycle to include software maintenance, we recommend the Extended Life Cycle Support (ELS) Add-On which extends the life cycle until February 28, 2015. The extension of the life cycle of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6 to 10 years focuses on the early-and-mid phases of their life cycles with additional hardware support and new software functionality provided during these phases.

Note that Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4, however, is already close to the end of its life cycle with an End-of-Life (EOL) date of February 29, 2012.

For more information about Extended Life Cycle Support, visit: http://www.redhat.com/rhel/add-ons/els.html
Also, please refer to https://access.redhat.com/support/policy/updates/errata/ for details.

Q: What impact does the life cycle extension have on the Extended Update Support (EUS) Add-On?

A: Other than extending the coverage dates for RHEL 5.6 EUS and 5.9 EUS, the life cycle extension doesn't affect the Extended Update Support (EUS) Add-On. In general, Extended Update Support extends the support period of a Red Hat Enterprise Linux minor release for 24 months and delivers overlapping release support to give enterprise customers more flexibility. Subscribers of EUS can choose when they wish to adopt enhancements while being provided with critical impact security fixes and selected urgent priority defect fixes during the 24 month extension period. EUS is offered today on select minor releases of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5, specifically Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.6, and all minor releases for Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6 in production phase 1 except for the last minor release where the life cycle transitions to production phase 2.

Note: EUS is typically offered up to the two-year anniversary of the minor release date in Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.

Please refer to https://access.redhat.com/support/policy/updates/errata/ for details.
EUS: http://www.redhat.com/rhel/add-ons/eus.html

Q: How does the life cycle extension impact the Extended Updated Support (EUS) releases/schedules in Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6?

A: The life span of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.6 EUS will be extended to provide coverage until six months after the availability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.9 as a result of this life cycle extension. The original plan was to provide service until six months after the availability of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.8. In addition, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.9 will have an EUS stream to provide customers adequate coverage until the production 3 phase of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5. Currently, there aren't any changes to the EUS plans for Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.

Q: Are the Add-Ons (High Availability, Resilient Storage, Network Load Balancer, Scalable File System, High Performance Network, Smart Management) affected by this change?

A: Yes. The Add-Ons are also aligned with the 10-year life cycle. High Availability Add-On (or Red Hat Cluster Suite), Scalable File System Add-On (or XFS), Load Balancer Add-On, and Resilient Storage Add-On (or GFS) will be supported as part of the 10-year life cycle of Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5. http://www.redhat.com/rhel/add-ons/

Q: Does this life cycle change impact customers who receive support directly from a hardware OEM?

A: There is no change. Customers will continue to purchase and receive support in the same way.

Q: For how long is Red Hat Enterprise Linux support for new hardware added within the 10-year life cycle?

A: Hardware enablement will continue through the production phases 1 and 2 of the Red Hat Enterprise Linux life cycle. As a result, upcoming Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 minor releases will enable new hardware. Moving forward, the determination of specifically which hardware is enabled is based on a technical assessment of what can be responsibly added to the release while preserving the highest levels of stability. As a result, in some cases only Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6 will deliver the latest hardware platform support with comprehensive support for all new features.

See https://access.redhat.com/support/policy/updates/errata/ for details.

Q: Are there life cycle changes to Red Hat Enterprise Linux for Itanium, IBM System z, IBM POWER, HPC, and SAP Business Applications?

A: All variants and architectures supported by Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5 and 6 will be available now with a 10-year life cycle.

See http://www.redhat.com/rhel/server/.

RESOURCES

Key resource sites included in this FAQ:

- Public — Red Hat Errata
- Public — Red Hat Public Life Cycle Add-Ons
- Public — Extended Life Cycle Support Overview
- Public — Extended Update Support Overview
- Public — Red Hat Enterprise Server Variants Availability

ABOUT RED HAT

Red Hat was founded in 1993 and is headquartered in Raleigh, NC. Today, with more than 60 offices around the world, Red Hat is the largest publicly traded technology company fully committed to open source. That commitment has paid off over time, for us and our customers, proving the value of open source software and establishing a viable business model built around the open source way.

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NORTH AMERICA
1-888-REDHAT1
www.redhat.com

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA
00800 7334 2835
www.europe.redhat.com
europe@redhat.com

ASIA PACIFIC
+65 6490 4200
www.apac.redhat.com
apac@redhat.com

LATIN AMERICA
+54 11 4329 7300
www.latam.redhat.com
info-latam@redhat.com