

Everything you every wanted to know about how to licence your Windows Server with Client Access Licences (CALs)

Client Access Licenses (CALs)

Q. What is the difference between a Windows Server 2003 R2 license and a Windows CAL? Why do I need both?

A. The Windows Server 2003 R2 license gives the license holder the right to install and use the server software. The Windows CAL grants the right for a device or user to access the server software. The two-component license provides a low entry price and a way to pay for capacity used: the more devices or users accessing the server software, the greater the license fees or price. The model therefore offers license affordability to organizations of all sizes.

Q. When do I need to acquire a Windows CAL?

A. A Windows CAL is required when a user or device accesses or uses the server software. However, if access is through the Internet and is unauthenticated (for example, when browsing a public Web site), a Windows CAL is not required. Also, if that user is an external user, another option is to acquire an External Connector license. See the Windows External Connector License section below for more detail. Further information is available at the External Connector License Overview.

Q. Are there any differences between the requirements for CALs in Windows 2000 Server versus CALs in Windows Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003 R2?

A. No. The Windows Server CAL requirements are the same. What has changed, however, is the language that specifies when a CAL is required. The Windows 2000 Server license agreement defined the product services which required a CAL (e.g. file, print, remote access, terminal services, and authenticated access). In practice, most customer usage of Windows 2000 Server accessed the file services and/or authentication features of the product and therefore required a CAL. Customer feedback indicated that it was difficult to know if a particular usage scenario met those definitions. So, for Windows Server 2003 and Windows Server 2003 R2, Microsoft has provided more specific language to clarify when customers require CALs.

Q. The End User License Agreement states that CALs are required for access or use of the server software and goes on to list usage examples. If I am using the server in a way that is not listed (e.g., as an application server), do I still need CALs?

A. Yes. The list of examples in the License Terms is not exhaustive but is instead meant to illustrate some common uses of the server software. If a device or user is accessing or using the server software, a CAL is required, unless:

- access is through the Internet and is unauthenticated, or
- access is to a server running Windows Server 2003 Web Edition, or
- access or use is by an External User and External Connector licenses are acquired instead of CALs.

Q. What is the difference between a Windows CAL and a Terminal Server (TS) CAL?

A. A Windows CAL is required when a user or device is directly or indirectly accessing a Windows server. Additionally, if the user or device is accessing or using the terminal server functionality of Windows Server Standard and Enterprise Editions, a TS CAL is also required. As an exception to these rules, up to two users or devices may access the server software only for server administration purposes, without requiring either a TS CAL or Windows CAL.

Q. What is the difference between a Device CAL and a User CAL?

A. A Windows Device CAL permits one device (used by any user) to access or use the server software. A Windows User CAL permits one user (using any device) to access or use the server software; the same holds true for TS Device CALs and TS User CALs.

Q. Why is Microsoft introducing another type of CAL?

A. Microsoft is introducing another type of CAL to provide choice to address customers' changing needs. Some customers require a solution where employees need to gain access to the company's corporate network using devices that the company doesn't own or control, and for which a device-based CAL cannot be readily acquired. Other customers prefer to count employees rather than devices for licensing compliance, because it is simpler.

Q. Can I use a Windows Device CAL and a Windows User CAL on the same server?

A. Yes. Windows Device and User CALs can be used on the same server. For ease of management and tracking though, Microsoft recommends that customers choose to acquire CALs on either a device or user basis.

Q. Can I use a Terminal Server Device CAL (TS Device CAL) and a Terminal Server User CAL (TS User CAL) on the same terminal server?

A. Yes. TS Device and User CALs can be used on the same server. For ease of management and tracking though, Microsoft recommends that customers choose to acquire CALs on either a device or user basis.

Q. Is there a difference in price between Device CALs and User CALs?

A. No. Windows Server 2003 Device CALs and Windows Server 2003 User CALs are priced the same, just as Windows Server 2003 TS Device CALs and Windows Server 2003 TS User CALs are the same price.

