Oracle Utilities Cloud Services
Update Policy Guide

For Supported Releases 25.4 and Later (Effective April 2025)

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Oracle Utilities Cloud Services Update Policy Guide, For Supported Releases 25.4 and Later (Effective April 2025)

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Introduction

Welcome to the Oracle Utilities Cloud Services Update Policy Guide. This document describes update policies and practices that apply to all customers of the following Oracle Utilities Cloud Services:

- Oracle Utilities Billing Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Customer Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Digital Asset Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Market Settlements Management Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Meter Solution Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Rate Cloud Service
- Oracle Utilities Work and Asset Cloud Service

This document includes the following:

- Cloud Services Update Policy

> ✏️ **Note:**
>
> The cloud service update policy described in this document is in effect as of April 2025 and the 25.4 release. The major change introduced is a change from 3 releases per year to 2 releases per year.
> Information about the cloud service update policy for releases 24A, 24B, and 24C is available here.

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Cloud Services Update Policy

This document describes update policies and practices that apply to all customers of any of the cloud services documented in the **Oracle Utilities Cloud Services Cloud Service Descriptions** document (available from the Oracle Cloud Services contracts page).

Note that the *Oracle Global Business Unit Cloud Services - Pillar Document* outlines the applicable Change Management Policy and the obligation to stay current, and this paper provides the applicable details and obligations.

This chapter includes the following:

- Overview
- The Oracle Utilities Cloud Model
- Prior to Go Live
- Go Live Release and Maintenance Packs
- Once You Go Live
- Software and Hardware Update Types
- Planned Maintenance Times
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Overview

Oracle Utilities periodically provides software and hardware releases for your Oracle Utilities cloud environments to:

- Introduce new features/functions
- Address reported issues
- Provide infrastructure and security updates

Staying current with your service involves managing and planning for these releases and updates.

The Oracle Utilities Cloud Model

The Oracle Utilities Cloud Model offers mission critical enterprise systems as "Software- as-a-Service" (SaaS) services and has been designed to meet the special needs of utilities to minimize customization, maximize production stability, and retain the benefits of using fully updated software in a SaaS implementation.

New General Availability (GA) software releases are provided two times a year (in other words, every six months) to introduce new features and functions. The significant features are designed to be 'opt-in', and we encourage every customer to make use of these features to reduce customizations. **Implementing customers are required to take new General Availability releases promptly until go-live is on the horizon (no more than three months away), while live customers are required to take each subsequent release in order. Skipping one or more releases is not allowed.**

For each General Availability release, Maintenance Packs (MPs) are provided each month, including the General Availability release month, until the release reaches end of life. For the first two months after a General Availability release, Maintenance Packs are mandatory and we do not allow any live production environments to update to the release during this period. For the next maintenance pack months, we limit patches to enable go-lives and production upgrades, and customers must not fall further than two months behind to ensure quality of service. In the last five months of support for a release, application patching is optional while platform updates continue monthly until version end of life; in other words, there are no planned monthly updates though a mandatory emergency patch is possible. All customers must plan to update to the next GA release prior to the end of life date as published on the Oracle Utilities Release Calendar.

Oracle does not allow customers to remain on an unsupported (non-GA) release that is past the end of life date published in the Oracle Utilities Release Calendar. If you do not upgrade prior to the published end of life date, Oracle may force-upgrade any unsupported environments (first in non-production environments followed by Production). You will be notified of upcoming release end of life dates and will also receive advance notification of any potential force- upgrades that need to occur.

