

Service Name

AWS License Manager

Service Overview

AWS License Manager is a service that helps organizations manage and track software licenses from various vendors, such as Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, and SAP, across multiple AWS regions and accounts. It offers consolidated visibility and comprehensive reporting for software license compliance at scale, reducing the risk of licensing overages and non-compliance. The service supports tracking of software that is licensed based on virtual cores, physical cores, sockets, or number of machines. License Manager allows administrators to set hard or soft limits on new and existing cloud deployments, helping prevent non-compliant server usage and provides built-in dashboards for ongoing visibility into license usage and assistance with vendor audits.

Key Use Cases

- **Bring Your Own License (BYOL) management:** Manage existing software licenses for use with cloud resources while maintaining compliance
- **License compliance tracking:** Monitor and enforce license usage across AWS and on-premises environments to prevent violations
- **Automated license discovery:** Automatically discover and track software installed on AWS resources including EC2 instances, RDS databases, and Elastic Beanstalk environments
- **Vendor audit preparation:** Provide comprehensive reporting and visibility to assist with software vendor audits and compliance verification
- **Cross-account license management:** Manage licenses across multiple AWS accounts and regions within an organization for centralized oversight

Features

- **Self-managed licenses:** Create and manage licensing rules based on enterprise agreements to determine how AWS processes license-consuming commands
- **License asset groups:** Provide organization-wide license management across multiple regions and accounts with centralized oversight and automated compliance monitoring
- **Automated discovery:** Automatically discover and track software installed on AWS resources, including uninstalled software tracking
- **Managed entitlements:** Enable ISVs to manage and distribute software licenses and data to end-users through centralized entitlement management
- **User-based subscriptions:** Associate licenses with specific users instead of instances for Microsoft Office and Visual Studio subscriptions

- **Linux subscriptions management:** Manage and track usage of Linux subscriptions including Red Hat and SUSE with conversion capabilities
- **License type conversions:** Convert instances from one license type to another and switch between different licensing models
- **Built-in dashboards:** Monitor license usage and compliance through comprehensive dashboards with real-time visibility

Value Proposition

AWS License Manager provides unique value by offering centralized license management across both cloud and on-premises environments with no additional charges. Key advantages include: automated compliance enforcement that prevents licensing violations through rule-based controls, significant cost savings through optimized BYOL opportunities and vCPU-based licensing cost reduction, comprehensive visibility with built-in dashboards for real-time license usage tracking, seamless integration with core AWS services like EC2, RDS, Systems Manager, and Organizations, and simplified vendor audit preparation with detailed reporting and compliance tracking. The service supports multiple licensing models including perpetual, floating, subscription, and usage-based licenses while using open industry standards for license representation and cryptographic verification.

Service Integration

AWS License Manager integrates deeply with core AWS services to provide comprehensive license management. Primary integrations include: Amazon EC2 for tracking instances, Dedicated Instances, Dedicated Hosts, and Spot Instances; Amazon RDS for Oracle and DB2 vCPU-based BYOL licenses; AWS Systems Manager for managed nodes and inventory collection; AWS Organizations for cross-account discovery and management; AWS IAM for access control and permissions; AWS Marketplace and AWS Data Exchange for license distribution; CloudFormation for infrastructure as code deployment; Service Quotas for limit management; AWS resource tagging for organization; and AWS X-Ray for monitoring. The service also works with AWS Managed Microsoft Active Directory for user subscription management and integrates with various launch mechanisms including EC2 launch templates and Service Catalog products.

Onboarding and Offboarding

Getting started with AWS License Manager involves opening the License Manager console and following prompts to configure permissions for License Manager and its supporting services. The initial setup process automatically configures necessary IAM roles and permissions:

- Customers can then create self-managed licenses by working with their compliance teams to review enterprise agreements and build appropriate licensing rules

- The service supports multiple onboarding paths including associating licenses with AMIs, using launch templates, CloudFormation templates, or Service Catalog products
- For organizations, administrators can enable trusted access with AWS Organizations to enable cross-account discovery and centralized management
- The setup process typically involves defining license terms as rules, configuring automated discovery for existing resources, and establishing monitoring through built-in dashboards

Getting Started Guide: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/license-manager/latest/userguide/getting-started.html>

Data Removal

License Manager data removal involves deactivating and deleting self-managed licenses, disassociating license configurations from AMIs and resources, and removing organizational integrations. When offboarding, administrators should first deactivate licenses to stop tracking, then systematically disassociate licenses from all tracked resources including EC2 instances and RDS databases. For Organizations integration, administrators must disable trusted access using the Organizations CLI or API. License configurations are automatically disassociated from deregistered AMIs every 8 hours, and all license tracking data is treated as sensitive customer data without AWS access.

