
VM Import/Export

User Guide



VM Import/Export: User Guide

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What Is VM Import/Export?

VM Import/Export enables you to import virtual machine (VM) images from your existing virtualization environment to Amazon EC2, and then export them back. This enables you to migrate applications and workloads to Amazon EC2, copy your VM image catalog to Amazon EC2, or create a repository of VM images for backup and disaster recovery.

For more information, see [VM Import/Export](#).

Features of VM Import/Export

VM Import provides the following features:

- The ability to import a VM from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as an Amazon Machine Image (AMI). You can launch EC2 instances from your AMI any time.
- The ability to import a VM from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as an EC2 instance. The instance is initially in a `stopped` state. You can create an AMI from the instance.
- The ability to export a VM that was previously imported from your virtualization environment.
- The ability to import disks as Amazon EBS snapshots.

How to Get Started with VM Import/Export

First, you must decide whether you will import your VMs as AMIs or instances. To get started, read about how image import and instance import work. You can also read through the prerequisites and limitations of each method. For more information, see:

- [How VM Import/Export Works \(p. 3\)](#)
- [Importing a VM as an Image Using VM Import/Export \(p. 6\)](#)
- [Importing a VM as an Instance Using VM Import/Export \(p. 17\)](#)

Accessing VM Import/Export

You can access VM Import/Export using the following interfaces:

AWS Command Line Interface (CLI)

Provides commands for a broad set of AWS products, and is supported on Windows, Mac, and Linux. To get started, see [AWS Command Line Interface User Guide](#). For more information about the commands for Amazon EC2, see [ec2](#) in the *AWS Command Line Interface Reference*.

AWS Tools for Windows PowerShell

Provides commands for a broad set of AWS products for those who script in the PowerShell environment. To get started, see the [AWS Tools for Windows PowerShell User Guide](#). For more information about the cmdlets for Amazon EC2, see the [AWS Tools for Windows PowerShell Reference](#).

Amazon EC2 API

Amazon EC2 provides a Query API. These requests are HTTP or HTTPS requests that use the HTTP verbs GET or POST and a Query parameter named `Action`. For more information about the API actions for Amazon EC2, see [Actions](#) in the *Amazon EC2 API Reference*.

AWS SDKs and Tools

If you prefer to build applications using language-specific APIs instead of submitting a request over HTTP or HTTPS, AWS provides libraries, sample code, tutorials, and other resources for software developers. These libraries provide basic functions that automate tasks such as cryptographically signing your requests, retrying requests, and handling error responses, making it is easier for you to get started. For more information, see [AWS SDKs and Tools](#).

Pricing

With Amazon Web Services, you pay only for what you use. There is no additional fee to use VM Import/Export. You pay the standard fees for the S3 buckets and EBS volumes used during the import and export processes, and for the EC2 instances that you run.

Related Services

VM Import/Export works with the following services:

- To plan your application migration, you can use the Application Discovery Service. This service identifies assets, maps the dependencies between assets, and provides an inventory of assets that you can query. For more information, see the [Application Discovery Service User Guide](#).
- If you're using VMware vSphere, you can use the AWS Connector for vCenter to export a VM from VMware and import it into Amazon EC2. For more information, see [Migrating Your Virtual Machine to Amazon EC2 Using AWS Connector for vCenter](#) in the *AWS Management Portal for vCenter User Guide*.
- If you use Microsoft Systems Center, you can use AWS Systems Manager for Microsoft SCVMM to import Windows VMs from SCVMM to Amazon EC2. For more information, see [Importing Your Virtual Machine Using AWS Systems Manager for Microsoft SCVMM](#) in the *Amazon EC2 User Guide for Windows Instances*.

How VM Import/Export Works

To use your VM in Amazon EC2, you must first export it from the virtualization environment, and then import it into Amazon EC2 as either an Amazon Machine Image (AMI) or an instance.

Benefits

You can use VM Import/Export to migrate applications and workloads, copy your VM image catalog, or create a disaster recovery repository for VM images.

- **Migrate existing applications and workloads to Amazon EC2**—When you migrate your VM-based applications and workloads to Amazon EC2, you preserve their software and configuration settings. When you create an AMI from your VM, you can run multiple instances based on the same imported VM. You can also use the AMI to replicate your applications and workloads around the world using AMI copy. For more information, see [Copying an AMI](#) in the *Amazon EC2 User Guide for Linux Instances*.
- **Import your VM image catalog to Amazon EC2**— If you maintain a catalog of approved VM images, you can copy your image catalog to Amazon EC2 and create AMIs from the imported images. You can import your existing software, including products that you have installed such as anti-virus software, intrusion detection systems, and so on, along with your VM images. You can use the AMIs you create as your Amazon EC2 image catalog.
- **Create a disaster recovery repository for VM images**—You can import your local VM images into Amazon EC2 for backup and disaster recovery purposes. You can import your VMs and store them as AMIs. The AMIs you create will be ready to launch in Amazon EC2 when you need them. If your local environment suffers an event, you can quickly launch your instances to preserve business continuity while simultaneously exporting them to rebuild your local infrastructure.

Differences Between Image Import and Instance Import

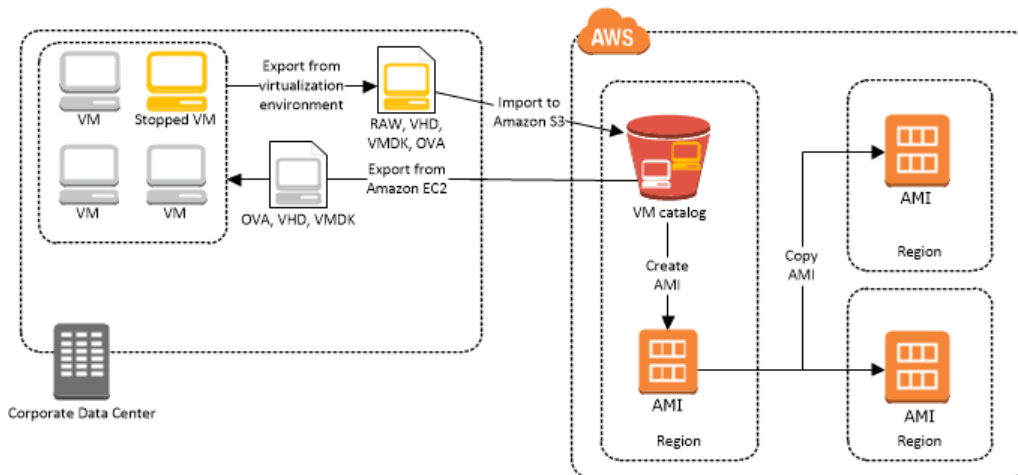
The following table summarizes the key differences between image import and instance import.

