How To Plan For A SOLIDWORKS Upgrade

TITLE:	How To Plan For A SOLIDWORKS Upgrade	
DATE:	September 2026	
SUBJECT:	SOLIDWORKS Upgrade	
ABSTRACT:	Comprehensive guide on planning an upgrade for SOLIDWORKS	



This document is meant to give a general overview of the installation process and provide a simple checklist for system administrators getting ready to deploy SOLIDWORKS and PDM software. A detailed overview of the installation process is available through the Hawk Ridge Support Portal.

When implementing any updated version, compatibility is a significant concern. Network-based licensing requires that the license server be updated first to the new version. Without an updated license server, clients will be unable to check out a license for the new version. In PDM Standard and Professional PDM environments, clients must have the same major version as their target vault server.

Hawk Ridge Systems Recommends taking a moment before installing any SOLIDWORKS product to review our article: Before Installing SOLIDWORKS Products, to ensure that you are ready to load your new software.

This is not a troubleshooting guide. If you have any technical issues with SOLIDWORKS, please contact Hawk Ridge Systems technical support.

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SOLIDWORKS Standalone Installation

SOLIDWORKS standalone licensing is activation-based, meaning that each standalone license can only be activated on **one** machine at a time.

To see current supported software/hypervisor versions, check the SOLIDWORKS System Requirements page.

Operating Systems

	SOLIDWORKS 2025	SOLIDWORKS 2026	SOLIDWORKS 2027
Client Products (e.g. SOLIDWORKS)			
Windows 11, 64-bit	✓	✓	✓
Windows 10, 64-bit	✓	✗	✗
Server Products (e.g. SOLIDWORKS PDM, SNL Manager)			
Windows Server 2025	✓ (SW2025 SP3)	✓	✓
Windows Server 2022	✓	✓	✓
Windows Server 2019	✓	✗	✗
eDrawings for Mac			
macOS Golden Gate (27.0)	✗	✗	✓
macOS Tahoe (26.0)	✗	✓	✓ (End of Life: eDrawings 2028)
macOS Sequoia (15.0)	✓	✓	✓ (End of Life: eDrawings 2027)
macOS Sonoma (14.0)	✓	✓	✗
macOS Ventura (13.0)	✓	✗	✗

Hardware and Hypervisors

	SOLIDWORKS 2025	SOLIDWORKS 2026	SOLIDWORKS 2027
Hardware			
Processor	x86_64 (Intel 64 or AMD64)		
RAM	16 GB (32 GB recommended) PDM Contributor/Viewer or Electrical Schematic: 8 GB (16 GB recommended)		
Graphics / GPU	Certified cards and drivers		
Drives	SSD drives recommended for optimal performance		
Hypervisors (Virtual Environments)			
VMware vSphere ESXi	8.0.3 U3	8.0.3 U3g	To be announced
VMware Workstation	17.6.0	17.6.4	To be announced
Microsoft Hyper-V	2022	2025	To be announced
Parallels Desktop, Mac	20.2.0	26.0.1	To be announced
Citrix XenServer	To be announced	To be announced	To be announced

- SOLIDWORKS and eDrawings require a GPU for optimal performance in a virtualized environment.
- Check Hardware Benchmarks for applications and references that can be used to help determine hardware performance.
- SOLIDWORKS Composer is not supported in virtualized environments.

For more information on hardware recommendations for SOLIDWORKS, reference our guides below:

- Recommended Hardware Guide
- Comprehensive Hardware Guide

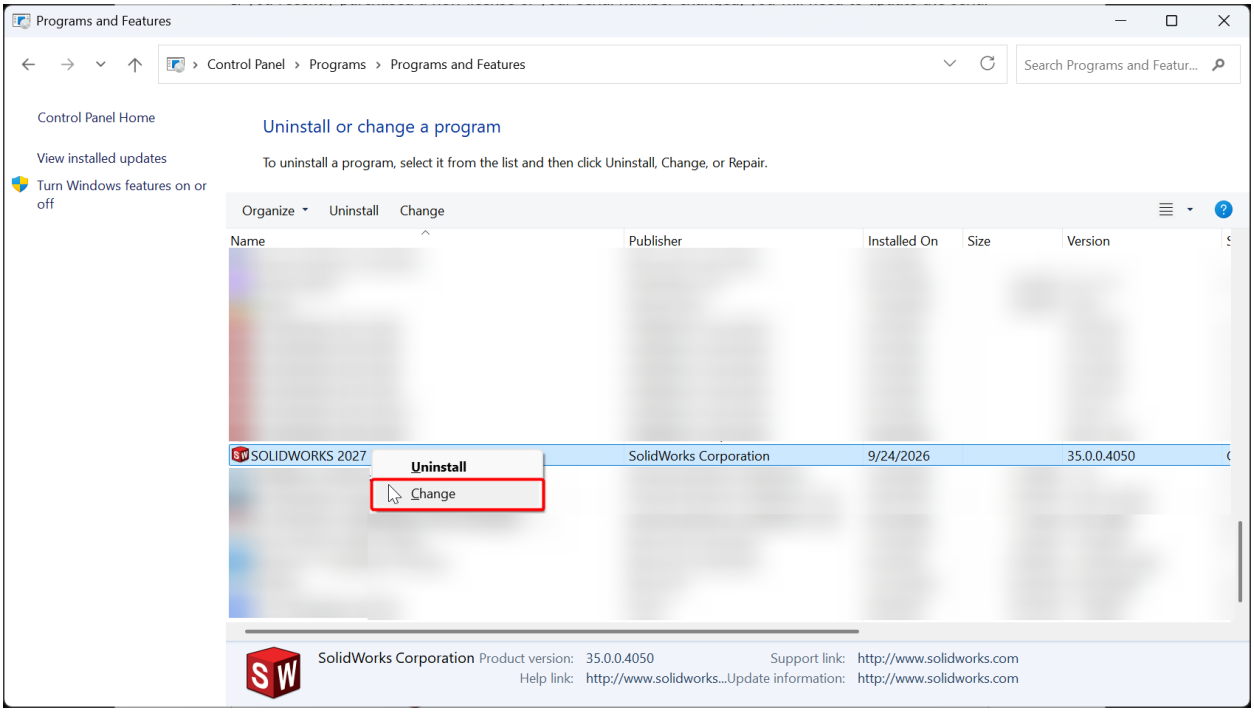
SOLIDWORKS requires a video card with a certified driver. It is best to update your video driver to the certified driver version found in the SOLIDWORKS Hardware Certification page, prior to installing SOLIDWORKS.

Licensing – Each standalone license can only be activated on one machine at a time. If you are planning to upgrade one computer from a previous version of SOLIDWORKS to a new version of SOLIDWORKS, the activation will carry over. However, if you need to switch machines or install SOLIDWORKS onto a new machine, you will first need to transfer your license from your old machine.

To transfer your license: open SOLIDWORKS, then use the Help icon (A question mark within a circle) > Licenses > Deactivate licenses. This feature deactivates the product on your current machine so it can be reactivated on the new machine. Then on the new computer, install SOLIDWORKS, and activate the license.

If you recently purchased a new license or your serial number changed, you will need to update the serial number that was used to install SOLIDWORKS. For example, if you purchased a new license of SOLIDWORKS Premium, and wanted to switch your license from your SOLIDWORKS Standard license. **Note: If you are looking to switch out your license serial number, you will need to first deactivate the license that is currently active on your machine.**

To change the serial number of your SOLIDWORKS installation, navigate to your Windows Control Panel, and select "Programs and Features." Find SOLIDWORKS 20XX in the list of programs, right click the program, and select Change.



This will launch the SOLIDWORKS installation manager. Select the option to "Modify your installation." Then input your new license serial number.

Access – A SOLIDWORKS installation requires the use of an administrator account.

Copy Settings Wizard – The Copy Settings Wizard can be used to copy all of the configurations of one SOLIDWORKS version to the next. Making it possible to backup and restore SOLIDWORKS configurations across year versions.

Upgrading the Hole Wizard/Toolbox – The Hole Wizard/Toolbox is a critical component of SOLIDWORKS. To avoid data loss, be sure to back up your Toolbox folder – usually found in the file path:

C:\SOLIDWORKS Data. For more information, please see our article: Updating the SOLIDWORKS Toolbox.

SOLIDWORKS Network Licensed Setup

The first step in a SOLIDWORKS upgrade is to upgrade the license server. License servers are backwards compatible but not forwards compatible. For example, if you plan to use SOLIDWORKS 2027, you must have an updated SOLIDWORKS 2027 license server. Users would still be able to use SOLIDWORKS 2025 and 2026 with a SOLIDWORKS 2027 SolidNetWork license manager. For a more detailed guide concerning network licensing, please see our guide: **How to Install The SolidNetWork License Manager (SNL) Server**. Note: SolidNetWork license manager server 2026 requires at least Windows Server 2022.

Network Server Version – Before starting the upgrade process, review the operation system compatibility below:

	SOLIDWORKS 2025	SOLIDWORKS 2026	SOLIDWORKS 2027
Server Products (e.g. SOLIDWORKS PDM, SNL Manager)			
Windows Server 2025	✓ (SW2025 SP3)	✓	✓
Windows Server 2022	✓	✓	✓
Windows Server 2019	✓	✗	✗

Support for virtual machines – Currently only the following virtual machine platforms will allow activation of the license server: VMWare, Microsoft Hyper-V, Parallels, and Citrix Xen.

