Software updates

The **Software updates** section of the Apple Policy Editor keeps the devices up to date: it can require a specific OS version by a deadline, and control how the devices download and install updates.

Required OS updates

Click **Add required update** to require an OS version. The device downloads the update, tells the user about the deadline and installs it at the deadline if the user hasn't done it before. Devices that already run that version or a later one ignore it. Requires iOS and iPadOS 17 or macOS 14.

- **Applies to** (required): iPhone and iPad, or Mac. Each OS has its own version numbers, so add one required update for each.
- **OS version**: the version to install, for example 18.5 or 15.4.1.
- **Build** (optional): a specific build, for example a beta or a Background Security Improvement.
- **Install by**: the deadline, in the local time of each device. A date in the past makes the devices install the update as soon as possible.
- **Details URL** (optional): a web page about the update, shown to the user.

> The device reports the progress of the update (download, installation, failures) in the **Device status** panel of the device page.

Software update settings

Turn on **Software update settings for iPhone and iPad** or **Software update settings for Mac** to control the updates on those devices. When a toggle is off, the devices keep their own settings. Requires iOS and iPadOS 18 or macOS 15: older devices ignore these settings.

- **Defer updates**: new updates are shown to the user only after the given number of days (1 to 90). On a Mac you can set different periods for major updates, minor updates and other system updates.
- **Updates shown to the user** (iPhone and iPad): when more than one update is available, show all of them, only the oldest minor update or only the newest one.

- **Standard users can install updates** (Mac): users without administrator rights can install macOS updates.
- **Notify the user about required updates**: show the notifications about the required updates and their deadline.
- **Automatic download**, **Automatic install** and **Automatic security updates**: let the user decide (Apple's default), or keep them always on or always off.
- **Background Security Improvements**: offer Apple's quick security fixes to the user, and choose whether the user can remove them.
- **Beta programs**: let the user join Apple beta programs, or remove the device from them and block them (on iPhone and iPad, supervised devices only).

Installing an update from the device page

The **Device status** panel of a device lists the updates available for it. Use **Check for updates** to ask the device for the list and **Install** to install one now or to download it and let the user install it. This works on supervised iPhones and iPads and on Macs. Apple removes these commands in iOS, iPadOS and macOS 27: on those versions use the required updates of the policy.

Revision #7
Created 2026-11-10 15:12:11 UTC by Admin
Updated 2026-11-12 09:51:56 UTC by Admin