

May 30, 2023

HPE Multivendor Services for Post-EOSL Brocade Switches

Brocade SAN switches, manufactured and sold by the Brocade subsidiary of Broadcom, Inc, are integrated into many HPE product solutions, and HPE offers several support solutions for these switches, including Tech Care and Complete Care offerings. Through an arrangement with Broadcom, HPE provides repair services, as well as access to Broadcom Intellectual Property such as the Brocade Fabric Operating System (FOS) used to load firmware on Brocade devices.

Beyond the switches integrated into HPE solutions, HPE can provide Multivendor Support services for Brocade switches that customers have acquired outside of HPE. These services also include access to FOS.

Recently, several Brocade switches have reached End of Support Life (EOSL), and Broadcom has withdrawn support for them, including access to FOS. This action has left customers with very few support options, and Broadcom has taken a strong position of not making exceptions to their support policy. A May 3, 2019 statement from Broadcom includes the following:

BSN Global Support has further clarified our End of Support (EOS) policy.

The BSN Technical Assistance Center (TAC) does not support or troubleshoot any devices that are End of Support (EOS). For customers running a multiple device fabric and TAC confirms that there is an EOS device in the fabric, TAC will not troubleshoot the fabric until the device is removed. The connection to an EOS device is considered "a misapplication and improper maintenance" under Support Exclusions in the support terms and conditions.

Per normal Brocade process once a device reaches End of Support, there is no TAC, Hardware or FOS support.

For customers needing to continue using their installed Brocade switches that have reached EOSL, this creates a difficult situation: either upgrade these switches to newer, supported switches, or risk denial of service on ANY Brocade switch in their environment. And lack of access to FOS prevents loading of any firmware changes on those EOSL switches. If parts are replaced on an EOSL switch that requires firmware to be reloaded, the switch becomes unusable.

HPE cannot provide our own support services such as Tech Care or Complete Care on these EOSL switches, since we do not have access to Broadcom-supplied spare parts, cannot provide access to FOS, and cannot elevate cases to Broadcom for technical assistance.

In addition to these support policy terms, Broadcom has also implemented a pricing strategy that increases the cost of supporting equipment approaching EOSL. Once the product has reached End-of-Sale (product is no longer actively sold, but is still supported by Broadcom), prices increase significantly for each remaining year until it reaches End-of-Support. Although the cost of continuing to use the switches rises, the equipment itself remains useable, with full access to FOS, support from the TAC, and spare parts available. During this period, HPE can continue to provide our HPE-branded support services, but our pricing must increase with the fees we pay Broadcom.

Customers are finding both the support policy and the pricing action very difficult to work with, and they continue to turn to HPE for assistance. Although we cannot bypass either of Broadcom's policies, and have been unable to identify any resellers who can provide more favorable terms, we are able to provide a work-around solution to provide some assistance to customers who must continue to operate this equipment.



HPE Multivendor Best-Effort Solution for Post-EOSL Brocade switches

To assist customers who need to continue using these EOSL switches, HPE Multivendor Services can provide a stop-gap solution that delivers best-effort hardware break/fix services, using aftermarket spare parts as available. It is important to understand that this is not “full support”, and that it does involve risk for the customer.

Constraints to consider include:

- Must be handled as Multivendor cases; attempting to route such cases to HPE support teams will result in denial of service, since the product is EOSL.
- Hardware break/fix only; no firmware updates, software updates, patches, or engineering elevations to Broadcom.
- NO ACCESS to FOS, or support from the Broadcom Technical Assistance Center (TAC).
- Generally, replacement parts will be used equipment, since new spares are not available from Broadcom.
- Subject to parts availability; HPE reserves the right to terminate services should parts become unavailable.

There are risks that the customer is taking, which HPE cannot control or reduce:

- Without access to FOS to load firmware, if a part fails that needs updated firmware for the replacement, the switch will be rendered useless.
- If the customer is running other Brocade switches in their environment, and requests assistance on one of those switches through the Broadcom TAC, the TAC will refuse support until the EOSL switch is removed from the environment (see May 3, 2019 statement from Broadcom).
- The customer must be very clear that this is a stop-gap solution, and NOT simply a continuation of the HPE services that they have been receiving.

We recognize that this is not an ideal solution for our customers, but it does permit them to continue their support relationship with HPE while they work to refresh these switches to newer technology. Since the restriction is a Broadcom policy, we believe that no other support organization can provide any more robust solutions that reduce the customer’s risk.

