

A comprehensive support and lifecycle program for ZPE Systems hardware and software.

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## 1. Introduction

The Nodegrid OS Support Life Cycle Policy is designed to provide clear and comprehensive information regarding the support phases of our software. This document aims to assist you in planning and managing your IT infrastructure effectively by outlining the various stages of support, including new features, security updates, and end-of-life policies.

Our objective is to ensure that you have all the necessary information to maintain the smooth and secure operation of your systems. We are committed to supporting you throughout the entire life cycle of our Nodegrid OS.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all major software releases of ZPE Systems' Nodegrid operating system and firmware across supported hardware platforms. It is intended for use by administrators, architects, and IT professionals responsible for managing ZPE Systems deployments.

Customers with active support contracts are guaranteed access to at least one actively supported software version throughout the expected hardware life cycle, typically five years. While the originally shipped software version may transition through the support phases or reach end-of-support, customers will be eligible to upgrade to a currently supported version. This ensures continued access to security updates, bug fixes, and operational stability, aligned with the support phase applicable to the software version in use.

## 3. Nodegrid OS Support Life Cycle Overview

At ZPE Systems, we follow a structured software release life cycle to ensure a predictable and secure support experience for our customers. Each major software version progresses through three defined support phases over a five-year period:

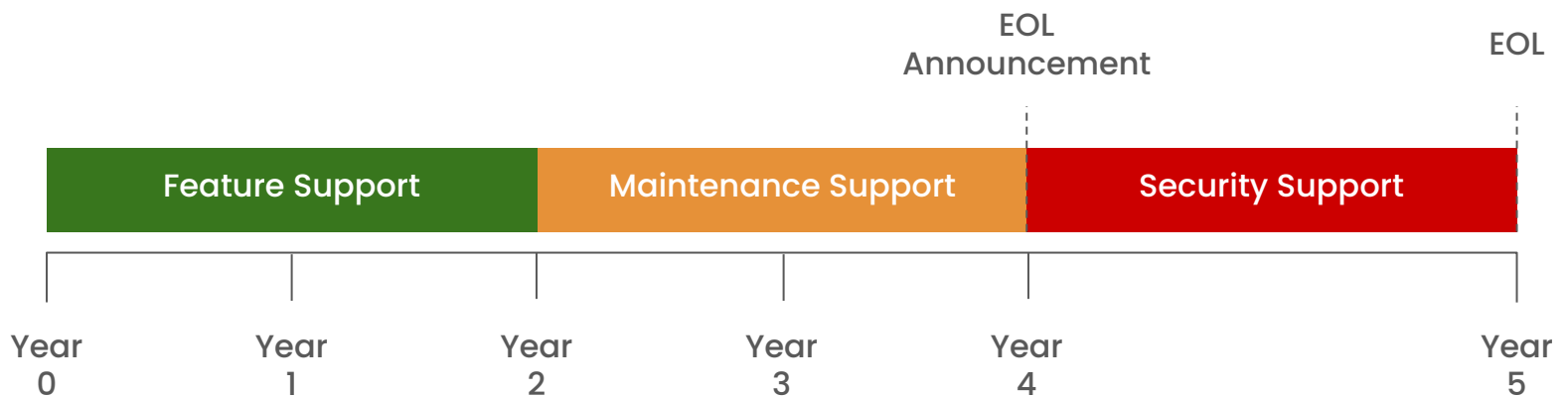
- Feature Support (Years 0-1)
- Maintenance Support (Years 2-3)
- Security Support (Years 4-5)

### 3. Nodegrid OS Support Life Cycle Overview (Continued...)

This phased approach ensures that you benefit from innovation early in the cycle, followed by a focus on stability and long-term security. Customers with active support contracts have the option to choose between a stable version, currently in its Maintenance Support phase, and a fully supported version, which is under active development and includes new features and enhancements. This provides comprehensive coverage throughout the expected hardware life cycle.

Additionally, please note that newly manufactured units will ship by default with the current Maintenance Release. This ensures that your new hardware is equipped with the most stable and reliable software version available.

