



Q & A

SP Base /SP Base Onsite

General

Q. What is Cisco® SP Base® support?

A. As part of Cisco Technical Support Services, the Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs offer leading-edge, customer solution services that provide enhancement and maintenance support resources during the operational lifetime of a Cisco network.

Q. What is included with Cisco SP Base support?

A. Cisco SP Base support includes:

- Software support on the licensed operating system software, such as Cisco IOS® Software or Cisco Catalyst® OS, for covered Cisco products, including maintenance, minor, and major releases
- Access to the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Registered access to Cisco.com – Easy access to online technical information and service request management
- Advance replacement of hardware parts, depending on the customer need and the coverage selected:
 - 24 x 7 x 2 – Advanced replacement parts, with or without a field engineer, are delivered within two hours of determining that part replacement is required during a standard work week (24 hours per day, 7 days per week)
 - 24 x 7 x 4 – Advanced replacement parts, with or without a field engineer, are delivered within four hours of determining that part replacement is required during a standard work week (24 hours per day, 7 days per week)
 - 8 x 5 x 4 – Advanced replacement parts, with or without a field engineer, are delivered within four hours of determining that part replacement is required during a standard work week (8 hours per day, 5 days per week)
 - Next Business Day (NBD) – Advanced replacement parts, with or without a field engineer, are delivered the next business day between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (provided the request is received before 3 p.m. local depot time)

Q. Why should a customer buy Cisco SP Base support or Cisco SP Base Onsite support?

A. By covering networking devices with a Cisco SP Base or Cisco SP Base Onsite contract, a customer can:

- Maximize network availability, reliability, and stability
- Reduce the cost of network ownership by using Cisco expertise, knowledge, and availability
- Increase return on investment (ROI) by having access to Cisco operating system software enhancements
- Expedite time-to-repair with the right parts at the right time to resolve issues quickly
- Better manage scarce internal expert resources at all locations
- Improve productivity and revenue per employee with access to tools and technical support documentation that can increase self-sufficiency and technical knowledge

Q. Are Cisco SP Base support and Cisco SP Base Onsite support just break/fix insurance?

A. A. The Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs offer customers much more than remedies for when something goes wrong. Only a small portion of service requests (less than five percent) coming into the Cisco TAC deal with failures and defects. Most service requests help customers handle complex network operation and management issues such as:

- Advanced software configuration
- Interoperability and upgrade questions
- Hardware and software information

In addition, the Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs help customers protect their network investments and minimize risks by:

- Keeping the customer's networking technology up-to-date with the latest software features and system improvements
- Supplementing the customer's network support organization to ensure the availability of the knowledge and skills necessary to address rapidly changing technologies
- Gaining access to knowledgeable resources and tools for rapid resolution of issues
- Eliminating the challenges of carrying replacement hardware in inventory and delivering them to remote sites by making replacement parts available when needed
- Providing trained field engineering resources to perform replacement services when and where needed

Q. What additional features are available under Cisco SP Base Onsite?

A. Cisco SP Base Onsite includes the same elements as Cisco SP Base support, with the addition of an onsite technician for parts replacement and installation. The same delivery timeframes apply.

Q. How should a user choose between the Cisco SP Base and Cisco SP Base Onsite programs?

A. Cisco SP Base Onsite support is the appropriate choice:

- When customers do not have the appropriate expert resources at a given site, such as a remote site.
- When trained personnel are not readily available to react quickly to a network issue. The Cisco SP Base Onsite program can help ensure rapid replacement of hardware.

Q. How does Cisco.com help customers support their networks?

A. This award-winning, industry-leading online support and information system includes interactive consulting tools, a comprehensive database, and knowledge transfer resources. Cisco.com is your access to the robust set of Cisco technical tools and product information, which increases self-sufficiency and builds in-house expertise for improved productivity.