Figure 2-1   Implementation,/Fast, Cutover, and Production Lanes
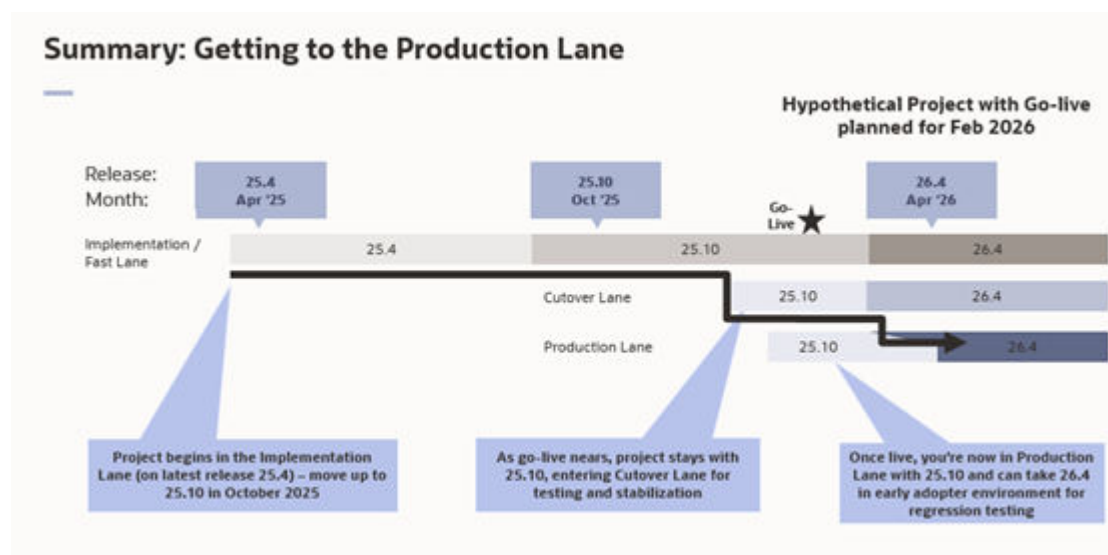
The above illustration is a diagram of the Implementation/Fast, Cutover, and Production lanes The black arrow indicates the path of a hypothetical project through implementation to production.

The next sections describe in more detail the policies Oracle Utilities has adopted to support both implementing customers and live customers.

Prior to Go Live

In the early stages of the implementation, also called the Fast Lane, Oracle will keep the environments on the latest release level, and uptake of monthly maintenance packs is required. One or more 'early adopter' environments will be updated on the first weekend of each month, and the other environments including the Production environment will be updated

on the third weekend of the month. This pattern is maintained until go-live is less than four months away.

The benefits of keeping your environments at the latest release level during your implementation may include:

- Access to the latest features and functions of the service, typically meaning less need for customization.

- Having all available patches applied means discovering fewer problems and makes it easier for customer support to replicate any issues you do experience.

When your go-live date is on the horizon (no more than three months away), you will move into the Cutover Lane by staying at your current release level, and if desired choosing a 'freeze' Maintenance Pack level to fully stabilize prior to go live. We support a freeze of no more than two months, so the 'freeze version' can only be set once you are less than one month from your go-live date (thus allowing for a month of post-go-live stabilization). Please note the following restrictions:

- If your go-live date shifts, part of the re-planning may need to involve moving up to the next General Availability release level.

- If you need one or more hotfixes, they will be based on the latest maintenance pack level, which means that you will be taking cumulative fixes that will include the needed hotfixes.

Go Live Release and Maintenance Packs

As go-live approaches, you can stay on your current General Availability release if it hasn't reached end of life, and your maintenance pack meets the following requirements:

- The maintenance pack number is 3 or higher.

- The end of life date of the release is more than 2 months from the cutover weekend.

- The maintenance pack number you go live with has been available for less than two calendar months.

Once You Go Live

Once your business is live with an Oracle Utilities Cloud Service, hot fixes will be available for the most recent Maintenance Pack.

After that **you must take up the subsequent General Availability release on average every six months**, with the exact timing of each release determined by you within our Production Lane guidelines. **Skipping one or more releases is not allowed.** You can take the next General Availability release into one or more non-production environments first for testing, which should focus on any customized areas of your system.

At this point the General Availability release will already be out of the Fast Lane, so the fixes are limited to critical/blocking issues faced by you or other customers getting ready for production use. If upgrade testing on the next General Availability release needs to continue for an extended period you can choose a 'freeze level' for stabilization, then will need to take a mandatory 'catch up' to the last maintenance pack. This is similar to the initial go-live and gives you the ability to test the release as needed and stay current in your production environment.

> ✎ **Note:**
>
> **Deadlines for upgrading to each General Availability release are provided on the Oracle Utilities Release Schedule .**

Software and Hardware Update Types

We provide the following software and hardware updates:

- General Availability Releases (2x per year)
- Maintenance Packs (monthly / 12 Maintenance Packs per release)
- Platform Updates (monthly)
- Application and Platform Security Updates (as needed)
- Hot Fix Updates (as needed)
- Infrastructure Patching (quarterly)

You will receive separate notifications with timing details prior to the maintenance.