#### ZPE Systems Nodegrid Software Support Lifecycle Timeline



### 4. Support Phases

#### 4.1 - Feature Support (Years 0-1)

During the Feature Support phase, the software version receives:

- **New features and enhancements:** We continually introduce new capabilities to keep your systems up to date.
- **Support for new hardware platforms:** Ensuring compatibility with the latest hardware.
- **Bug fixes:** Addressing any issues to maintain system stability.
- **Security updates:** In line with ZPE Systems' CVE policy to protect against vulnerabilities.
- **Minor Release Cycle:** Estimated every 6 weeks to provide regular updates.

This phase is ideal for customers seeking the latest capabilities and hardware compatibility.

## 4.2 – Maintenance Support (Years 2–3)

In the Maintenance Support phase:

- **No new features or hardware support:** The focus shifts to maintaining system stability.
- **Bug fixes and security updates:** Continued in line with ZPE Systems’ CVE policy.
- **Minor Release Cycle:** Estimated every 12 weeks to ensure ongoing reliability.
- **Shipping Version:** Newly manufactured units will ship by default with the current Maintenance Release, providing the most stable and reliable software version available.

This phase is recommended for customers prioritizing reliability and operational consistency in production environments.

## 4.3 – Security Support (Years 4–5)

In the final phase:

- **Critical and high-severity security vulnerabilities and bugs:** Addressed in line with ZPE Systems’ CVE policy.
- **No feature updates or general bug fixes:** The focus is solely on security.
- **Minor Release Cycle:** Estimated every 12 weeks to provide essential security updates.

This phase is intended for customers who require extended security coverage while planning their upgrade to a newer supported version.

Phase	Name	Total Support Duration	Description
1	Feature Support	0–24 months	Full support including new features, hardware support, bug fixes, and security updates.
2	Maintenance Support	25–48 months	No new features; continued bug fixes and security updates to ensure operational stability.
3	Security Support	49–60 months	Only critical security patches; no feature or bug fix updates.

## 5. End-of-Life (EOL) Policy

At the conclusion of the Security Support phase, typically five years after the initial release, a software version reaches its End-of-Life (EOL) status. Once a version is EOL:

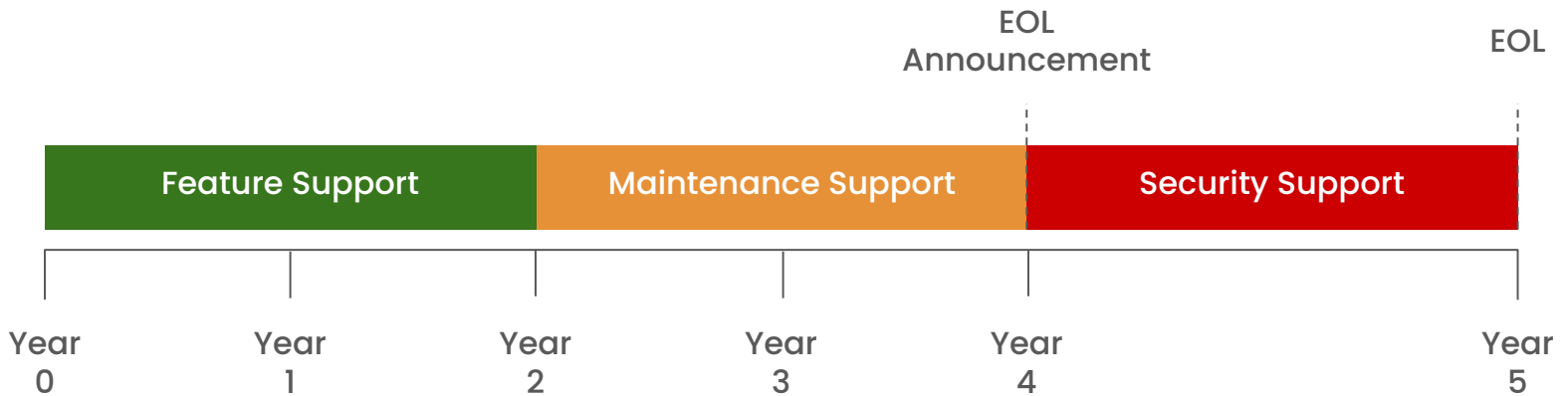
- No further updates: This includes security patches, bug fixes, and feature updates.
- Technical support: Support for the version is no longer available.