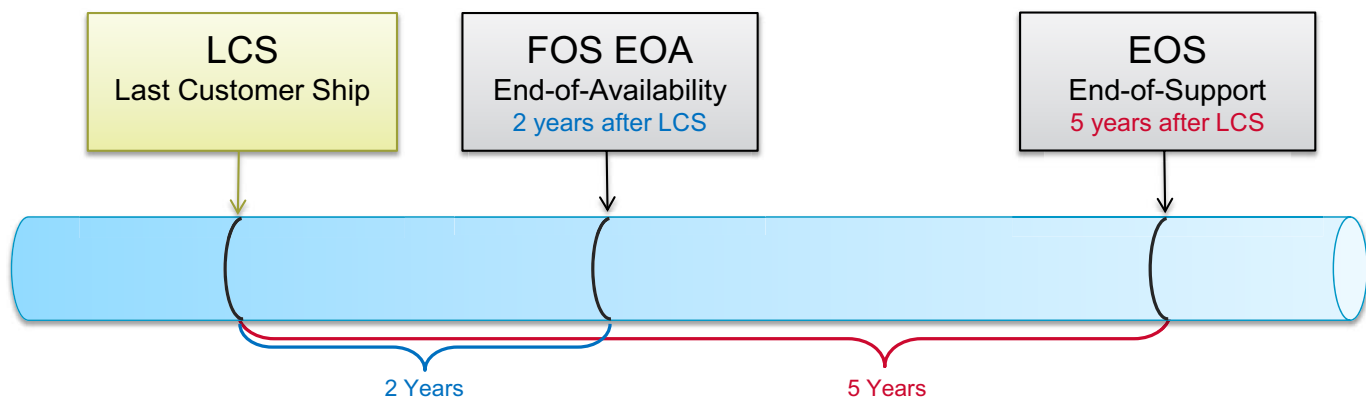
If you have any further questions, please reach out to your HPE Services Multivendor Services representative.

Brocade[®] Storage Networking Hardware Product End-of-Life (EOL) and End-of-Support (EOS) Policy

Version 1.2: Effective April 15, 2022

Hardware products reach the end of their product lifecycle for many reasons, including, for instance: product line enhancements, upgrades, and to offer customers a higher quality product. In order to assist customers in the transition process, we are providing this overview of the Brocade Hardware End-of-Life and End-of-Support Policy.

For Brocade-branded hardware products, the End-of-Life (EOL) timeline is as follows.



Once the End-of-Life Notification has been provided by Brocade, a Broadcom company, any existing unfulfilled orders will be scheduled for shipment prior to the Last Customer Ship (LCS) date. For customers who have purchased a support agreement prior to the EOL Notification, support will be provided through the end of the applicable term of the support agreement or through the End-of-Support (EOS) date, whichever is earlier. Prior to the EOS date, a renewal to an existing support agreement may be purchased, subject to availability. Applicable product EOL Notifications will contain specific dates for LCS, FOS EOA, EOS, and additional information.

Unless otherwise noted, all optional software feature licenses or kits that include software licenses (including Ports-on-Demand kits) for a product will remain available for purchase for a period of two (2) years after the LCS date.

After a Brocade hardware product enters the EOL period, new Fabric OS[®] (FOS) releases will continue to be made available as per Brocade software policies and processes. A hardware product in the EOL period with a valid support agreement is allowed to use any currently available FOS release that supports and is made available for that platform, in accordance with the FOS EULA. Once the hardware product is two (2) years past LCS, FOS will reach End-of-Availability (EOA) for that platform and new FOS releases will no longer be made available. On an exception basis, Broadcom may elect to expedite or defer the FOS EOA date for a platform prior to or later than the standard two-year period. The FOS EOA date for a hardware product is published in the product's EOL Notification document. An existing FOS release (generally the latest supported release for the hardware product prior to FOS EOA) will be designated as the last available version for that platform until the EOS date. For customers with valid support agreements, support will be provided until the EOS date. During the EOL period, if a critical software issue arises, Broadcom may, at its discretion, provide a workaround or issue a patch.

To receive support, in addition to having a valid support agreement, a supported FOS release must be installed on the customer device(s). Available FOS releases may be accessed and downloaded on the Broadcom Customer Support Portal (CSP) site.

Although every effort will be made to support EOL products in accordance with our EOL and EOS policy, Broadcom reserves the right to change its policy as it deems appropriate.

Complete hardware support terms and conditions are available on Broadcom.com. This policy is applicable to Brocade hardware products. Different policies apply to Brocade software products.

Appendix A: Definitions

EOL/End-of-Life

Final phase of the Brocade hardware product lifecycle prior to and including the End-of-Support for the platform.

