

Microsoft Defender

Licensing guidance

Summary

Microsoft Defender products that defend endpoints play an integral role in Microsoft's threat protection solutions, providing customers with security for their organizations. These solutions help organizations prevent, detect, investigate, and respond to advanced threats. Customers can obtain the products through user- and server-based subscription licenses. Customers can also consume server protection through Microsoft Defender for Cloud.

This guidance provides clarity on device entitlements under Microsoft Defender licenses. It does not introduce new terms or supplement existing ones but offers insight into this topic and explains the intent of existing guidance.

Contents

Summary.....	1
Applicable products	2
Licensing models.....	4
Product-specific provisions	4
Frequently Asked Questions	5

Applicable products

This guidance applies to the following products:

User subscription licenses

Product	Overview
Microsoft Defender for Vulnerability Management	Microsoft Defender for Vulnerability Management delivers continuous asset discovery and inventory in a consolidated view, performs intelligent assessments using Microsoft threat intelligence, prioritizes based on risk, and includes built-in remediation and mitigation flows.
Microsoft Defender Vulnerability Management Add-on	Customers who have Defender for Endpoint P2 can get the Microsoft Defender Vulnerability Management Add-on, which includes consolidated inventories, expanded asset coverage, and enhanced assessment and mitigation tools.
Microsoft Defender for Business	Defender for Business delivers an enterprise-grade, AI-powered security solution built especially for small and medium-sized businesses (up to 300 employees). It helps protect your company's devices from ransomware, malware, phishing, and other cyberthreats.
Microsoft Defender for Endpoint P1	Microsoft Defender for Endpoint P1 offers a foundational set of capabilities, including industry-leading antimalware, cyberattack surface reduction, and device-based conditional access. Customers who use Microsoft 365 E3 also receive this offering.
Microsoft Defender for Endpoint P2	Microsoft Defender for Endpoint P2 offers all the capabilities in P1, plus endpoint detection and response, automated investigation and incident response, and cyberthreat and vulnerability management. Also available with Microsoft 365 E5.

Server subscription licenses

Product	Overview
Microsoft Defender for Endpoint for servers	Defender for Endpoint for servers is for server protection and offers all the same capabilities as Defender for Endpoint P2.
Microsoft Defender Vulnerability Management Add-On to Microsoft Defender for Endpoint for servers	This add-on SKU provides advanced vulnerability management capabilities beyond the capabilities Microsoft includes in Defender for Endpoint for servers.
Microsoft Defender for Business for servers (Subscription License)	Microsoft Defender for Business for servers is an add-on to Defender for Business that enables you to secure your server operating systems with the same protection that Defender for Business provides for client devices.

Server consumption-based licenses

Product	Overview
Microsoft Defender for Servers P1	Defender for Server P1 offers all the same capabilities as Defender for Endpoint for servers. Microsoft licenses and prices it based on consumption.
Microsoft Defender for Servers P2	Defender for Servers P2 builds on Defender for Servers P1 with additional capabilities for multi-cloud server environments. Microsoft licenses and prices it based on consumption.

Licensing models

User subscriptions

You can license protection for client and mobile devices on a user subscription basis through commercial licensing programs such as the Microsoft Cloud Agreement (MCA) or Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA). Assign a User Subscription License to the account for any user whose devices you want to protect. [\[View related Product Terms\]](#)

Server subscriptions

You can license server protection on a subscription basis through commercial licensing programs such as the Microsoft Cloud Agreement (MCA) or Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA). Assign a separate Subscription License to each physical or virtual server (defined as “each OSE” in the Product terms) you want to protect. [\[View related Product Terms\]](#)

Server consumption

You can also license the protection of servers on a consumption basis through Microsoft Defender for Cloud.

- [Learn more about choosing a Microsoft Defender for Servers plan and deployment scope.](#)
- [Find Microsoft Defender for Cloud pricing.](#)

Product-specific provisions

Protecting the licensed user's devices

For applicable Microsoft Defender products, each User Subscription License (SL) allows you to protect up to five client and/or mobile devices that your organization designates for the Licensed User's use. These may be personal devices or devices your organization provides. (Servers require server-based licensing)

You can change the specific devices being protected, as long as you protect no more than five of the licensed user's devices at any given time. If a user needs protection for more than five devices simultaneously, you can purchase additional User Subscription Licenses.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What platforms are supported by Microsoft Defender products licensed under the user subscription model?

Microsoft Defender products support, but are not limited to the platforms below:

- Windows clients
- macOS
- iOS
- Android

You can find additional information on supported platforms and releases here:

- [Onboard client devices \(Windows or Mac\) to Microsoft Defender for Endpoint - Microsoft Defender for Endpoint | Microsoft Learn](#)
- [Microsoft Defender for Endpoint on other platforms - Microsoft Defender for Endpoint | Microsoft Learn](#)
- [Microsoft Defender for Endpoint - Mobile Threat Defense - Microsoft Defender for Endpoint | Microsoft Learn](#)

2. Can I use Microsoft Defender products licensed under the user subscription model to protect server products?

No. Defender User Subscription Licenses are for protecting the licensed user's client and/or mobile devices, not an organization's servers. For a list of options for server protection see the list of server applicable licenses above. [View related [Product Terms](#)]

3. Can I protect Linux-based servers with Defender products?

No, Linux Server is a server-based product and requires server-based licensing.

4. Can I protect Linux-based client devices with Defender products?

Microsoft Defender for Endpoint does not currently support Linux client devices.

5. What are the server types covered under Microsoft Defender products?

The server products include, but are not limited to:

- [Windows Servers](#)
- [Linux Server](#)

6. Does the five-device rule apply to Frontline Worker User Subscription Licenses?

Yes, Frontline Workers User Subscription Licenses have the same provisions as Information Worker User Subscription Licenses and qualify for the five client and/or mobile devices. [See relevant Product Terms for Frontline Worker eligibility.](#)

© 2025 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This document is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS DOCUMENT. This information is provided to help guide your authorized use of products you license; it is not your agreement. Your use of products licensed under your volume license agreement is governed by the terms and conditions of that agreement. In the case of any conflict between this information and your agreement, the terms and conditions of your agreement control. Prices for licenses acquired through Microsoft resellers are determined by the reseller.

Publication date: May 2025