To ensure continued security and compliance, customers are strongly encouraged to upgrade to a currently supported version. Customers will have the opportunity to upgrade to at least one major version that is actively maintained and supported.

### EOL Notification Timeline

ZPE Systems will announce the EOL date for a software version at the start of the **Security Support** phase (i.e., after the conclusion of Maintenance Support). This provides customers with a **minimum of 12 months' notice** to plan and execute their upgrade strategy.

ZPE Systems Nodegrid Software Support Lifecycle Timeline



## 6. Customer Responsibilities

To ensure continued support and security, customers are responsible for the following:

- **Maintaining an active support contract:** This is essential to be eligible for software updates and technical assistance.
- **Upgrading to a supported software version before the current version reaches EOL:** This ensures that there are no interruptions to security and compliance.
- **Monitoring life cycle announcements from ZPE Systems:** Stay informed about support timelines and upgrade recommendations.
- **Validating compatibility of new software versions with their deployed hardware and configurations:** This helps avoid any disruptions during upgrades.

### Use Case Example

Consider a customer who begins their deployment with the current Feature Support version to take advantage of specific functions they require. As their internal requirements remain stable, they continue using this version as it transitions into the Maintenance Support phase. This phase focuses on maintaining system stability with bug fixes and security updates.

As their needs evolve, the customer has two options:

- **Stay on the current version until it reaches the last stage of its life cycle:** At this point, upgrade to either the latest Feature or Maintenance release to ensure continued support and security.
- **Upgrade at any point to the current Feature release:** If they require new features or enhancements, they can choose to upgrade to the latest version under active development.

This approach enables customers to strike a balance between their need for new features and the stability and security of their systems.

ZPE Systems provides tools, documentation, and support services to help customers plan and execute upgrades.

### Stay Informed via The Loop

Customers can subscribe to life cycle notifications, including EOL announcements, through **The Loop**. This is ZPE Systems' official communication channel for product updates, security advisories, and life cycle milestones.

## 7. Versioning and Release Cadence

ZPE Systems uses a consistent versioning scheme and release cadence to ensure clarity, predictability, and long-term support for customers.

### 7.1 – Versioning Scheme

Each software release is identified using the following format:

<Major>.<Minor>.<Patch>

- **Major and Minor:** Indicates a new software generation and starts a new 5-year support cycle.
- **Patch:** Includes all updates to the current release, including new features, bug fixes, and security updates, depending on the current version life cycle stage. ZPE Systems does not separate feature updates from patches.

### Example:

6.0.29

- Major version: 6
- Minor version: 0
- Patch version: 29 → This version is part of the 6.0 software life cycle.

### 7.2 – Release Cadence

- **New Software Life Cycles** (<Major>.<Minor>): Typically released every 18–24 months, initiating a new 5-year support cycle.
- **Patch Releases:** Delivered as needed during all support phases. These may include new features (during Active Support), bug fixes, and security updates, depending on the current phase.
  - **Feature Support:** estimated every 6 weeks
  - **Maintenance Support:** estimated every 12 weeks
  - **Security Support:** estimated every 12 weeks

All release announcements, including changelogs and upgrade guidance, are communicated through The Loop.

## 8. Support Phase Comparison Table

Feature / Activity	Feature Support (Years 0-1)	Maintenance Support (Years 2-3)	Security Support (Years 4-5)	End of Support (Years > 5)
New Features	✓ Included	✗ Not Included	✗ Not Included	✗ Not Included
New Hardware Support	✓ Included	✗ Not Included	✗ Not Included	✗ Not Included
Bug Fixes	✓ Included	✓ Included	✗ Not Included	✗ Not Included
Security Updates	✓ Included	✓ Included	⚠ Critical Only	✗ Not Included
Technical Support	✓ Full Support	✓ Full Support	⚠ Limited to Security Issues	⚠ Limited
EOL Notification	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	In Effect	In Effect
Upgrade Recommendation	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Required

## 9. Nodegrid OS Version Overview

The official current version life cycle status can be reviewed [here](#).