



# Deploy the Firepower Management Center Virtual Using KVM

---

You can deploy the Cisco Firepower Management Center Virtual (FMCv) on KVM.

- [About Deployment Using KVM, on page 1](#)
- [Prerequisites for Deployment Using KVM, on page 2](#)
- [Guidelines and Limitations, on page 3](#)
- [Prepare the Day 0 Configuration File, on page 4](#)
- [Launch the FMCv, on page 5](#)
- [Deploy Without the Day 0 Configuration File, on page 10](#)

## About Deployment Using KVM

KVM is a full virtualization solution for Linux on x86 hardware containing virtualization extensions (such as Intel VT). It consists of a loadable kernel module, `kvm.ko`, that provides the core virtualization infrastructure and a processor specific module, such as `kvm-intel.ko`.

### FMCv Requires 28 GB RAM for Upgrade (6.6.0+)

The FMCv platform has introduced a new memory check during upgrade. FMCv upgrades to Version 6.6.0+ will fail if you allocate less than 28 GB RAM to the virtual appliance.



#### Important

We recommend you do not decrease the default settings: 32 GB RAM for most FMCv instances, 64 GB for the FMCv 300. To improve performance, you can always increase a virtual appliance's memory and number of CPUs, depending on your available resources.

As a result of this memory check, we will not be able to support lower memory instances on supported platforms.

### Memory and Resource Requirements

You can run multiple virtual machines running unmodified OS images using KVM. Each virtual machine has private virtualized hardware: a network card, disk, graphics adapter, and so forth. See the [Cisco Firepower Compatibility Guide](#) for hypervisor compatibility.

**Important**

When upgrading the FMCv, check the latest Firepower Release Notes for details on whether a new release affects your environment. You may be required to increase resources to deploy the latest version of Firepower.

When you upgrade Firepower, you add the latest features and fixes that help improve the security capabilities and performance of your Firepower deployment.

The specific hardware used for FMCv deployments can vary, depending on the number of instances deployed and usage requirements. Each virtual appliance you create requires a minimum resource allocation—memory, number of CPUs, and disk space—on the host machine.

The following lists the recommended and default settings for the FMCv appliance on KVM:

- Processors
  - Requires 4 vCPUs
- Memory
  - Minimum required 28 / Recommended (default) 32 GB RAM

**Important**

The FMCv platform has introduced a new memory check during upgrade. FMCv upgrades to Version 6.6.0+ will fail if you allocate less than 28 GB RAM to the virtual appliance.

- Networking
  - Supports virtio drivers
  - Supports one management interface
- Host storage per Virtual Machine
  - The FMCv requires 250 GB
  - Supports virtio and scsi block devices
- Console
  - Supports terminal server via telnet

## Prerequisites for Deployment Using KVM

- Download the Firepower Management Center Virtual qcow2 file from Cisco.com and put it on your Linux host:

<https://software.cisco.com/download/navigator.html>

- A Cisco.com login and Cisco service contract are required.

- For the purpose of the sample deployment in this document, we assume you are using Ubuntu 18.04 LTS. Install the following packages on top of the Ubuntu 18.04 LTS host:
  - qemu-kvm
  - libvirt-bin
  - bridge-utils
  - virt-manager
  - virtinst
  - virsh tools
  - genisoimage
- Performance is affected by the host and its configuration. You can maximize the throughput on KVM by tuning your host. For generic host-tuning concepts, see [Network Function Virtualization: Quality of Service in Broadband Remote Access Servers with Linux and Intel Architecture](#).
- Useful optimizations for Ubuntu 18.04 LTS include the following:
  - macvtap—High performance Linux bridge; you can use macvtap instead of a Linux bridge. Note that you must configure specific settings to use macvtap instead of the Linux bridge.
  - Transparent Huge Pages—Increases memory page size and is on by default in Ubuntu 18.04.
  - Hyperthread disabled—Reduces two vCPUs to one single core.
  - txqueuelength—Increases the default txqueuelength to 4000 packets and reduces drop rate.
  - pinning—Pins qemu and vhost processes to specific CPU cores; under certain conditions, pinning is a significant boost to performance.
- For information on optimizing a RHEL-based distribution, see [Red Hat Enterprise Linux6 Virtualization Tuning and Optimization Guide](#).