Characteristic	Image import	Instance import
CLI support	AWS CLI	Amazon EC2 CLI
Supported formats for import	OVA, VHD, VMDK, raw	VHD, VMDK, raw
Multi-disk support	✓	
Windows BYOL support	✓	

Image Import

First, you prepare your virtual machine for export, and then export it using one of the supported formats. Next, you start the import task, which uploads the VM image to Amazon S3 and creates an AMI. After the import task is complete, you can launch an instance from the AMI. If you want, you can copy the AMI to other regions so that you can launch instances in those regions.

The following diagram shows the process of exporting a VM from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as an AMI.



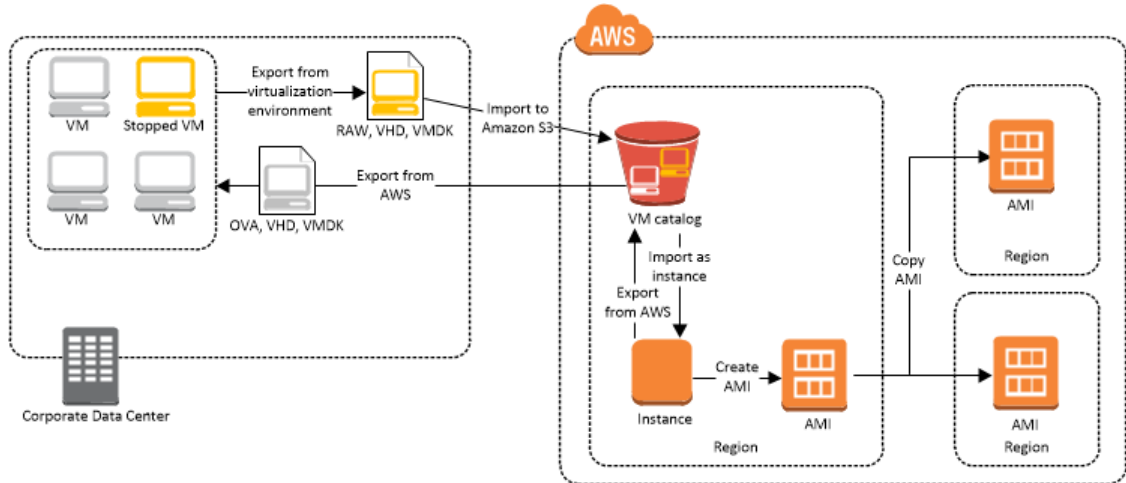
Instance Import

First, you prepare your virtual machine for export, and then export it using one of the supported formats. Next, you start the import task, which uploads the VM image to Amazon S3 and launches it as a stopped instance. After the import task is complete, you can create an AMI from the instance. If you want, you can copy the AMI to other regions so that you can launch instances in those regions. You can also export a previously imported instance to your virtualization environment.

The following diagram shows the process of exporting a VM from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as an instance.

VM Import/Export User Guide

Instance Import



Importing a VM as an Image Using VM Import/Export

You can use VM Import/Export to import virtual machine (VM) images from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as Amazon Machine Images (AMI), which you can use to launch instances. Subsequently, you can export the VM images from an instance back to your virtualization environment. This enables you to leverage your investments in the VMs that you have built to meet your IT security, configuration management, and compliance requirements by bringing them into Amazon EC2.

Contents

- [Prerequisites \(p. 6\)](#)
- [Limitations \(p. 8\)](#)
- [Required Permissions for IAM Users \(p. 9\)](#)
- [Step 1: Prepare Your VM \(p. 10\)](#)
- [Step 2: Export Your VM from its Virtualization Environment \(p. 12\)](#)
- [Step 3: Import Your VM as an Image \(p. 12\)](#)

Prerequisites

You can import or export a VM using the AWS CLI. If you have not already installed the AWS CLI, see the [AWS Command Line Interface User Guide](#).

Before you begin, you must be aware of the operating systems and image formats that VM Import/Export supports, and understand the limitations on importing instances and volumes.

Operating Systems

The following operating systems can be imported to and exported from Amazon EC2.

Windows (32- and 64-bit)

- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 (Standard, Datacenter, Enterprise) with Service Pack 1 (SP1) or later (32- and 64-bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2 (Standard, Datacenter, Enterprise) (32- and 64-bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 (Standard, Datacenter, Enterprise) (32- and 64-bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 (Standard, Datacenter, Enterprise) (64-bit only)

- Microsoft Windows Server 2012 (Standard, Datacenter) (64-bit only)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2 (Standard, Datacenter) (64-bit only)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2016 (Standard, Datacenter) (64-bit only)
- Microsoft Windows 7 (Professional, Enterprise, Ultimate) (US English) (32- and 64-bit)
- Microsoft Windows 8 (Professional, Enterprise) (US English) (32- and 64-bit)
- Microsoft Windows 8.1 (Professional, Enterprise) (US English) (64-bit only)
- Microsoft Windows 10 (Home, Professional, Enterprise, Education) (US English) (64-bit only)

Linux/Unix (64-bit)

- Ubuntu 12.04, 12.10, 13.04, 13.10, 14.04, 14.10, 15.04
- Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) 5.1-5.11, 6.1-6.6, 7.0-7.1 (6.0 lacks required drivers)
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 11
 - Service Pack 1 - 2.6.32.12-0.7
 - Service Pack 2 - 3.0.13-0.27
 - Service Pack 3 - 3.0.76-0.11, 3.0.101-0.8, and 3.0.101-0.15
 - Service Pack 4 - 3.0.101-63
- SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 12
 - 3.12.28-4
 - Service Pack 1 - 3.12.49-11
- CentOS 5.1-5.11, 6.1-6.6, 7.0-7.2 (6.0 lacks required drivers)
- Debian 6.0.0-6.0.8, 7.0.0-7.8.0, 8.0.0
- Oracle Linux 6.1-6.6, 7.0-7.1
- Fedora Server 19-21

Image Formats

VM Import/Export supports the following image formats for importing both disks and VMs:

- Open Virtual Appliance (OVA) image format, which supports importing images with multiple hard disks.
- Stream-optimized ESX Virtual Machine Disk (VMDK) image format, which is compatible with VMware ESX and VMware vSphere virtualization products. Note that you can only import VMDK files into Amazon EC2 that were created through the OVF export process in VMware.
- Fixed and Dynamic Virtual Hard Disk (VHD) image formats, which are compatible with Microsoft Hyper-V and Citrix Xen virtualization products. Note that VHDX images are not supported, and you must export dynamic VHDs instead of fixed VHDs.
- Raw format for importing disks and VMs.