Online troubleshooting tools and support resources include:

- **Software Advisor** – Features information and compatibility assistance
- **TAC Case Collection** – Identifies and troubleshoots common problems
- **My Tech Support** – Personalized Webpage with customized links
- **Output Interpreter** – Provides problem resolution recommendations
- **Peer-to-peer online forums** – Sharing with others in your industry
- **Technical Support Newsletter** – Keeps you up-to-date and informed

These and many other help tools and resources are available on the Technical Support and Document Website at:

<http://www.cisco.com/techsupport>.

TSS brochure, resource guide, and Web Tools and Resources presentation are available at: <http://www.cisco.com/go/supportservices>.

Cisco Warranty vs. Cisco Service Contract

Q. What is a Cisco warranty?

A. Warranties are short-term limited liability for Cisco to repair and/or replace defects in Cisco products. They are limited in both the duration and the support they offer and warranties do not include Cisco TAC support, software updates, or any of the additional benefits obtained under a support service contract. It is the responsibility of Cisco to repair and/or replace the Cisco product within the timeframe identified in the warranty card that accompanied the originally purchased Cisco product. Elements covered under a Cisco warranty are:

- **Hardware:** This guarantees that the piece of hardware will be free of defects in material and workmanship under normal use or it will be replaced by Cisco.
- **Software:** This guarantees that the physical media is free from defects or it will be replaced by Cisco. Also, the warranty guarantees that the software generally conforms to the published specifications for the product. The warranty is explicitly “as is” and no new releases are included.

Q. If a product is already covered under the standard Cisco warranty, why should a customer buy Cisco SP Base services during the warranty duration?

A. The Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs provide more robust levels of support than that available under a Cisco warranty. For most products, Cisco warranties are limited in duration (detailed specifically by product type), whereas Cisco SP Base programs can be purchased to deliver support and maintenance for at least five years after first product shipment. Services available under a Cisco SP Base service contract that are not covered under a warranty are:

- Rapid replacement of hardware in NBD, four-hour, or two-hour dispatch options (restrictions apply; see Cisco SP Base data sheet for additional information)
- Continuous technical support through Cisco TAC
- Latest software updates
- Registered access to Cisco.com

Table 1. Cisco SP Base vs. Warranty

| | SP Base | 90-Day/1-Year Limited HW | Limited Lifetime Hardware |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Hardware Coverage Duration | Renewable contracts | 90 Days/1 Year | Lifetime (fans and power supplies limited to five years) |
| Application Software Coverage Duration | No | 90 Days | No |
| Technical Support from TAC | Yes | No | No |
| Maintenance Releases for OS | Yes | 90 Days | 90 Days |
| Minor and Major Releases for OS | Yes | No | No |
| Software Application Maintenance and Minor Releases | No | No | No |
| Software Application Major Releases | No | No | No |
| Signature File Updates | No | No | No |

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| | SP Base | 90-Day/1-Year Limited HW | Limited Lifetime Hardware |
|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Registered Access to Cisco.com for Knowledge and Online Tools | Yes | No | No |
| Parts Replacement | Standard: Next Business Day Delivery Options: 2 hr, 4 hr onsite | RTF (10 Days) | RTF (10 Days) |
| Equipment Covered | All | All | All |

Operating System Software Support

Q. Are Cisco software updates included with the Cisco SP Base contract?

A. Yes. For Cisco operating systems such as Cisco IOS Software and Cisco Catalyst OS, all software updates for licensed feature sets for the customer’s covered platform are part of the basic program. Software updates include bug fixes and maintenance, minor, and major releases within a feature set. There is no additional charge for updates as long as the product remains under Cisco SP Base coverage.

- Major Release (Version or Main Line) – Consolidates previous bug fixes, maintenance and previous early deployment releases, and/or new capabilities into a single release. For example: 12.0 or 12.0M.
- Minor Release – Internal to Cisco for Cisco IOS Software; synonymous with a major release. For example: 12.3 or 12.3M.
- Maintenance Release – Includes bug fixes. For example: 12.2(16), 12.2(16a), 12.2.16, or 12.2.16a. Also includes new point features or early deployment release. For example: 12.2(8)T, 12.2.(8)T1, 12.2.8T, or 12.2.8T1.