General Availability Releases

There are two feature/function General Availability releases each calendar year, and each General Availability release is supported for 12 months. Once in production, you will have a certain amount of flexibility to schedule the General Availability release first for testing, then for production. Note that you will always need to take the next General Availability release prior to the end of life of your current production release.

Note: General Availability Releases are mandatory. You cannot skip a General Availability release.

General Availability Releases may include:

- New and enhanced features/functions (generally provided as 'opt-in')
- New and Updated language packs
- Fixes for reported issues with Oracle Utilities Cloud Applications
- Fixes and updates of the other bundled services which are part of the cloud subscription, such as the Utilities Testing Accelerator.

Information Category	Details
Mandatory or Optional	Mandatory for Fast Lane Customers
	Optional for Cutover / Production Lane Customers
Delivery Schedule	General Availability releases are delivered two times per year.
	Please refer to the Oracle Utilities Release Calendar for details.

Information Category	Details
Environment Update Plan	During implementation / Customers on fast lane, General Availability releases are scheduled promptly at General Availability, first to non-production environments, then to production.
	As go-live approaches, you can stay on your current General Availability release to stabilize for final acceptance as long as you are on maintenance pack 3 or higher (see Maintenance Packs for more information about maintenance packs).
	Once in Production after go-live, we recommend scheduling uptake of the next General Availability release based on the maintenance pack 3 or higher. This will give you time to perform quick regression before uptake to production (see Maintenance Packs for more information about maintenance packs).
	Non-production early adopters (remaining non-production environments): First Maintenance window (typically first Saturday) of the month.
	Production environment and late adopters: Second Maintenance window (typically third Saturday) of the month or next maintenance window.
Planned Outage Times	Outage times are according to the Planned Maintenance Times section.
Readiness Material and Documentation	You will receive advance notice of Readiness material, which describe the new features/functions in upcoming releases. This material is published on the Oracle Cloud Readiness site at least 30 days prior to update availability. This Readiness material along with the documentation will help you prepare for the features/functions introduced with each new release.

> **Note:**
>
> When a new General Availability release level is introduced into a test environment, it is not possible to refresh that environment from Production until Production has also been updated. Many customers schedule a refresh of the test environment just prior to taking the next General Availability release.

Maintenance Packs

Maintenance Packs (MP) are released monthly and contain fixes for reported application issues and are provided monthly until the release's end of life (remember that releases are supported for 12 months). For the first two months of the release, maintenance packs contain roll-ups of all available fixes for Fast Lane customers. After that point the next maintenance packs on a release will include only fixes for critical/blocking issues faced by customers either live or soon going live.

Monthly maintenance packs are mandatory while in the Fast Lane (when your cloud service is not yet in live production).

When go-live is approaching, you have the option to choose a monthly maintenance pack level at which to 'freeze' and stabilize for final acceptance. The freeze can last up to two months, then there will be a mandatory 'catch-up' after go-live to the latest monthly pack. The first allowable freeze level is the third maintenance pack for the release, and the last possible is the eighth maintenance pack.

After going live, we require you to move up to the latest maintenance pack for your current release and from that point forward only hot fix updates will be provided to minimize change in the live system, if needed.

The fixes provided in each monthly maintenance pack are documented in My Oracle Support.

Information Category	Details
Mandatory or Optional	Mandatory while in Fast Lane.
	Optional to temporarily freeze on a maintenance pack for go-live (up to two months), followed by mandatory 'catch up'.
Delivery Schedule	Maintenance Packs are prepared for the first weekend of each calendar month (with rare exceptions for holidays).
Environment Update Plan	Non-production early adopter environments: First Maintenance window (typically first Saturday) of the month or subsequent maintenance windows.
	Production environment and late adopters: Second maintenance window (typically third Saturday) of the month or subsequent maintenance windows.
Planned Outage Times	Outage times are according to the Planned Maintenance Times section.
Readiness Material and Documentation	Documentation for the included fixes can be found in My Oracle Support. (Doc ID 2616460.1).

Platform Updates

The Oracle Utilities cloud services utilize a Kubernetes-based microservice architecture, and this platform provides services such as networking, monitoring, logging, etc. On a monthly basis we will provide platform updates, which do not in themselves alter the functionality of the service. These platform updates are installed at the same time as the maintenance packs and are also applied in months when no new maintenance pack is provided.

Information Category	Details
Mandatory or Optional	Mandatory
Delivery Schedule	Platform updates are released monthly. Please refer to Environment Update Plan below for details concerning when platform updates are rolled out for different types of environments.
	Note that platform updates are applied to all environments regardless of whether you are accepting application patches or fixes to your environment.

