Release Recommendation Guide For NetApp ONTAP Data Management Software

Use the following as a guide to determine when you need to upgrade from your current version of ONTAP Data Management Software, along with the benefits delivered by each major release.

RC

GA 0

1

2

EOES 3

4

EOVS 5

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7

8

RC: Release Candidate; fully tested releases suitable for exploring or certifying new features / bug fixes.

GA: General Availability; designation given to the RC to indicate sufficient maturation for wider deployment.

RR: Recommended Release; release meeting rigorous quality and field metrics criteria. Suitable for widescale deployment.

Full Support: Includes technical support, root cause analysis, online documentation, online software, vulnerability assessment, and service updates (P-releases).

GA 0 ——1 year——> 1

- Suitable for early deployment
- Recommended period to deploy release
- Period new deployments discouraged
- Transition period to newer major release
- Limited Support (2 years)
- Self-Service Support (3 years)
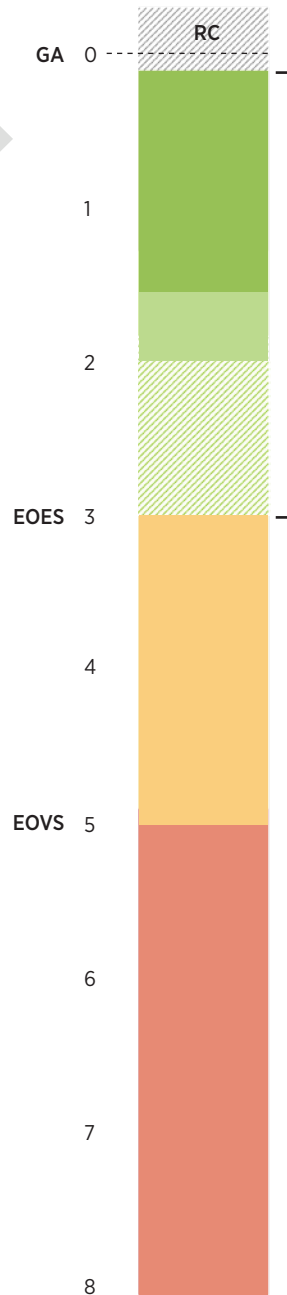
RC, 2-3 months: Period for early deployment. Suitable for new platform / feature support, interoperability requirements, or qualification testing.

FULL SUPPORT - 3 YEARS

- Run RR release up to 2 years post GA. Use final 1 year within Full Support to plan and transition to a newer major release.
- Apply service updates to latest RR every 3-6 months. Critical updates warrant quicker upgrade.

Current Recommended Release: 9.7

- Plan for your upgrade to the next major release within 1-year of reaching EOES
- Transition to next Major Release (last 1 year)

DO NOT RUN OR DEPLOY POST FULL SUPPORT

LIMITED SUPPORT - 2 YEARS

EOES: End of Engineering Support; date marking end of Full Support and beginning of Limited Support.

- **Limited Support**: Includes technical support, root cause analysis, online documentation, and online software. Does not include service updates (P-releases).

SELF-SERVICE SUPPORT - 3 YEARS

EOVS: End of Version Support; date marking the end of limited support and transition to Self-Service Support.

- **Self-Service Support**: Online documentation only

NetApp

ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
9.7*	Enhanced simplicity	Even simpler management with ONTAP System Manager and Active IQ® Unified Manager.	Simplified user experience.
	Increased security	Data-at-rest encryption enabled by default.	At-rest data is encrypted by default; Active IQ Security Dashboard provides detailed visibility for all clusters.
	Expanded capabilities and use cases	FabricPool mirror. Mirror the same data to multiple vendors for an additional level of resiliency. More opportunities for scale-out NAS: • FlexGroup and FlexCache • Additional cloud tiers – Google and Alibaba. Extend data protection and business continuity: • Deploy SnapMirror Synchronous with NVMe/FC.	Encrypt your at-rest data on any drives, one volume at a time. Also introduces onboard key management for a self-contained encryption solution for data at rest.
9.6†	Simplicity and productivity	• New ONTAP System Manager based on REST APIs. • Simpler FlexGroup volume management. • Auto-discovery of nodes during cluster setup.	Improved user experience delivered by REST APIs, simplified setup; auto-discover nodes during cluster setup.

*For the current release recommendation for this version, click here.

ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
	Data tiering	FabricPool enhancements: • Automatic inactive data reporting turned on by default. • Additional cloud tiers – Google and Alibaba.	Identify cold data nondisruptively and determine the benefits of tiering with FabricPool before enabling it. Adds even more public cloud options for FabricPool.
	QoS	Adaptive QoS support for NVMe/FC (maximums) and ONTAP Select (minimums).	AQoS supports NVMe/FC.
	More use cases	• More host OS support with NVMe/FC. • FlexGroup on MetroCluster and SQL Server over SMB CA. • Higher-performance ONTAP Select with Premium XL license.	Support for new use cases including expanded NVMe/FC ecosystem, FlexCache with Cloud Volumes ONTAP, and FlexGroup on MetroCluster, to name a few.
	FlexCache to Cloud	FlexCache with Cloud Volumes ONTAP.	Extends FlexCache to support multiple public clouds, allowing "cloud bursting" of workloads from on premises to public cloud.
	Security	• Over-the-wire encryption with SnapMirror and FlexCache. • Per tenant/SVM encryption key management. • Aggregate-level encryption enables cross-volume deduplication.	Enhanced security for your valuable data with encryption in transit for replication and caching, plus increased granularity for key management and more options for balancing storage efficiency with granular security.

ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
9.5*	Data protection	• SnapMirror Synchronous with more protocols FlexGroup on MetroCluster and SQL Server over SMB CA. • Entry AFF and FAS MCC IP; shared intersite networking	Additional opportunities to reduce cost and increase deployment options for business-critical availability.
	FlexCache®	Accelerates read access by caching data in sparsely populated volumes within the same cluster or on a different remote cluster.	Projects your data seamlessly across sites with a thin cache on any AFF, FAS, or ONTAP Select system for NFS access.
	SnapMirror Synchronous	Volume granular, synchronous data replication that can ensure zero RPO and very low RTO.	Synchronous data replication to ensure zero RPO and very low RTO.
	MetroCluster IP	Up to 700km; added support for midrange AFF A300 and FAS8200 systems.	Increased range for MetroCluster configurations, up to 700km.
	Expanded FabricPool capabilities	FlexGroup support; cloud encryption; more object store options.	Enhanced FabricPool capabilities and use cases.
	NVMe/FC with storage path failover	Introduces multipath I/O for NVMe/FC namespaces with Alternate Namespace Access, providing storage HA for application availability.	Broader ecosystem and support for high-availability enterprise applications over NVMe/FC.

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ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
	SnapLock® Compliance replication	SnapLock support with ONTAP Select. Use SnapLock to protect against ransomware and rogue admins.	Compliance support on software-defined ONTAP Select.
	Storage efficiency: Adaptive compression	15% to 20% more space savings with some workloads by using larger compression groups.	Enhanced storage efficiency delivers 15% to 20% more space savings.
9.4*	Intelligent cloud services	• Most cloud-connected all-flash infrastructures. • FabricPool enhancements tier cold data and support Azure as a target.	Reduce TCO by tiering cold data from the AFF system to a lower-cost tier. Enhances hybrid multicloud options with the addition of Microsoft Azure to previous StorageGRID or AWS options.
	Fastest all-flash performance with NVMe over Fabrics	NVMe-oF delivers the next-generation high-performance storage infrastructure..	Industry-first enterprise end-to-end NVMe/FC.
	Most efficient and secure enterprise storage	• Double the storage density and half the footprint with industry-first support for 30TB SSDs. • Support for granular secure purge and new secure boot capabilities.	Increased ability to reduce storage footprint and maximize density. Improved security with trusted boot and the ability to purge data from unanticipated data spills.

*EOVS

ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
9.3*	Adaptive QoS	• **Adaptive QoS (AQoS)**. Enables IOPs/volume to increase or decrease automatically based on volume capacity changes. • Choose from three policies (Extreme, Performance, or Value) to ensure the most efficient use of storage resources.	Ensure application performance and simplify performance management.
	Over 40% higher performance	ONTAP optimizations and path parallelization deliver more IOPS and lower latency.	Over 40% improvement in performance – more IOPS and reduced latency.
	30% higher storage efficiency	Optimized deduplication further increases space savings.	Optimized deduplication for 30% higher storage efficiency.
	Stronger security	• Multifactor authentication, NVE integration with external key managers. • Compliance policies for legal holds and event-based retention.	Added layer of security with multifactor authentication.
	Improved TCO for continuous availability	**MetroCluster™ over IP** leverages IP for back-end connectivity.	Savings in capex and opex, plus high availability and disaster recovery for any single- or multiple--point failure with single-command recovery over IP infrastructure.

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ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
	SnapMirror® with SolidFire®	Enables the use of SnapMirror to mirror baseline and incremental data from SolidFire to ONTAP.	Enable more private cloud use cases with SolidFire protected by ONTAP.
9.2*	Greater storage efficiency	• Inline aggregate deduplication enables improved $/GB and TCO for AFF systems. • ADP root-data partitioning support on FAS8xxx and FAS9xxx systems with HDDs.	Improved $/GB and TCO for AFF systems by increasing usable storage space out of the same raw storage.
	Automated data tiering to the cloud	**FabricPool**. A unique approach with block-level tiering of: • Disaster recovery and data backup from secondary AFF tier. • Snapshot™ data from primary AFF tier to an object-based capacity tier on premises (NetApp StorageGRID®) or off premises (AWS S3). Data is protected, easily accessed, and secured both at rest and over the wire. Now enables use of tiering cold data from the active file system data and other object storage.	Reduce TCO by tiering Snapshot copies and replicas from the AFF system to a lower-cost tier. Enable hybrid cloud adoption by moving this data automatically to private (NetApp StorageGRID) or public (AWS S3) cloud.
	Performance controls for shared environments	QoS policy expanded to include minimum threshold for AFF SAN deployments, in addition to already available QoS max limits.	Enable performance guarantees for business-critical workloads in a shared storage environment.

*EOVS

ONTAP VERSION UPGRADE	FEATURE	DESCRIPTION	BENEFIT TO THE CUSTOMER
9.1*	Simplicity and efficiency	Inline data compaction, headroom, support for 15TB SSDs.	Increase the scalability and efficiency of the storage system.
	Protection and availability	NetApp® ONTAP® incorporates RAID-TEC™ data protection technology for additional protection against drive failures.	Enhanced data protection against multiple simultaneous drive failures, especially valuable when deploying large-capacity drives.
	Security and compliance	**NetApp Volume Encryption NVE**. This solution uniquely encrypts each volume of data without the use of specialized disks; you can now do both hardware- and software-based encryption. Onboard key management.	Encrypt your at-rest data on any drives, one volume at a time. Also introduces onboard key management for a self-contained encryption solution for data at rest.
	Flexibility and performance	**FlexGroup**. Supports compute-intensive workloads such as for AI, EDA, software builds, media, and HIPAA.	Supports massively scalable unstructured data workloads, with 20+ PB in a single directory balanced across an entire cluster.

*EOVS