## Guidelines and Limitations

- Firepower Management Center Virtual appliances do not have serial numbers. The **System > Configuration** page will show either **None** or **Not Specified** depending on the virtual platform.
- Nested hypervisors (KVM running on top of VMware/ESXi) are not supported. Only bare-metal KVM deployments are supported.
- Cloning a virtual machine is not supported.
- High Availability is not supported.

# Prepare the Day 0 Configuration File

You can prepare a Day 0 configuration file before you launch the FMCv. The Day 0 configuration is a text file that contains the initial configuration data that gets applied at the time a virtual machine is deployed. This initial configuration is placed into a text file named “day0-config” in a working directory you chose, and is manipulated into a day0.iso file that is mounted and read on first boot.




---

**Note** The day0.iso file must be available during first boot.

---

If you deploy with a Day 0 configuration file, the process allows you to perform the entire initial setup for FMCv appliance. You can specify:

- EULA acceptance
- A host name for the system
- A new administrator password for the admin account
- Network settings that allow the appliance to communicate on your management network. If you deploy without a Day 0 configuration file, you must configure Firepower System-required settings after launch; see [Deploy Without the Day 0 Configuration File, on page 10](#) for more information.




---

**Note** We use Linux in this example, but there are similar utilities for Windows.

---

- Leave both DNS entries empty to use the default Cisco Umbrella DNS servers. To operate in a non-DNS environment, set both entries to “None” (not case sensitive).

---

**Step 1** Enter the CLI configuration for the FMCv network settings in a text file called “day0-config”.

**Example:**

```
#FMC
{
  "EULA": "accept",
  "Hostname": "FMC-Production",
  "AdminPassword": "Admin123",
  "DNS1": "10.1.1.5",
  "DNS2": "192.168.1.67",

  "IPv4Mode": "manual",
  "IPv4Addr": "10.12.129.45",
  "IPv4Mask": "255.255.0.0",
  "IPv4Gw": "10.12.0.1",
  "IPv6Mode": "disabled",
  "IPv6Addr": "",
  "IPv6Mask": "",
  "IPv6Gw": ""
}
```

**Step 2** Generate the virtual CD-ROM by converting the text file to an ISO file:

**Example:**

```
/usr/bin/genisoimage -r -o day0.iso day0-config
```

or

**Example:**

```
/usr/bin/mkisofs -r -o day0.iso day0-config
```

**Step 3** Repeat to create unique default configuration files for each FMCv you want to deploy.

---

**What to do next**

- If using `virt-install`, add the following line to the `virt-install` command:  

```
--disk path=/home/user/day0.iso,format=iso,device=cdrom \
```
- If using `virt-manager`, you can create a virtual CD-ROM using the `virt-manager` GUI; see [Launch Using Virtual Machine Manager, on page 7](#).

## Launch the FMCv

You can launch the FMCv on KVM using the following methods:

- Using a Deployment Script—Use a `virt-install` based deployment script to launch the FMCv; see [Launch Using a Deployment Script, on page 5](#).
- Using Virtual Machine Manager—Use `virt-manager`, a graphical tool for creating and managing KVM guest virtual machines, to launch the FMCv; see [Launch Using Virtual Machine Manager, on page 7](#).
- Using OpenStack—Use an OpenStack environment to launch the FMCv; see [Launch Using OpenStack, on page 8](#).

You can also choose to deploy the FMCv without the Day 0 configuration file. This requires you to complete the initial setup using the appliance's CLI or the web interface.

## Launch Using a Deployment Script

You can use a `virt-install` based deployment script to launch the Firepower Management Center Virtual.