Q. Other vendors say they offer software upgrades, why does Cisco only offers software “updates” with the Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs?

A. It is really just a difference in terminology. Cisco has chosen to attribute the term “upgrade” to when a customer moves from one software feature set to another. “Major releases” within a software feature set is the Cisco equivalent to what other vendors call software upgrades (an upgrade from 2.X to 3.X, for example).

Q. What, then, is a feature set upgrade? Is it included in the Cisco SP Base and SP Base Onsite programs?

A. A feature set upgrade is a separately licensed and priced software release that contains enhanced configurations and/or features that provide additional capabilities. For example, to upgrade from the IP to IP/IPX feature set or IP-Base to IP-Advance security (new feature sets for Cisco 17000, 2600, and 3700 systems), customers must purchase the upgrade. However, these feature set upgrades are not available as part of a Cisco SP Base or SP Base Onsite program.

Q. What software is my customer entitled to with Cisco SP Base?

A. Customers are entitled to all operating system software updates within their licensed feature sets for their covered devices. This includes operating system bug fixes and maintenance, minor, and major releases.

Q. Is support for Cisco applications software products, such as security, IP telephony, and network management, included in the Cisco SP Base or SP Base Onsite programs?

A. No. Cisco offers Software Application Support services that provide support for Cisco application software products such as security, IP telephony, and network management. There are two programs available – Software Application Support (SAS) and Software Application Support plus Upgrades (SASU). Cisco SAS includes 24-hour Cisco TAC support, registered access to Cisco.com, and application software updates (maintenance and minor releases). Cisco SASU includes all of the components of Cisco SAS, plus access to major application software releases.

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Q. How are users notified of new software releases if they have a Cisco SP Base contract?

A. New releases are announced via product bulletins posted on Cisco.com and in the Technical Support Newsletter that users can sign up for at: <http://www.cisco.com/techsupport>.

Q. How does a customer obtain software updates included with Cisco SP Base support?

A. Cisco IOS Software and Cisco Catalyst OS updates are available for download via the Cisco.com Software Center at: <http://www.cisco.com/software>.

Q. Can a customer purchase Cisco SP Base services for a Cisco device that has not been covered previously by a Cisco service contract?

A. Yes, but the customer must be using the current version of software. If the software is one or more releases old, the company must first purchase the current release before it can purchase Cisco SP Base services for each device. Additionally, the product must be inspected by Cisco to ensure that all components and software are approved.

Q. Do the Cisco SP Base or SP Base Onsite programs include entitlement to remote or onsite software upgrade installation services?

A. No. Cisco SP Base services do not include software installation. The customer is responsible for software installation or may purchase these services from a Cisco channel partner. However, the services will allow the company to call the Cisco TAC for help in this process.

Cisco Technical Assistance Center Support

Q. What makes Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) different from other support centers?

A. The Cisco TAC provides award-winning, worldwide support for Cisco products via the Web, e-mail, or telephone, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Cisco TAC provides service contract holders with:

- Expert assistance – to complement your in-house resources, Cisco TAC employs a highly skilled staff that offers you years of networking experience – including many customer support engineers with networking and CCIE® certifications, as well as research and development engineers. Cisco engineers hold more than 800 U.S.-issued patents, are often asked to speak at technical conferences, and have authored numerous industry white papers and books.
- Faster resolution – Cisco TAC provides constant measurement of customer satisfaction and time-to-resolution tracking.
- High level of knowledge – Cisco TAC offers depth and breadth of expertise with Cisco devices and operating system software, as well as a broad range of networking environments (such as voice, video, and data communications) and technologies (such as access dial, Cisco IP Telephony, LAN Switching, optical networking, security, content delivery networks [CDNs], storage area networks [SANs], IP routing, and wireless). Cisco TAC engineers have a minimum of five years industry experience and Cisco provides continuous training to ensure our technical staff stays current with leading-edge technologies.
- Support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in multiple languages – via e-mail or telephone, Cisco TAC is there when you need it. In addition, to support the TAC, Cisco uses a powerful virtual lab, equipped with all Cisco devices and Cisco OS Software versions, as an invaluable engineering resource and knowledge base for training, product information, and testing of network problems.