Client Installation – The SOLIDWORKS network client installation is similar to a standalone installation. The network license key is used to install SOLIDWORKS, and no activation is required. All clients must be able to communicate with the license server on ports 25734 and 25735.

Migration from Standalone licensing – When switching workstations to use a network license, the first step will be to designate and install the SolidNetWork license manager on the new license server.

To remove the previous license activated on a client installation, the SOLIDWORKS installation will need to be modified to use the network serial number and receive their licenses from the license server. Follow this procedure to switch the serial numbers for the SOLIDWORKS installation using the Windows Control Panel > Programs and Features > right click the application and select change. This will provide you with the option to change the installed serial number and add the client's license manager.

Admin Image Deployment – Creating an admin image for deployment provides a method to create a single image to be pushed out to each client machine. Images can be customized per machine to change installation modules for specific workstations.

PDM Version – Before updating your clients and license server, it is essential to consider if you have an active PDM system as this system will need to be upgraded as well. With SOLIDWORKS Professional, Standard or Workgroup PDM clients, if you wish to use a newer version of SOLIDWORKS PDM, the PDM vault, and client software will need to be upgraded as well, A newer client will be unable to connect to an older vault.

License Troubleshooting – The most common error associated with a network license is the Windows firewall blocking access to the license server. Make sure that the 25734 and 25735 ports are open on all clients and inbound on the license server.

PDM Professional Installation

PDM Professional consists of three modules: The PDM Archive server, PDM Database server, and PDM clients. Each of these must be updated to work together. **Before upgrading, be sure to have a backup of your SQL database and vault data.** Once you have current backups, to complete the installation, you will need to have the logins for the SQL SA user account and the PDM vault admin account.

Change in licensing method – SOLIDWORKS 2015 added activation based licensing for PDM using the SolidNetWork license manager. Licenses for PDM are now managed through the SolidNetWork license server with the FlexNet License Manager, giving administrators real-time information on license usage.

SQL Server installation – PDM Professional does not include a copy of the SQL Server. Either a current installation will need to be used or a new installation will need to be created. Hawk Ridge Systems can provide licensing for SQL Server Standard if you should need it. PDM Standard only requires a SQL Express server that is included in your installation.

Vault and Client Version – PDM Professional clients can be up to two versions older than the server installation (i.e. a PDM Professional 2027 server will be able to communicate with a PDM 2027, 2026, or 2025 client).

Client Compatibility – CAD Editor

Operating Systems

	SOLIDWORKS 2025	SOLIDWORKS 2026	SOLIDWORKS 2027
Client Products (e.g. SOLIDWORKS)			
Windows 11, 64-bit	✓	✓	✓
Windows 10, 64-bit	✓	✗	✗
Server Products (e.g. SOLIDWORKS PDM, SNL Manager)			
Windows Server 2025	✓ (SW2025 SP3)	✓	✓
Windows Server 2022	✓	✓	✓
Windows Server 2019	✓	✗	✗

To see current supported software/hypervisor versions, check the SOLIDWORKS System Requirements page.

Database and Archive Server Compatibility

Note: SOLIDWORKS PDM Professional 2026 will be the last year version to support SQL Server 2019.

Microsoft/Apple Products Support Lifecycle (SOLIDWORKS 2025 - 2027)

Products	Start of Support	End of Support[1]
Windows 11, 64-bit	SW 2022 SP2	Active
Windows 10, 64-bit	SW 2015 SP5	SW 2025 SP5
Windows Server 2025	SW 2025 SP3	Active
Windows Server 2022	SW 2022 SP4	SW 2028 SP5
Windows Server 2019	SW 2019 SP3	SW 2025 SP5
SQL Server 2025	SW 2026 SP0	Active
SQL Server 2022	SW 2023 SP2	Active
SQL Server 2019	SW 2020 SP0	SW 2026 SP5
Word, Excel, PowerPoint 2024 (64-bit recommended)	SW 2025 SP3	Active
Word, Excel, PowerPoint 2021 (64-bit recommended)	SW 2022 SP2	SW 2026 SP5
macOS Golden Gate (27.0)	eDrawings 2027	eDrawings 2029
macOS Tahoe (26.0)	eDrawings 2026	eDrawings 2028
macOS Sequoia (15.0)	eDrawings 2025	eDrawings 2027
macOS Sonoma (14.0)	eDrawings 2024	eDrawings 2026
macOS Ventura (13.0)	eDrawings 2023	eDrawings 2025

For additional support, existing customers can submit a ticket or new customers can contact Hawk Ridge Systems.