Instance Types

VM Import/Export supports importing Windows instances into most instance types. For more information about using Windows and other Microsoft products within AWS, including "bring your own license" (BYOL), see [Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Linux instances can be imported into the following instance types:

- **General purpose:** t2.micro | t2.small | t2.medium | m3.medium | m3.large | m3.xlarge | m3.2xlarge

- Compute optimized: c3.large | c3.xlarge | c3.2xlarge | c3.4xlarge | c3.8xlarge | cc1.4xlarge
- Memory optimized: r3.large | r3.xlarge | r3.2xlarge | r3.4xlarge | r3.8xlarge
- Storage optimized: i2.xlarge | i2.2xlarge | i2.4xlarge | i2.8xlarge

Volume Types and File Systems

VM Import/Export supports importing Windows and Linux instances with the following file systems:

Windows (32- and 64-bit)

MBR-partitioned volumes that are formatted using the NTFS file system. GUID Partition Table (GPT) partitioned volumes are not supported.

Linux/Unix (64-bit)

MBR-partitioned volumes that are formatted using the ext2, ext3, ext4, Btrfs, JFS, or XFS file system. GUID Partition Table (GPT) partitioned volumes are not supported.

Limitations

Importing AMIs and snapshots is subject to the following limitations:

- EFI partitions are not supported.
- You can have up to 20 import image or snapshots tasks per region in progress at the same time. To request an increase to this limit, contact AWS Support. Tasks must complete within 7 days of the start date.
- VM Import creates AMIs that use Hardware Virtual Machine (HVM) virtualization. VM Import can't create AMIs that use Paravirtual (PV) virtualization. Linux PVHVM drivers are supported within imported VMs.
- Imported Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) VMs must use Cloud Access (BYOL) licenses. For more information, see [Red Hat Cloud Access](#) on the Red Hat website.
- Imported SUSE Linux Enterprise Server VMs must use SUSE Public Cloud Program (BYOS) licenses. For more information, see [SUSE Public Cloud Program—Bring Your Own Subscription](#).
- Imported Linux VMs must use 64-bit images. Importing 32-bit Linux images is not supported.
- Imported Linux VMs should use default kernels for best results. VMs that use custom Linux kernels might not import successfully.
- Typically, you import a compressed version of a disk image; the expanded disk image can't exceed 1 TiB.
- Make sure that you have at least 250 MB of available disk space for installing drivers and other software on any VM you want to import into an Amazon EC2 AMI running Microsoft Windows or Linux.
- Multiple network interfaces are not currently supported. When converted and imported, your VM will have a single virtual network interface that uses DHCP to assign addresses. Your instance receives a private IP address.
- A VM imported into a VPC does not receive a public IP address, regardless of the auto-assign public IP setting for the subnet. Instead, you can allocate an Elastic IP address to your account and associate it with your instance.
- Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) IP addresses are not supported.
- For vCenter 4.0 and vSphere 4.0 users, remove any attached CD-ROM images or ISOs from the virtual machine.

- VMs that are created as the result of a P2V conversion are not supported. A P2V conversion occurs when a disk image is created by performing a Linux or Windows installation process on a physical machine and then importing a copy of that Linux or Windows installation to a VM.
- VM Import/Export does not install the single root I/O virtualization (SR-IOV) drivers except with imports of Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2 VMs. These drivers are not required unless you plan to use enhanced networking, which provides higher performance (packets per second), lower latency, and lower jitter. For Microsoft Windows Server 2012 R2 VMs, SR-IOV drivers are automatically installed as a part of the import process.
- When you use your own Microsoft licenses, such as through MSDN or [Windows Software Assurance Per User](#), to run Microsoft Software on AWS through a bring your own license (BYOL) model, the following apply:
 - Your BYOL instances will be priced at the prevailing Amazon EC2 Linux instance pricing, provided that you (a) run on a Dedicated Instance ([Dedicated Instances](#)); (b) launch from VMs sourced from software binaries provided by you using VM Import/Export, which will be subject to the then-current terms and abilities of VM Import/Export; (c) designate the instances as BYOL instances; (d) run the instances within your designated AWS regions, and where AWS offers the BYOL model; and (e) activate using Microsoft keys that you provide or are used in your Key Management System.
 - You must account for the fact that when you start an Amazon EC2 instance, it can run on any one of many servers within an Availability Zone. This means that each time you start an Amazon EC2 instance (including a stop/start), it may run on a different server within an Availability Zone. You must account for this fact in light of the limitations on license reassignment as described in the Microsoft Volume Licensing Product Use Rights (PUR)/Product Terms (PT) available at [Volume Licensing for Microsoft Products and Online Services](#), or consult your specific use rights to determine if your rights are consistent with this usage.
 - You must be eligible to use the BYOL program for the applicable Microsoft software under your agreement(s) with Microsoft, for example, under your MSDN user rights or under your Windows Software Assurance Per User Rights. You are solely responsible for obtaining all required licenses and for complying with all applicable Microsoft licensing requirements, including the PUR/PT. Further, you must have accepted Microsoft's End User License Agreement (Microsoft EULA), and by using the Microsoft Software under the BYOL program, you agree to the Microsoft EULA.
 - AWS recommends that you consult with your own legal and other advisers to understand and comply with the applicable Microsoft licensing requirements. Usage of the Services (including usage of the **licenseType** parameter and **BYOL** flag) in violation of your agreement(s) with Microsoft is not authorized or permitted.