**Before you begin**

Be aware that you can optimize performance by selecting the best guest caching mode for your environment. The cache mode in use will affect whether data loss occurs, and the cache mode can also affect disk performance.

Each KVM guest disk interface can have one of the following cache modes specified: *writethrough*, *writeback*, *none*, *directsync*, or *unsafe*. The *writethrough* mode provides read caching; *writeback* provides read and write

caching; *directsync* bypasses the host page cache; *unsafe* may cache all content and ignore flush requests from the guest.

- A *cache=writethrough* will help reduce file corruption on KVM guest machines when the host experiences abrupt losses of power. We recommend that you use writethrough mode.
- However, *cache=writethrough* can also affect disk performance due to more disk I/O writes than *cache=none*.
- If you remove the cache parameter on the *--disk* option, the default is *writethrough*.
- Not specifying a cache option may also significantly reduce the time required for the VM creation. This is due to the fact that some older RAID controllers have poor disk caching capability. Hence, disabling disk caching (*cache=none*) and thus defaulting to *writethrough*, helps ensure data integrity.

---

**Step 1** Create a virt-install script called “virt\_install\_fmc.sh”.

The name of the Firepower Management Center Virtual instance must be unique across all other virtual machines (VMs) on this KVM host. The Firepower Management Center Virtual can support one network interface. The virtual NIC must be Virtio.

**Example:**

```
virt-install \
  --connect=qemu:///system \
  --network network=default,model=virtio \
  --name=fmcv \
  --arch=x86_64 \
  --cpu host \
  --vcpus=4 \
  --ram=8192 \
  --os-type=linux \
  --virt-type=kvm \
  --import \
  --watchdog i6300esb,action=reset \
  --disk path=<fmc_filename>.qcow2,format=qcow2,device=disk,bus=virtio,cache=writethrough \
  --disk path=<day0_filename>.iso,format=iso,device=cdrom \
  --console pty,target_type=serial \
  --serial tcp,host=127.0.0.1:<port>,mode=bind,protocol=telnet \
  --force
```

**Step 2** Run the virt\_install script:

**Example:**

```
/usr/bin/virt_install_fmc.sh
Starting install...
Creating domain...
```

A window appears displaying the console of the VM. You can see that the VM is booting. It takes a few minutes for the VM to boot. Once the VM stops booting you can issue CLI commands from the console screen.

---

## Launch Using Virtual Machine Manager

Use virt-manager, also known as Virtual Machine Manager, to launch the Firepower Management Center Virtual. virt-manager is a graphical tool for creating and managing guest virtual machines.

- 
- Step 1** Start virt-manager (**Applications > System Tools > Virtual Machine Manager**).
- You may be asked to select the hypervisor and/or enter your root password.
- Step 2** Click the button in the top left corner to open the **New VM** wizard.
- Step 3** Enter the virtual machine details:
- For the operating system, select **Import existing disk image**.  
This method allows you to import a disk image (containing a pre-installed, bootable operating system) to it.
  - Click **Forward** to continue.
- Step 4** Load the disk image:
- Click **Browse...** to select the image file.
  - Choose *Use Generic* for the **OS type**.
  - Click **Forward** to continue.
- Step 5** Configure the memory and CPU options:
- Set **Memory (RAM)** to *8192*.
  - Set **CPUs** to *4*.
  - Click **Forward** to continue.
- Step 6** Check the **Customize configuration before install** box, specify a **Name**, then click **Finish**.
- Doing so opens another wizard that allows you to add, remove, and configure the virtual machine's hardware settings.
- Step 7** Modify the CPU configuration.
- From the left panel, select Processor, then select **Configuration > Copy host CPU configuration**.
- This applies the physical host's CPU model and configuration to your virtual machine.
- Step 8** 8. Configure the Virtual Disk:
- From the left panel, select **Disk 1**.
  - Select **Advanced options**.
  - Set the **Disk bus** to *Virtio*.
  - Set the **Storage format** to *qcow2*.
- Step 9** Configure a serial console:
- From the left panel, select **Console**.
  - Select **Remove** to remove the default console.
  - Click **Add Hardware** to add a serial device.
  - For **Device Type**, select *TCP net console (tcp)*.
  - For **Mode**, select *Server mode (bind)*.
  - For **Host**, enter **0.0.0.0** for the IP address and enter a unique **Port** number.
  - Check the **Use Telnet** box.
  - Configure device parameters.