Backup/Restore and Disaster Recovery

AWS License Manager does not provide traditional backup and disaster recovery capabilities as it is a management service rather than a data storage service. The service manages license metadata and configurations which are maintained by AWS infrastructure. License configurations and rules are stored within the AWS service infrastructure with built-in redundancy. For disaster recovery, customers should document their license configurations and rules as Infrastructure as Code using CloudFormation templates to enable recreation in alternate regions if needed. The service relies on AWS's underlying infrastructure resilience for availability and data protection.

Backup Capabilities

AWS License Manager does not have traditional backup capabilities as it manages license metadata rather than customer data. The service does not integrate with AWS Backup since license configurations are management constructs maintained by the AWS service infrastructure:

- License tracking data and configurations are automatically maintained by the service with built-in redundancy across AWS availability zones
- Customers should maintain documentation of their license rules and configurations, potentially using Infrastructure as Code approaches for reproducibility across regions or accounts

Disaster Recovery

AWS License Manager does not directly support AWS Elastic Disaster Recovery as it is a management service focused on license tracking rather than application recovery. The service relies on AWS's underlying infrastructure for resilience and availability:

- For disaster recovery planning, customers should document license configurations and consider using CloudFormation templates to recreate license rules in alternate regions
- Cross-region license tracking is not supported, so customers must establish separate license configurations in each region where they operate

Recovery Objectives

AWS License Manager supports recovery objectives indirectly by maintaining license compliance during infrastructure recovery scenarios. The service ensures license rules and tracking continue functioning across AWS infrastructure failures through built-in service resilience. During recovery scenarios, license configurations remain available to prevent compliance violations when launching new instances. However, specific RPO/RTO objectives are not applicable since License Manager manages configuration metadata rather than critical business data. The service contributes to overall recovery by maintaining license compliance throughout infrastructure restoration processes.

Service Constraints

Service Quotas: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/general/latest/gr/licensemanager.html>

FAQ: <https://aws.amazon.com/license-manager/faqs/>

Technical Requirements

Service Documentation: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/license-manager/latest/userguide/license-manager.html>

User Guide: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/license-manager/latest/userguide/>

API Reference: <https://docs.aws.amazon.com/license-manager/latest/APIReference/>

Pricing Overview

Please see the AWS UK G Cloud 15 Pricing Document accompanying this service in the Digital Marketplace.

Public Pricing: <https://aws.amazon.com/license-manager/pricing/>

Cost Optimization

AWS License Manager offers unique cost optimization through several mechanisms: BYOL cost savings by enabling customers to repurpose existing license inventory for cloud resources, potentially saving up to 50% on EC2 instance costs; vCPU-based licensing cost reduction through integration with Optimize CPU capability to track custom vCPU usage; automated license compliance to prevent costly licensing violations and penalties; license utilization optimization through tracking and reporting that identifies unused or underutilized licenses; Dedicated Hosts cost optimization for server-bound software licenses; and elimination of manual license tracking overhead. The service itself is provided at no additional charge, making license management cost-effective while enabling substantial savings through optimized license usage and compliance.

Savings Considerations

Primary cost savings from AWS License Manager include: significant BYOL savings through optimized license utilization and compliance, with potential reductions of up to 77% for Windows Server licenses and 45% for SQL Server licenses when migrating to AWS; prevention of costly licensing violations and audit penalties through automated compliance tracking; reduced administrative overhead by automating manual license management tasks; optimized resource utilization through right-sizing recommendations and license-to-resource matching; cost avoidance through proactive license limit enforcement preventing overages; and improved negotiating position with vendors through detailed usage analytics. Organizations can also achieve savings through centralized license management across multiple accounts and regions, reducing duplicate licensing costs and improving license pool utilization efficiency.