Required Permissions for IAM Users

If you're logged on as an AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) user, you'll need the following permissions in your IAM policy to use VM Import/Export:

```
{
  "Version": "2012-10-17",
  "Statement": [
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
        "s3:ListAllMyBuckets"
      ],
      "Resource": "*"
    },
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
```

```
        "s3:CreateBucket",
        "s3>DeleteBucket",
        "s3>DeleteObject",
        "s3:GetBucketLocation",
        "s3:GetObject",
        "s3:ListBucket",
        "s3:PutObject"
    ],
    "Resource": [ "arn:aws:s3:::mys3bucket", "arn:aws:s3:::mys3bucket/*" ]
},
{
    "Effect": "Allow",
    "Action": [
        "ec2:CancelConversionTask",
        "ec2:CancelExportTask",
        "ec2:CreateImage",
        "ec2:CreateInstanceExportTask",
        "ec2:CreateTags",
        "ec2>DeleteTags",
        "ec2:DescribeConversionTasks",
        "ec2:DescribeExportTasks",
        "ec2:DescribeInstanceAttribute",
        "ec2:DescribeInstanceStatus",
        "ec2:DescribeInstances",
        "ec2:DescribeTags",
        "ec2:ImportInstance",
        "ec2:ImportVolume",
        "ec2:StartInstances",
        "ec2:StopInstances",
        "ec2:TerminateInstances",
        "ec2:ImportImage",
        "ec2:ImportSnapshot",
        "ec2:DescribeImportImageTasks",
        "ec2:DescribeImportSnapshotTasks",
        "ec2:CancelImportTask"
    ],
    "Resource": "*"
}
]
```

Step 1: Prepare Your VM

Use the following guidelines to configure your VM before exporting it from the virtualization environment.

General

- Review the prerequisites. For more information, see [Prerequisites \(p. 6\)](#).
- Install the AWS CLI on your virtual machine to import it to Amazon EC2. For more information, see [Installing the AWS Command Line Interface](#) in the *AWS Command Line Interface User Guide*.
- Disable any antivirus or intrusion detection software on your VM. These services can be re-enabled after the import process is complete.
- Uninstall the VMware Tools from your VMware VM.
- Disconnect any CD-ROM drives (virtual or physical).

- Set your network to DHCP instead of a static IP address. If you want to assign a static private IP address, be sure to use a non-reserved private IP address in your VPC subnet. Amazon Virtual Private Cloud (Amazon VPC) reserves the first four private IP addresses in a VPC subnet.
- Shut down your VM before exporting it.

Windows

- Enable Remote Desktop (RDP) for remote access.
- Make sure that your host firewall (Windows firewall or similar), if configured, allows access to RDP. Otherwise, you will not be able to access your instance after the import is complete.
- Make sure that the administrator account and all other user accounts use secure passwords. All accounts must have passwords or the importation might fail.
- Make sure that your Windows VM has .NET Framework 3.5 or later installed, as required by [Amazon Windows EC2Config Service](#).
- You can run System Preparation (Sysprep) on your Windows Server 2008 or Windows Server 2012 VM images before or after they are imported. If you run Sysprep before importing your VM, the importation process adds an answer file (`unattend.xml`) to the VM that automatically accepts the End User License Agreement (EULA) and sets the locale to EN-US. If you choose to run Sysprep after importation, we recommend that you use the Amazon EC2 Config service to run Sysprep.

To include your own answer file instead of the default (`unattend.xml`)

1. Copy the following sample file below and set the **processorArchitecture** parameter to **x86** or **amd64**, depending on your OS architecture:

```
<?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8'?>
<unattend xmlns:wcm='http://schemas.microsoft.com/WMIConfig/2002/State'
  xmlns='urn:schemas-microsoft-com:unattend'>
  <settings pass='oobeSystem'>
    <component versionScope='nonSxS' processorArchitecture='x86
or amd64' name='Microsoft-Windows-International-Core'
  publicKeyToken='31bf3856ad364e35' language='neutral'>
      <InputLocale>en-US</InputLocale>
      <SystemLocale>en-US</SystemLocale>
      <UILanguage>en-US</UILanguage>
      <UserLocale>en-US</UserLocale>
    </component>
    <component versionScope='nonSxS' processorArchitecture='x86 or amd64'
  name='Microsoft-Windows-Shell-Setup' publicKeyToken='31bf3856ad364e35'
  language='neutral'>
      <OOBE>
        <HideEULAPage>true</HideEULAPage>
        <SkipMachineOOBE>true</SkipMachineOOBE>
        <SkipUserOOBE>true</SkipUserOOBE>
      </OOBE>
    </component>
  </settings>
</unattend>
```

2. Save the file in the **C:\Windows\Panther** directory with the name `unattend.xml`.
3. Run Sysprep with the **/oobe** and **/generalize** options.

Note

These options strip all unique system information from the Microsoft Windows installation and prompt you to reset the administrator password.

4. Shut down the VM and export it from your virtualization environment.

- Disable Autologon on your Windows VM.
- Open **Control Panel > System and Security > Windows Update**. In the left pane, choose **Change settings**. Choose the desired setting. Be aware that if you choose **Download updates but let me choose whether to install them** (the default value) the update check can temporarily consume between 50% and 99% of CPU resources on the instance. The check usually occurs several minutes after the instance starts. Make sure that there are no pending Microsoft updates, and that the computer is not set to install software when it reboots.
- Apply the following hotfixes:
 - [You cannot change system time if RealTimeIsUniversal registry entry is enabled in Windows](#)
 - [High CPU usage during DST changeover in Windows Server 2008, Windows 7, or Windows Server 2008 R2](#)
- Set the RealTimeIsUniversal registry key. For more information, see [Setting the Time](#) in the *Amazon EC2 User Guide for Windows Instances*.

Linux

- Enable Secure Shell (SSH) for remote access.
- Make sure that your host firewall (such as Linux iptables) allows access to SSH. Otherwise, you won't be able to access your instance after the import is complete.
- Make sure that you have configured a non-root user to use public key-based SSH to access your instance after it is imported. The use of password-based SSH and root login over SSH are both possible, but not recommended. The use of public keys and a non-root user is recommended because it is more secure. VM Import will not configure an `ec2-user` account as part of the import process.
- Make sure that your Linux VM uses GRUB (GRUB legacy) or GRUB 2 as its bootloader.
- Make sure that your Linux VM uses one of the following for the root file system: EXT2, EXT3, EXT4, Btrfs, JFS, or XFS.

Step 2: Export Your VM from its Virtualization Environment

After you have prepared your VM for export, you can export it from your virtualization environment. When importing a VM as an image, you can import disks in the following formats: Open Virtualization Archive (OVA), Virtual Machine Disk (VMDK), Virtual Hard Disk (VHD), and raw. With some virtualization environments, you would export to Open Virtualization Format (OVF), which typically includes one or more VMDK or VHD files.