- Step 10** Configure a watchdog device to automatically trigger some action when the KVM guest hangs or crashes:
- Click **Add Hardware** to add a watchdog device.
  - For **Model**, select *default*.
  - For **Action**, select *Forcefully reset the guest*.
- Step 11** Configure the virtual network interface.
- Choose **macvtap** or specify a shared device name (use a bridge name).
- Note** By default, the Firepower Management Center Virtual virtual instance launches with one interface, which you can then configure.
- Step 12** If deploying using a Day 0 configuration file, create a virtual CD-ROM for the ISO:
- Click **Add Hardware**.
  - Select **Storage**.
  - Click **Select managed or other existing storage** and browse to the location of the ISO file.
  - For **Device type**, select *IDE CDROM*.
- Step 13** After configuring the virtual machine's hardware, click **Apply**.
- Step 14** Click **Begin installation** for virt-manager to create the virtual machine with your specified hardware settings.

## Launch Using OpenStack

You can deploy the Firepower Management Center Virtual in an OpenStack environment. OpenStack is a set of software tools for building and managing cloud computing platforms for public and private clouds, and is tightly integrated with the KVM hypervisor.

### About the Day 0 Configuration File on OpenStack

OpenStack supports providing configuration data via a special configuration drive (config-drive) that is attached to the instance when it boots. To deploy a Firepower Management Center Virtual instance with Day 0 configuration using the nova boot command, include the following line:

```
--config-drive true --file day0-config=/home/user/day0-config \
```

When the `--config-drive` command is enabled, the file `=/home/user/day0-config`, as found on the Linux filesystem where the nova client is invoked, is passed to the virtual machine on a virtual CDROM.



**Note** While the VM may see this file with the name *day0-config*, OpenStack typically stores the file contents as `/openstack/content/xxxx` where `xxxx` is an assigned four-digit number (e.g. `/openstack/content/0000`). This may vary by OpenStack distribution.

## Launch on OpenStack Using the Command Line

Use the nova boot command to create and boot a FMCv instance.



### Procedure

	Command or Action	Purpose
<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Boot a FMCv instance using image, flavor, interface and Day 0 configuration information.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <pre>local@maas:~\$ nova boot \   --image=6883ee2e-62b1-4ad7-b4c6-cd62ee73d1aa \   --flavor=a6541d78-0bb3-4dc3-97c2-7b87f886b1ba \   --nic \   net-id=5bf6b1a9-c871-41d3-82a3-2ecee26840b1 \   --config-drive true --file \   day0-config=/home/local/day0-config \</pre>	The FMCv requires one management interface.

## Launch on OpenStack Using the Dashboard

Horizon is an OpenStack Dashboard, which provides a web based user interface to OpenStack services including Nova, Swift, Keystone, and so forth.

### Before you begin

- Download the FMCv qcow2 file from Cisco.com and put it on your local MAAS server:  
<https://software.cisco.com/download/navigator.html>
- A Cisco.com login and Cisco service contract are required.