Q. My Windows Server 2003 R2 software came with a set number of CALs because I acquired it through a retail store or with a new piece of hardware. How do I designate those CALs to be User or Device CALs?

A. When the software comes packaged with CALs, you choose whether those CALs are User or Device CALs after you make the purchase on the CAL End User License Agreement document. In other words, you choose the type of CAL once you get the product.

Q. What is the difference between "types" of CALs and "licensing modes" for CALs?

A. The different types of CALs are outlined above. See Device and User CALs.

Different licensing modes only apply to Windows CALs and pertain to how to assign the Windows CALs.

- In Per Server mode, the Windows CALs acquired should equal the total number of users and/or devices accessing that server's software at a given time. For example, in this mode, the maximum concurrent connections are equal to the number of Windows CALs acquired.
- In Per Device or Per User mode, Windows CALs should be acquired for each device or user, in order for that device or user to access all the servers deployed in this mode. There is no limit to the number of devices or users accessing a server at a given time.
- Please visit the CAL overview page for further detail, including a helpful graphic depicting CAL licensing modes.

Q. I have some extra Windows 2000 CALs that are not being used. Can I apply these to a Windows Server 2003 or Windows Server 2003 R2 server(s)?

A. No. A CAL must be the same version (or later) as the server it is accessing. Therefore, access to a Windows 2003 Server or Windows Server 2003 R2 must be licensed with a Windows 2003 Device or User CAL.

Q. Can I downgrade a Windows CAL for use on a Windows 2000 server?

A. Yes. Both Windows Server 2003 User and Device CALs can be downgraded to access a Windows 2000 server.

Q. Can I downgrade a TS CAL for use on a Windows 2000 terminal server?

A. Yes. You may downgrade Windows Server 2003 TS CALs. However, both TS User and Device CALs will act as device-based CALs when accessing a Windows 2000 terminal server, as TS User CALs are not supported.

Q. How do I designate Windows Server 2003 TS User or Device CALs or Windows 2000 TS CALs?

A. During set-up, the Terminal Server Licensing Management (TSLM) will prompt you to choose.

Q. I have valid upgrade coverage (Upgrade Advantage or Software Assurance) on my CALs. Can I choose either User or Device CALs? How do I do that?

A. Yes. You must designate your Windows CALs as Device or User when you upgrade them. If you exercise your one-time right to convert Device CALs to User CALs mid-contract, you simply record the change for your records. When Software Assurance comes up for renewal, all the new specifications (for example, number of User CALs, number of Device CALs) are documented and revised in Microsoft Volume License Services' records.

For TS CALs, when you request TS CAL tokens through Terminal Server Licensing Management, you are prompted to specify User or Device.

Q. Will I be allowed to switch between Windows Device CALs and Windows User CALs? What about TS CALs?

A. Customers who have active Software Assurance coverage for Windows Server CALs under agreements signed on or before April 1, 2003 may change their Windows Device CALs to Windows User CALs at the time of the annual true-up process. These transition rights can also be applied in the same way for switching from TS Device CALs to TS User CALs for TS CALs covered by SA under agreements signed on or before April 1, 2003.

Customers with current Software Assurance for CALs acquired after April 1, 2003 may switch their Device CALs to User CALs and User CAL to Device CALs upon renewal of their Software Assurance coverage for those CALs.

Q. What are TS transition CALs? Is everyone eligible to acquire them?

A. As part of the TS CAL Transition Plan, customers who had rights to Windows XP Professional licenses as of April 24, 2003 get rights to complimentary Windows Server 2003 TS CALs. These customers can then acquire Software Assurance, if they wish, for these complimentary TS CALs to gain the benefits of upgrade protection by acquiring these special TS transition CALs. In other words, the only customers eligible to acquire TS transition CALs are those customers who qualified to receive complimentary Windows Server 2003 TS CALs.