For more information, see the documentation for your virtualization environment. For example:

- **VMware** — [Export an OVF Template](#) on the VMware website
- **Citrix** — [Export VMs as OVF/OVA](#) on the Citrix website
- **Microsoft Hyper-V** — [Overview of exporting and importing a virtual machine](#) on the Microsoft website

Step 3: Import Your VM as an Image

After exporting your VM from your virtualization environment, you can import it to Amazon EC2. The import process is the same regardless of the origin of the VM.

Tasks

- [Prerequisites \(p. 13\)](#)
- [Import the VM \(p. 14\)](#)
- [Check the Status of the Import Task \(p. 15\)](#)
- [\(Optional\) Cancel an Import Task \(p. 16\)](#)
- [Next Steps \(p. 16\)](#)

Prerequisites

You must provide an Amazon S3 bucket and an IAM role named `vmimport`.

Amazon S3 Bucket

VM Import requires an Amazon S3 bucket to store your disk images, in the region where you want to import your VMs. You can create a bucket as follows, or use an existing bucket if you prefer.

(Optional) To create an S3 bucket

1. Open the Amazon S3 console at <https://console.aws.amazon.com/s3/>.
2. Choose **Create Bucket**.
3. In the **Create a Bucket** dialog box, do the following:
 - a. For **Bucket Name**, type a name for your bucket. This name must be unique across all existing bucket names in Amazon S3. In some regions, there might be additional restrictions on bucket names. For more information, see [Bucket Restrictions and Limitations](#) in the *Amazon Simple Storage Service Developer Guide*.
 - b. For **Region**, select the region that you want for your AMI.
 - c. Choose **Create**.

VM Import Service Role

VM Import requires a role to perform certain operations, such as downloading disk images from an Amazon S3 bucket. You must create a role with the name `vmimport` with the following policy and trusted entities.

To create the service role

1. Create a file named `trust-policy.json` with the following policy:

```
{
  "Version": "2012-10-17",
  "Statement": [
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Principal": { "Service": "vmie.amazonaws.com" },
      "Action": "sts:AssumeRole",
      "Condition": {
        "StringEquals": {
          "sts:Externalid": "vmimport"
        }
      }
    }
  ]
}
```

2. Use the `create-role` command to create a role named `vmimport` and give VM Import/Export access to it.

```
aws iam create-role --role-name vmimport --assume-role-policy-document
file://trust-policy.json
```

3. Create a file named `role-policy.json` with the following policy, where `disk-image-file-bucket` is the bucket where the disk images are stored:

```
{
  "Version": "2012-10-17",
  "Statement": [
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
        "s3:ListBucket",
        "s3:GetBucketLocation"
      ],
      "Resource": [
        "arn:aws:s3:::disk-image-file-bucket"
      ]
    },
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
        "s3:GetObject"
      ],
      "Resource": [
        "arn:aws:s3:::disk-image-file-bucket/*"
      ]
    },
    {
      "Effect": "Allow",
      "Action": [
        "ec2:ModifySnapshotAttribute",
        "ec2:CopySnapshot",
        "ec2:RegisterImage",
        "ec2:Describe*"
      ],
      "Resource": "*"
    }
  ]
}
```

4. Use the following `put-role-policy` command to attach the policy to the role created above:

```
aws iam put-role-policy --role-name vmimport --policy-name vmimport --
policy-document file://role-policy.json
```

For more information about IAM roles, see [IAM Roles](#) in the *IAM User Guide*.

Import the VM

You can upload your VMs to your Amazon S3 bucket using the upload tool of your choice. After you upload your VM to Amazon S3, you can use the AWS CLI to import the image. These tools accept

either a URL (public Amazon S3 file, a signed GET URL for private Amazon S3 files) or the Amazon S3 bucket and path to the disk file.

Use the `import-image` command to create an import image task.

Example 1: Import an OVA

```
aws ec2 import-image --description "Windows 2008 OVA" --disk-containers
file://containers.json
```

The following is an example `containers.json` file.

```
[
  {
    "Description": "Windows 2008 OVA",
    "Format": "ova",
    "UserBucket": {
      "S3Bucket": "my-import-bucket",
      "S3Key": "vms/my-windows-2008-vm.ova"
    }
  }
]
```

Example 2: Import Multiple Disks

```
aws ec2 import-image --description "Windows 2008 VMDKs" --disk-containers
file://containers.json
```

The following is an example `containers.json` file.

```
[
  {
    "Description": "First disk",
    "Format": "vmdk",
    "UserBucket": {
      "S3Bucket": "my-import-bucket",
      "S3Key": "disks/my-windows-2008-vm-disk1.vmdk"
    }
  },
  {
    "Description": "Second disk",
    "Format": "vmdk",
    "UserBucket": {
      "S3Bucket": "my-import-bucket",
      "S3Key": "disks/my-windows-2008-vm-disk2.vmdk"
    }
  }
]
```

Check the Status of the Import Task

Use the `describe-import-image-tasks` command to return the status of an import task.

Status values include the following:

- `active` — The import task is in progress.

- `deleting` — The import task is being canceled.
- `deleted` — The import task is canceled.
- `completed` — The import task is completed and the AMI is ready to use.

```
aws ec2 describe-import-image-tasks --import-task-ids import-ami-fgxn195v
```

(Optional) Cancel an Import Task

Use the `cancel-import-task` command to cancel an active import task.

```
aws ec2 cancel-import-task --import-task-id import-ami-fg4z7c9h
```

Next Steps

Now that you have an AMI, you can launch it as an instance or copy it to another region. For more information, see the following topics in the Amazon EC2 documentation.

Windows

- [Launching an Instance](#)
- [Installing the Latest Version of EC2Config](#) (recommended)
- [Copying an AMI](#)

Linux

- [Launching an Instance](#)
- [Copying an AMI](#)

Importing a VM as an Instance Using VM Import/Export

You can use VM Import/Export to import virtual machine (VM) images from your virtualization environment to Amazon EC2 as instances. Subsequently, you can export the VM images from the instance back to your virtualization environment. This enables you to leverage your investments in the VMs that you have built to meet your IT security, configuration management, and compliance requirements by bringing them into Amazon EC2.

To import your VM to Amazon EC2 as an instance, you must first export it from your virtualization environment, and then import it to Amazon EC2 using the Amazon EC2 CLI. For more information, see [Importing a Virtual Machine Using the Amazon EC2 CLI](#) in the *Amazon EC2 Command Line Reference*.