- 
- Step 1** On the Log In page, enter your user name and password, and click **Sign In**.
- The visible tabs and functions in the dashboard depend on the access permissions, or roles, of the user you are logged in as.
- Step 2** Choose **Admin > System Panel > Flavor** from the menu.
- Virtual hardware templates are called *flavors* in OpenStack, and define sizes for RAM, disk, number of cores, and so on.
- Step 3** Enter the required information in the **Flavor Info** window:
- Name**—Enter a descriptive name that easily identifies the instance. For example, FMC-4vCPU-8GB.
  - VCPUs**—Select 4.
  - RAM MB**—Select 8192.
- Step 4** Choose **Create Flavor**.
- Step 5** Choose **Admin > System Panel > Images** from the menu.
- Step 6** Enter the required information in the Create An Image window:
- Name**—Enter a name that easily identifies the image. For example, *FMC-Version-Build*.
  - Description**—(Optional) Enter a description for this image file.
  - Browse**—Select the Firepower Management Center Virtual qcow2 file previously downloaded from Cisco.com.

- d) **Format**—Select *QCOW2-QEMU* Emulator as the format type.
- e) Check the **Public** box.

**Step 7** Choose **Create Image**.

View the newly created Image.

**Step 8** Choose **Project > Compute > Instances** from the menu.

**Step 9** Click **Launch Instance**.

**Step 10** Enter the required information in the **Launch Instance > Details** tab:

- a) **Instance Name**—Enter a name that easily identifies the instance. For example, *FMC-Version-Build*.
- b) **Flavor**—Select the flavor created earlier in Step 3. Enter a description for this image file.
- c) **Instance Boot Source**—Select *Boot from image*.
- d) **Image Name**—Select the image created earlier in Step 6.

**Step 11** From the **Launch Instance > Networking** tab, select a management network for the Firepower Management Center Virtual instance.

**Step 12** Click **Launch**.

The instance starts on a compute node in the cloud. View the newly created instance from the Instances window.

**Step 13** Select the Firepower Management Center Virtual instance.

**Step 14** Select the **Console** tab.

**Step 15** Log into the virtual appliance at the console.

## Deploy Without the Day 0 Configuration File

For all Firepower Management Centers, you must complete a setup process that allows the appliance to communicate on your management network. If you deploy without a Day 0 configuration file, setting up a FMCv is a two-step process:

- After you initialize the FMCv, run a script at the appliance console that helps you configure the appliance to communicate on your management network.
- Then, complete the setup process using a computer on your management network to browse to the web interface of the FMCv.

## Configure Network Settings Using a Script

The following procedure describes how you complete the initial setup on a FMCv using the CLI.

**Step 1** At the console, log into the FMCv appliance. Use **admin** as the username and **Admin123** as the password.

**Step 2** At the admin prompt, run the following script:

**Example:**

```
sudo /usr/local/sf/bin/configure-network
```

On first connection to the FMCv you are prompted for post-boot configuration.

- Step 3** Follow the script's prompts.
- Configure (or disable) IPv4 management settings first, then IPv6. If you manually specify network settings, you must enter IPv4 or IPv6 addresses.
- Step 4** Confirm that your settings are correct.
- Step 5** Log out of the appliance.
- 

#### What to do next

- Complete the setup process using a computer on your management network to browse to the web interface of the FMCv.

## Perform Initial Setup Using the Web Interface

The following procedure describes how you complete the initial setup on a FMCv using the web interface.

---

- Step 1** Direct your browser to default IP address of the FMCv's management interface:
- Example:**
- ```
https://192.168.45.45
```
- Step 2** Log into the Firepower Management Center Virtual appliance. Use **admin** as the username and **Admin123** as the password. The setup page appears.
- The setup page appears. You must change the administrator password, specify network settings if you haven't already, and accept the EULA.
- Step 3** When you are finished, click **Apply**. The FMCv is configured according to your selections. After an intermediate page appears, you are logged into the web interface as the admin user, which has the Administrator role.
- The FMCv is configured according to your selections. After an intermediate page appears, you are logged into the web interface as the admin user, which has the Administrator role.
- 

#### What to do next

- For more information about the initial setup of the FMCv, see [Firepower Management Center Virtual Initial Setup](#)
- For an overview of the next steps needed in your FMCv deployment, see the chapter [Firepower Management Center Virtual Initial Administration and Configuration](#).