EOL/End-of-Life Notification

Date customers are notified of Broadcom's intention to EOL a product.

LCS/Last Customer Ship Date

Last date Broadcom will ship the product. If a PO includes a requested ship date, the requested ship date may not exceed this date (LCS).

FOS EOA/End-of-Availability

Date after which Broadcom will no longer make new Brocade Fabric OS (FOS) releases available for a specific hardware product.

EOS/End-of-Support Date

Date after which Broadcom will no longer support or troubleshoot any Brocade product that is End-of-Support (EOS). For customers running a multiple-device fabric, if the Brocade Technical Assistance Center (TAC) confirms that there is an EOS Brocade product in the fabric, TAC will not troubleshoot the fabric until the Brocade EOS product has been removed from the fabric.

Revision History

Version 1.2; May 6, 2022 (Brocade-HW-EOL-EOS-Policy-OT101)

Eliminated the obsolete Last Time Order (LTO) date. The effectivity date of the current Hardware EOL/EOS Policy remains unchanged due to there being no impact on the overall policy or milestones.

Version 1.1; April 15, 2022 (Brocade-HW-EOL-EOS-Policy-OT100)

Updated to incorporate the FOS EOA as part of the hardware product EOL timeline.

Version 1.0; May 19, 2019

Initial document version.

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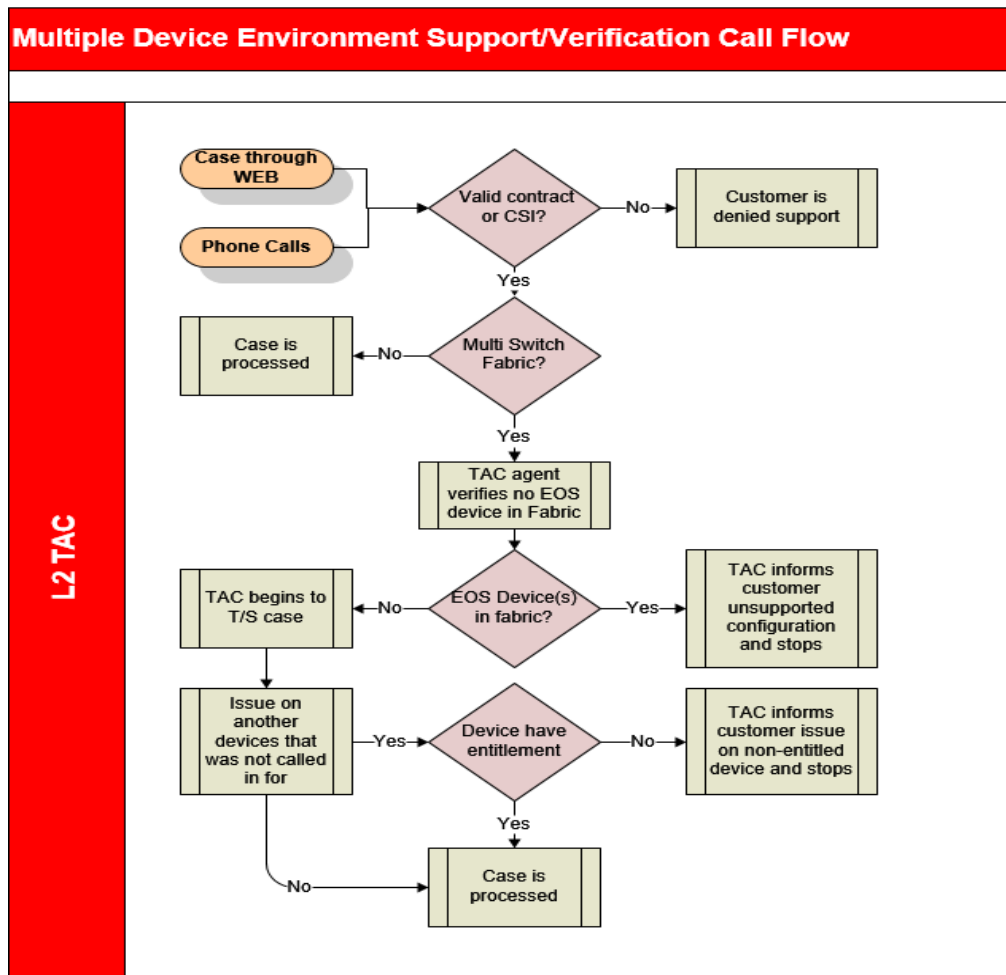
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May 3, 2019

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Here is a brief overview of the TAC support flow:



Per normal Brocade process once a device reaches End of Support, there is no TAC, Hardware or FOS support.