Q. Can I get support from the Cisco TAC if I do not have a service contract?

A. Yes. Cisco TAC will help you if you do not have a Cisco service contract, but you will be requested to pay a “per-incident fee” or to purchase a service contract.

Q. How does Cisco TAC prioritize support service requests?

A. Cisco processes allow for customers to designate the severity of every service request reported. To ensure that all problems are reported in a standard format, Cisco has established the following problem severity definitions:

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- *Severity 1* – When an existing network is down or there is a critical impact to the customer’s business operations. Cisco and the customer will commit necessary resources around the clock to resolve the situation.
- *Severity 2* – When the operation of an existing network is severely degraded, or significant aspects of the customer’s business operation are being negatively impacted by unacceptable network performance. Cisco and the customer will commit full-time resources during normal business hours to resolve the situation.
- *Severity 3* – When the operational performance of the network is impaired while most business operations remain functional. Cisco and the customer are willing to commit resources during normal business hours to restore service to satisfactory levels.
- *Severity 4* – When a customer requires information or assistance on Cisco product capabilities, installation, or configuration, and there is little or no impact to the customer’s business operation. Cisco and the customer are willing to provide resources during normal business hours to provide information or assistance as requested.

Q. I understand that Cisco TAC out-tasks services under a SP Base Support contract. How will this affect the handling of my network issues?

A. Cisco TAC relies on a network of partners and third-party vendors to provide basic services on our behalf. This is a common practice in the industry. Working under the supervision of Cisco TAC management, these engineers address only simple support scenarios that have well-established fixes such as basic hardware replacement and routine technical questions. For nonroutine or more complex issues, the Cisco TAC employs a highly skilled staff that offers years of networking experience. In addition, a sophisticated call routing system allows the Cisco TAC to promptly route your questions to the correct technology expert who can quickly address the problem at hand.

Advance Replacement

Q. Are parts always delivered the Next Business Day if the user has a contract with that option?

A. Parts are delivered the Next Business Day during regular business hours, where available. If Next Business Day service is not available, Cisco offers Same Day Ship (SDS) service, where the parts are shipped from the Depot the same day. However, for receiving locations outside the U.S., the exact delivery date is subject to issues outside of Cisco control, such as Customs and Duty for the receiving country. Contact your Cisco representative to verify what level of service is available in your area.

Process and Responsibilities

Q. Who is responsible for returning defective parts that have been replaced by one of the hardware replacement programs?

A. The Cisco SP Base customer is responsible for obtaining a return-materials-authorization (RMA) number to return the product. Cisco will provide prepaid airbills for the shipment of RMA’d equipment located in the U.S. and Canada. Policies outside the U.S. and Canada may vary by region. Contact your local Cisco representative for details on the policy in your region.

Q. What are the dispatch guidelines for delivery of parts within four hours?

A. The four-hour measurement starts from the time the Cisco TAC determines that a part should be replaced and dispatches a part or a field engineer.

Q. Can a company get support from the Cisco TAC if it doesn’t have a service contract?

A. Yes. The Cisco TAC will help companies that do not have a Cisco service contract, but there will be a per-incident fee, or the company may be asked to purchase a service contract.

Availability

Q. Where is Cisco SP Base support available?

A. Cisco SP Base support is available throughout the world with some service level exceptions in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Cisco is continually expanding its service areas. In addition, the Cisco Service Availability Matrix (SAM) tool can be used to verify the available product services worldwide. This tool includes information for Cisco SP Base support, Cisco SP Base, and the Cisco SmartSpares programs. Information is available at: <http://tools.cisco.com/apic/sam/search.do>.

Q. Where can I find more information about Cisco Services?

A. More information about Cisco Services is available at: <http://www.cisco.com/go/supportservices>. (Partners log in to see more options.)

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