Information Category	Details
Environment Update Plan	All Non-production environments: First weekend of the calendar month.
	Production environments: Third weekend of the calendar month (may adjust in certain months due to holidays).
Planned Outage Times	Outage times are according to the Planned Maintenance Times section.
Readiness Material and Documentation	N/A

Application and Platform Security Updates

The security of Oracle Utilities cloud services is achieved via a shared responsibility model. In that shared responsibility model, you, the Customer, are responsible for knowing what data you are sending to the cloud services (Your Content) and for configuring access control policies that say who may access Your Content. Oracle is responsible for providing the encryption protocols and secure storage for your data, and that the application logic which process Your Content is correctly implemented and secure.

As Oracle has a clear responsibility to ensure that all security updates are applied in a timely manner, any maintenance packs containing security updates are mandatory and will be automatically applied to your environments as per the release schedule and associated update policies.

Security updates are released for both cloud applications and associated platforms and are cumulative. These security updates are considered as critical and mandatory to be deployed in both non-production and the Production environments based on the following categories:

Category	Delivery Schedule	Environment Update Plan
Critical	Zero day	As soon as available
High Priority	Monthly	During Early Adopter week (First Saturday of the month) for all non-staging environments and Late Adopter week (Third Saturday of the month) for Production environments
Less Priority	With each General Availability release	As part of new release updates in Early Adopter environments

> **Note:**
>
> Oracle does not provide documentation for security updates.

Hot Fix Updates

You may need a Hot Fix Update when you encounter an unexpected issue that disables a business-critical process and no workaround exists. You must raise the hot fix request through the Service Request (SR) you opened when you initially reported the problem. We approve hot fix requests on a case-by-case basis.

Several criteria must be met to request and receive a hot fix Update, including:

- A resolution is available

- No workaround exists, or you believe that a proposed workaround is not acceptable

- You submitted an update to the existing SR explaining how the reported problem severely impacts a key business process.

- You are on a maintenance pack that is eligible for a hot fix, as described in Maintenance Packs (otherwise the patch will be made available to you as part of a new maintenance pack).

If you're approved to receive a hot fix update, Oracle Support will explain the type of update you will receive and the timing for applying it. Hot fix updates are cumulative in nature, thus may contain multiple fixes available only on the latest Maintenance Pack. Hot fix releases are always applied to a selected non-production environment first for validation, then to production.

Information Category	Details
Mandatory or Optional	Functional fixes are Optional.
	Exception: Oracle declares a patch is critical and mandatory.
Delivery Schedule	Hot fix updates are delivered after approval, coding and testing.
Environment Update Plan	For all environments, the next available hot fix window after agreed upon with Customer Success Manager (CSM).
	Note: Hot fixes will always be applied to non-prod environment first and after validation., applied in the Production environment.
Planned Outage Times	Outage times are either as outlined in the Planned Maintenance Times section or as negotiated depending on the criticality.
Readiness Material and Documentation	Documentation for the included fixes can be found in My Oracle Support (Doc ID 2616460.1).

All hot fix updates are rolled up and included in the next monthly maintenance pack.

Infrastructure Patching

Oracle provides hardware, database, network, and operating system updates periodically to keep your environments optimized and secure. Infrastructure quarterly patching does not typically involve any downtime.

Information Category	Details
Mandatory or Optional	Mandatory
Delivery Schedule	Quarterly or as needed.
	Cloud Operations will communicate the specific dates for each quarter prior to patching.
Planned Outage Times	Downtime is not planned for infrastructure patching.
Readiness Material and Documentation	N/A

> **✏ Note:**
>
> Infrastructure patching can create 'blackout periods' during which some environmental activities such as refresh or new environment provisioning cannot occur. Oracle will advise on dates of these periods.

Planned Maintenance Times

This section describes planned maintenance times, including planned outage schedules, and exceptions to update practices.

Planned Outage Schedule

Outage times are defined to minimize disruption to your business. We will send you advance notification with outage details, including impacted environment and outage start and end dates.

The standard outage windows start on Saturday evenings at 9pm data center time. Additional planned windows are for hot fix releases Thursday nights starting 11:59pm data center time (2nd, 4th and 5th Thursdays).

Exceptions to Update Practices

We will make every attempt to limit update-related outages and exceptions to the update schedule defined in this document.