Note that the AWS CLI does not support importing a VM as an instance. If you prefer to use the AWS CLI, you must import the VM as an Amazon Machine Image (AMI) instead. For more information, see [Importing a VM as an Image Using VM Import/Export \(p. 6\)](#).

If you're importing a Windows instance that uses the bring your own license (BYOL) model, you must import the VM as an AMI instead. For more information, see [Importing a VM as an Image Using VM Import/Export \(p. 6\)](#).

If you're importing a VM from VMware vCenter, you can alternatively use the AWS Connector for vCenter to export a VM from VMware and import it to Amazon EC2. For more information, see [Migrating Your Virtual Machine to Amazon EC2 Using AWS Connector for vCenter](#) in the *AWS Management Portal for vCenter User Guide*.

Importing a Disk as a Snapshot Using VM Import/Export

VM Import/Export enables you to import your disks as Amazon EBS snapshots. You can create an EBS volume from an EBS snapshot, and then attach the volume to an instance.

Prerequisites

- The following disk formats are supported: Virtual Hard Disk (VHD), ESX Virtual Machine Disk (VMDK), and raw.
- You must first upload your disks to Amazon S3.

To import a disk image

1. Use the following `import-snapshot` command to import a disk. You can specify the URL of the S3 bucket, or provide the S3 bucket name and key.

The following is an example response:

```
{
  "ImportTaskId": "import-snap-ffy5pvea",
  "SnapshotTaskDetail": [
    {
      "DiskImageSize": 0.0
      "Progress": "3",
      "Status": "active",
      "Description": "Windows 2008 VMDK",
      "UserBucket": {
        "S3Bucket": "mys3bucket",
        "S3Key": "vms/Win_2008_Server_Enterprise_R2_64-bit.vmdk"
      },
      "StatusMessage": "pending"
    }
  ],
}
```

```
    "Description": "Windows 2008 VMDK"
  }
```

2. Use the [describe-import-snapshot-tasks](#) command to confirm that your snapshot imported successfully.

```
aws ec2 describe-import-snapshot-tasks --import-task-ids import-snap-fgr1mmg7
```

The following is an example response. The status shown is **active**, which means the import is in progress.

```
{
  "ImportSnapshotTasks": [
    {
      "SnapshotTaskDetail": [
        {
          "DiskImageSize": "3.115815424E9",
          "Progress": "22",
          "Status": "active",
          "Description": "Windows 2008 VMDK",
          "Format": "VMDK",
          "UserBucket": {
            "S3Bucket": "mys3bucket",
            "S3Key": "vms/Win_2008_Server_Enterprise_R2_64-bit.vmdk"
          },
          "StatusMessage": "Validated"
        },
        {
          "ImportTaskId": "import-snap-fgr1mmg7",
          "Description": "Windows 2008 VMDK"
        }
      ]
    }
  ]
}
```

3. Use the following [create-volume](#) command to create a volume from the snapshot. You must select the Availability Zone of the instance to which you'll attach the volume.

```
aws ec2 create-volume --availability-zone us-east-1a --snapshot-id snap-1234567890abcdef0
```

The following is example output:

```
{
  "AvailabilityZone": "us-east-1a",
  "VolumeId": "vol-1234567890abcdef0",
  "State": "creating",
  "SnapshotId": "snap-1234567890abcdef0"
}
```

4. Use the following [attach-volume](#) command to attach the EBS volume that you created in the previous step to one of your existing instances.

```
aws ec2 attach-volume --volume-id vol-1234567890abcdef0 --instance-id i-1234567890abcdef0 --device /dev/sdf
```

The following is example output:

```
{
  "AttachTime": "YYYY-MM-DDTHH:MM:SS.000Z",
  "InstanceId": "i-1234567890abcdef0",
  "VolumeId": "vol-1234567890abcdef0",
  "State": "attaching",
  "Device": "/dev/sdf"
}
```


Exporting an Instance as a VM Using VM Import/Export

If you have previously imported a virtual machine into Amazon EC2, you can export that EC2 instance to Citrix Xen, Microsoft Hyper-V, or VMware vSphere. Exporting an instance that you previously imported is useful when you want to deploy a copy of your EC2 instance in your on-site virtualization environment.

Important

When you export an instance, you are charged the standard Amazon S3 rates for the bucket where the exported VM is stored. In addition, there might be a small charge for the temporary use of an Amazon EBS snapshot. For more information about Amazon S3 pricing, see [Amazon Simple Storage Service Pricing](#).

If you're using VMware vSphere, you can alternatively use the AWS Connector for vCenter to export a VM from Amazon EC2. For more information, see [Exporting a Migrated Amazon EC2 Instance](#) in the *AWS Management Portal for vCenter User Guide*.

Contents

- [Prerequisites](#) (p. 21)
- [Limitations](#) (p. 22)
- [Export an Instance](#) (p. 23)
- [Monitor Instance Export](#) (p. 23)
- [Cancel or Stop Instance Export](#) (p. 23)

Prerequisites

To export a VM from Amazon EC2, install the AWS CLI on the instance. For more information, see the [AWS Command Line Interface User Guide](#).

You can create an Amazon S3 bucket for storing the exported instances and grant VM Import/Export permission to access the bucket. If you already have a bucket and want to use it, you can use it instead of creating a bucket.

(Optional) To create an S3 bucket

1. Open the Amazon S3 console at <https://console.aws.amazon.com/s3/>.
2. Choose **Create Bucket**.

3. In the **Create a Bucket** dialog box, do the following:
 - a. For **Bucket Name**, type a name for your bucket. This name must be unique across all existing bucket names in Amazon S3. In some regions, there might be additional restrictions on bucket names. For more information, see [Bucket Restrictions and Limitations](#) in the *Amazon Simple Storage Service Developer Guide*.
 - b. For **Region**, select a region.
 - c. Choose **Create**.

The `vm-import-export@amazon.com` account must have **Upload/Delete** and **View Permissions** access to the S3 bucket.

To grant VM Import/Export permissions to your bucket

1. Open the Amazon S3 console at <https://console.aws.amazon.com/s3/>.
2. Select the bucket, and then choose **Properties**.
3. Under **Permissions**, choose **Add more permissions**.
4. For **Grantee**, type `vm-import-export@amazon.com`.

Instead of specifying the `vm-import-export@amazon.com` account, you can also use the following region-specific canonical IDs:

- **China (Beijing)**: 834bafd86b15b6ca71074df0fd1f93d234b9d5e848a2cb31f880c149003ce36f
- **AWS GovCloud (US)**:
af913ca13efe7a94b88392711f6cfc8aa07c9d1454d4f190a624b126733a5602
- **All other regions**:
c4d8eabf8db69dbe46bfe0e517100c554f01200b104d59cd408e777ba442a322

Note

You cannot use an email address such as `vm-import-export@amazon.com` to specify a grantee for any AWS region that was created after 12/8/2014. The following regions were created after 12/8/2014: Asia Pacific (Mumbai), Asia Pacific (Seoul), EU (Frankfurt), China (Beijing), and AWS GovCloud (US) regions. In these regions, you must use the canonical ID.

5. Select **Upload/Delete** and **View Permissions**.
6. Choose **Save**.

For more information, see [Editing Bucket Permissions](#) in the *Amazon Simple Storage Service Console User Guide*.

Limitations

Exporting instances and volumes is subject to the following limitations:

- You can't export an instance from Amazon EC2 unless you previously imported it into Amazon EC2 from another virtualization environment.
- You must export your instances and volumes to one of the following image formats that your virtualization environment supports:
 - Open Virtual Appliance (OVA), which is compatible with VMware vSphere versions 4 and 5.
 - Virtual Hard Disk (VHD), which is compatible with Citrix Xen and Microsoft Hyper-V virtualization products.

- Stream-optimized ESX Virtual Machine Disk (VMDK), which is compatible with VMware ESX and VMware vSphere versions 4 and 5.
- You can't export Amazon EBS data volumes.
- You can't export an instance that has more than one virtual disk.
- You can't export an instance that uses a fixed Virtual Hard Disk (VHD).
- You can't export an instance that has more than one network interface.
- You can't export an instance from Amazon EC2 if you've shared it from another AWS account.
- You can't have more than five export tasks per region in progress at the same time.

Export an Instance

To export your instance, use the [create-instance-export-task](#) command. You must provide the information required to properly export the instance to the selected virtualization format. The exported file is saved in the S3 bucket that you specify.

```
aws ec2 create-instance-export-task --instance-id id --target-  
environment target_environment \  
--export-to-s3-task  
DiskImageFormat=disk_image_format,ContainerFormat=ova,S3Bucket=bucket,S3Prefix=prefix
```

Options

id

The ID of the instance.

target_environment

The target environment (vmware | citrix | microsoft).

disk_image_format

The disk image format (VMDK | VHD).

bucket

The name of the S3 bucket.

prefix

The image is written to an object in the S3 bucket using the following S3 key: *prefix/export-i-xxxxxxx.format* (for example, my-exports/export-i-12345678.ova).

Monitor Instance Export

To monitor the export of your instance, use the following [describe-export-tasks](#) command:

```
aws ec2 describe-export-tasks --export-task-ids export-i-12345678
```

Cancel or Stop Instance Export

You can use the following [cancel-export-task](#) command to cancel or stop the export of an instance up to the point of completion.

```
aws ec2 cancel-export-task --export-task-id export-i-12345678
```

The **cancel-export-task** command removes all artifacts of the export, including any partially created Amazon S3 objects. If the export task is complete or is in the process of transferring the final disk image, the command fails and returns an error.

Troubleshooting VM Import/Export

When importing or exporting a virtual machine (VM), most errors occur because of an attempt to do something that isn't supported. To avoid these errors, be sure to check the requirements and limitations carefully.

Errors

- [ImportImage Errors \(p. 25\)](#)
- [ImportInstance Errors \(p. 25\)](#)
- [VM Export Errors \(p. 26\)](#)
- [Windows VM Errors \(p. 26\)](#)
- [Linux VM Errors \(p. 28\)](#)

ImportImage Errors

AWS Error Code: InvalidParameter, AWS Error Message: Message: Parameter disk-image-size=0 has an invalid format

The specified image format is not supported. Retry the operation using one of the following supported image formats: VHD, VMDK, or raw.

A client error (MalformedPolicyDocument) occurred when calling the CreateRole operation: Syntax errors in policy

You must include the `file://` prefix before the policy document name.

The service role <vmimport> does not exist or does not have sufficient permissions for the service to continue

The VM import service role is missing or incorrect. You may also receive this error if the IAM user trying to start the import does not have sufficient privileges to Amazon EC2 resources.

ImportInstance Errors

AWS Error Code: InvalidParameter, AWS Error Message: Message: Parameter disk-image-size=0 has an invalid format

The specified image format is not supported. Retry the operation using one of the following supported image formats: OVA, VHD, VMDK, or raw.

Client.Unsupported: No bootable partition found. (Service: AmazonEC2; Status Code: 400; Error Code: Unsupported; Request ID: <RequestID>)

The root volume is GUID Partition Table (GPT) partitioned. GPT partitioned volumes are not supported. Convert the root volume to an MBR partition and try again.

ClientError: Footers not identical

You attempted to import a differencing VHD, or there was an error in creating the VHD. Export your VM again and retry importing it into Amazon EC2.

ClientError: Uncompressed data has invalid length

The VMDK file is corrupted. You can try repairing or recreating the VMDK file, or use a different file.

ERROR: Bucket <MyBucketName> is not in the <RegionName> region, it's in <RegionName>

The Amazon S3 bucket is not in the same region as the instance you want to import. Try adding the `--ignore-region-affinity` option, which ignores whether the bucket's region matches the region where the import task is created. You can also create an Amazon S3 bucket using the Amazon Simple Storage Service console and set the region to the region where you want to import the VM. Run the command again and specify the new bucket you just created.

ERROR: File uses unsupported compression algorithm 0

The VMDK was created using OVA format instead of OVF format. Create the VMDK in OVF format.

Invalid S3 source location

The command syntax or Amazon S3 bucket name is incorrect. Create an Amazon S3 bucket in the appropriate region solely for VM Import and upload the VM files to the root of the bucket.

The given S3 bucket is not local to the region

The Amazon S3 Bucket used for VM Import must reside in the same AWS region where you want to import the VM.

VM Export Errors

Client.UnsupportedOperation: This instance has multiple volumes attached. Please remove additional volumes.

Detach volumes other than the root volume and try again. If you need the data from the volumes, you can copy it to the root volume or import the volumes to Amazon EBS.