However, there may be an occasional need to vary from this schedule for various reasons, such as:

- Unscheduled, emergency updates to address a critical problem affecting all customers
- Extending a planned outage time for an update
- Specially negotiated outage windows based on customer-specific business requirements

We will make every attempt to forecast these special cases and provide you with advance notifications.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions about updates and environment refresh.

On Updates

During Implementation can I skip a Maintenance Pack?

No. We need to ensure all customers have the latest critical code updates and features/functions. Therefore, during implementation all maintenance packs are mandatory.

Without these critical fixes, the stability of your cloud environment can be affected. You can 'freeze' on maintenance pack 3 or higher in the lead-up to go-live, but will need to catch up afterwards.

Can I combine multiple General Availability Releases into a single maintenance window? No. We manage the monthly maintenance packs for each General Availability release to support both implementing customers and live production customers. While implementing, you will be kept on the latest General Availability release and latest maintenance pack so you can make use of all available features, while Production customers will be using the mature releases which have very low rate of change to ensure stability.

Why do the non-production and production environments get Release Updates and Monthly Maintenance Packs two weeks apart?

This gives you time to perform testing in non-production before changes are introduced to your production environment.

Can I stay on a non-GA (unsupported or past end-of-life) release version?

We do not allow customers to remain on an unsupported (non-GA) release that is past the end of life date published in the Oracle Utilities Release Calendar. If you do not upgrade prior to the published end of life date, Oracle may force-upgrade any unsupported environments (including Production). You will be notified of upcoming release end of life dates and will also receive advance notification of any potential force- upgrades that need to occur.

How do I know what release version I'm on?

The Maintenance notification tells you what version is being delivered. You can also find the Version number on the **About Window** found within each environment.

How do I know what is included in the General Availability release to create a testing plan?

Review the following content:

- What's New documents included in Release Readiness content for each service under **Industries**, **Energy and Water** (https://docs.oracle.com/en/cloud/saas/readiness/index.html)

Can I access new features in the latest General Availability Release?

No. We deliver most new features turned off by default. You need to 'opt-in' to turn new features on. See the Release Readiness content for more information (https://docs.oracle.com/en/cloud/saas/readiness/index.html). Please note that we recommend a 'technical upgrade' approach, which involves updating the production environment to the next General Availability release without turning on new features, then in a second phase configuring and opting-in to new features as desired.

Can I request a specific downtime for when updates are applied?

No. We schedule predefined downtime windows for all updates, as it's critical to time updates when the Oracle Cloud Applications Operations team is available in your region and when most business operations are minimal. You can find additional details in the Planned Outages section in this paper.

What do I do if an update does not address my reported issue?

Update the specific Service Request (SR) in My Oracle Support, indicating that the issue was not resolved after the application of the update. Provide details of any changes in error messages or symptoms and screen shots as appropriate.

Does the update outage schedule still apply if we have more than one Cloud Service (for example, Customer Cloud Service and Work and Asset Cloud Service)?

Yes. You will receive updates for all Oracle Utilities Cloud Services at the same time.

On Environment Refresh

How do Updates affect a request for an Environment Refresh?

An Environment Refresh can only be performed when both source and target environments are at the same version level. Note that monthly maintenance packs will set selected non-production environments to a different level from other environments between the first and third weekends of each month.

If you receive a hot fix update, your non-production test environment will typically be at a different version from your production environment and an Environment Refresh cannot be performed. Oracle will identify the impact of hot fix Updates on a scheduled Environment Refresh. We will not apply hot fix updates to synchronize environments for an Environment Refresh.

When can I schedule an Environment Refresh?

The Environment Refresh for an environment needs to be scheduled for a time period where both source and target environments are at the same version level. Also, it should not be scheduled within a blackout period (e.g. during Infrastructure Quarterly Patching). Please reference the *Oracle Utilities Cloud Services Cloud Operations Guide* for more details on Refresh.

How will I know that my environments are at the same levels for an Environment Refresh?

You can check the version levels of the environments using the About Window. After you submit an Environment Refresh request, we will verify that your environments are at the same update level and can receive an Environment Refresh on the date you request. If necessary, Oracle will identify the date on which your environments could be updated to the same level so that you can reschedule your Environment Refresh.

How will I know if this Oracle Utilities update process changes?

This guide will be updated as changes occur and the changes will be communicated via Oracle Support.

Glossary

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