Client.NotExportable: Only imported instances can be exported. (Service: AmazonEC2; Status Code: 400; Error Code: NotExportable; Request ID: <RequestID>)

VM Export is supported only with instances that you previously imported to Amazon EC2 using VM Import.

Error starting instances: Invalid value <instance ID> for instanceId. Instance does not have a volume attached at root (/dev/sda1).

You attempted to start the instance before the VM import process and all conversion tasks were complete. Wait for the VM import process and all conversion tasks to completely finish, and then start the instance.

Windows VM Errors

ClientError: Booter Networking failure/instance not reachable. Please retry after installation of .Net framework 3.5 SP1 or greater.

The EC2 Config Service requires the Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1 or later. Install Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1 or later on your Windows VM and try again.

FirstBootFailure: This import request failed because the Windows instance failed to boot and establish network connectivity.

When you import a VM using the `ec2-import-instance` command, the import task might stop before its completed, and then fail. To investigate what went wrong, you can use the [ec2-describe-conversion-tasks](#) command to describe the instance.

When you receive the FirstBootFailure error message, it means that your virtual disk image was unable to perform one of the following steps:

- Boot up and start Windows.
- Install Amazon EC2 networking and disk drivers.
- Use a DHCP-configured network interface to retrieve an IP address.
- Activate Windows using the Amazon EC2 Windows volume license.

The following best practices can help you to avoid Windows first boot failures:

- **Disable anti-virus and anti-spyware software and firewalls** — These types of software can prevent installing new Windows services or drivers or prevent unknown binaries from running. Software and firewalls can be re-enabled after importing.
- **Do not harden your operating system** — Security configurations, sometimes called hardening, can prevent unattended installation of Amazon EC2 drivers. There are numerous Windows configuration settings that can prevent import. These settings can be reapplied once imported.
- **Disable or delete multiple bootable partitions** — If your virtual machine boots and requires you to choose which boot partition to use, the import may fail.

This inability of the virtual disk image to boot up and establish network connectivity could be due to any of the following causes:

TCP/IP networking and DHCP are not enabled

Cause: TCP/IP networking and DHCP must be enabled.

Resolution: Ensure that TCP/IP networking is enabled. For more information, see [Setting up TCP/IP \(Windows Server 2003\)](#) or [Configuring TCP/IP \(Windows Server 2008\)](#) at the Microsoft TechNet website. Ensure that DHCP is enabled. For more information, see [What is DHCP](#) at the Microsoft TechNet web site.

A volume that Windows requires is missing from the virtual machine

Cause: Importing a VM into Amazon EC2 only imports the boot disk, all other disks must be detached and Windows must be able to boot before importing the virtual machine. For example, Active Directory often stores the Active Directory database on the `D:\` drive. A domain controller cannot boot if the Active Directory database is missing or inaccessible.

Resolution: Detach any secondary and network disks attached to the Windows VM before exporting. Move any Active Directory databases from secondary drives or partitions onto the primary Windows partition. For more information, see ["Directory Services cannot start" error message when you start your Windows-based or SBS-based domain controller](#) at the Microsoft Support website.

Windows always boots into System Recovery Options

Cause: Windows can boot into System Recovery Options for a variety of reasons, including when Windows is pulled into a virtualized environment from a physical machine, also known as P2V.

Resolution: Ensure that Windows boots to a login prompt before exporting and preparing for import. Do not import virtualized Windows instances that have come from a physical machine.

The virtual machine was created using a physical-to-virtual (P2V) conversion process

Cause: A P2V conversion occurs when a disk image is created by performing the Windows installation process on a physical machine and then importing a copy of that Windows installation into a VM. VMs that are created as the result of a P2V conversion are not supported by Amazon EC2 VM import. Amazon EC2 VM import only supports Windows images that were natively installed inside the source VM.

Resolution: Install Windows in a virtualized environment and migrate your installed software to that new VM.

Windows activation fails

Cause: During boot, Windows will detect a change of hardware and attempt activation. During the import process we attempt to switch the licensing mechanism in Windows to a volume license provided by Amazon Web Services. However, if the Windows activation process does not succeed, then the import fails.

Resolution: Ensure that the version of Windows that you are importing supports volume licensing. Beta or preview versions of Windows might not.

No bootable partition found

Cause: During the import process of a virtual machine, we could not find the boot partition.

Resolution: Ensure that the disk you are importing has a boot partition.

Linux VM Errors

ClientError: Invalid configuration - Could not read fstab

Linux VMs with multi-boot volumes or multiple `/etc` directories are not supported.

ClientError: Unsupported configuration: Multiple directories found

Linux VMs with multi-boot volumes or multiple `/etc` directories are not supported.

Linux is not supported on the requested instance

Linux VMs can be imported to specific instance types. Try again using one of the following supported instance types.

- General purpose: `t2.micro` | `t2.small` | `t2.medium` | `m3.medium` | `m3.large` | `m3.xlarge` | `m3.2xlarge`
- Compute optimized: `c3.large` | `c3.xlarge` | `c3.2xlarge` | `c3.4xlarge` | `c3.8xlarge` | `cc1.4xlarge`
- Memory optimized: `r3.large` | `r3.xlarge` | `r3.2xlarge` | `r3.4xlarge` | `r3.8xlarge`
- Storage optimized: `i2.xlarge` | `i2.2xlarge` | `i2.4xlarge` | `i2.8xlarge`

Document History for VM Import/Export

The following table describes the documentation for this release of VM Import/Export.

Change	Description	Date
Operating system additions	Added support for importing Windows 10, SUSE and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server 11-12, Fedora 19-21, and Oracle Enterprise Linux 6-7 operating system images.	9 December 2015
Import VMs with multiple volumes as images	Added support for importing VMs as an Amazon Machine Image (AMI) using the ImportImage API. ImportInstance also supports importing VMs with multiple volumes. The new API has improved performance and flexibility.	23 April 2015
Import Linux virtual machines	Added support for importing Linux instances.	16 December 2013
EC2 instance export	Added support for exporting Windows Server instances that you originally imported into Amazon EC2. Added support for exporting Linux instances to Citrix Xen, Microsoft Hyper-V, and VMware vSphere.	25 May 2012

Change	Description	Date
Import in VHD file format	Added support for importing virtual machine image files in VHD format. With this release, VM Import now supports RAW, VHD, and VMDK (VMware ESX-compatible) image formats.	24 August 2011