

# Xen Administration Guide

FortiOS 8.0



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FortiOS 8.0 Xen Administration Guide

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# About FortiGate-VM on Xen

FortiGate-VMs allow you to mitigate blind spots by implementing critical security controls within your virtual infrastructure. They also allow you to rapidly provision security infrastructure whenever and wherever it is needed. FortiGate-VMs feature all the security and networking services common to hardware-based FortiGate appliances. You can deploy a mix of FortiGate hardware and VMs, operating together and managed from a common centralized management platform.

This document describes how to deploy a FortiGate-VM in a Xen environment.

## FortiGate-VM models and licensing

FortiGate-VM offers perpetual licensing (normal series and v-series) and annual subscription licensing. See [VM license](#) for details.

After you submit an order for a FortiGate-VM, Fortinet sends a license registration code to the email address that you entered on the order form. Use this code to register the FortiGate-VM with [Customer Service & Support](#), then download the license file. After you upload the license to the FortiGate-VM and validate it, your FortiGate-VM is fully functional.

## FortiGate-VM evaluation license

The FortiOS permanent trial license requires a FortiCare account. This trial license has limited features and capacity. See [Permanent trial mode for FortiGate-VM](#) for details.

## FortiGate-VM virtual licenses and resources

The primary requirement for provisioning a FortiGate-VM may be the number of interfaces it can accommodate rather than its processing capabilities. In some cloud environments, options with a high number of interfaces tend to have high numbers of vCPUs.

FortiGate-VM licensing does not restrict whether the FortiGate can work on a VM instance in a public cloud that uses more vCPUs than the license allows. The number of vCPUs that the license indicates does not restrict the FortiGate from working, regardless of how many vCPUs the virtual instance includes. However, only the licensed number of vCPUs process traffic and management tasks. The FortiGate-VM does not use the rest of the vCPUs.

License	1 vCPU	2 vCPU	4 vCPU	8 vCPU	16 vCPU	32 vCPU
FGT-VM08	OK	OK	OK	OK	The FortiGate-VM uses 8 vCPUs for traffic and management and does not use the rest.	

You can provision a VM instance based on the number of interfaces you need and license the FortiGate-VM for only the processors you need.

## Public compared to private clouds

The behavior differs between private and public clouds:

- Private clouds (VMware ESXi/KVM/Xen/Microsoft Hyper-V): both licensed vCPUs and RAM are affected. FortiOS does not have licensed RAM size restrictions. Having at least 4 GB of RAM for proper FortiGate-VM operation is recommended, especially if unified threat management, zero trust network access, or proxy is enabled.
- Public clouds (AWS/Azure/GCP/OCI/AlibabaCloud): only licensed vCPU is affected.

For example, you can activate FG-VM02 on a FGT-VM with 4 vCPUs and there is no limit on the RAM size when running on a private VM platform.

Likewise, you can activate FG-VM02 on a FGT-VM c5.2xlarge EC2 instance with 8 vCPUs running on AWS. Only 2 vCPU is consumable, and there is no limit on the RAM size. You can refer to licenses for public clouds as bring your own license.

# Preparing for deployment

This documentation assumes that before deploying the FortiGate-VM on the Xen virtual platform, you have addressed the following requirements:

## Virtual environment

You have installed the Xen software on a physical server with sufficient resources to support the FortiGate-VM and all other VMs deployed on the platform.

If you configure the FortiGate-VM to operate in transparent mode, or include it in a FortiGate clustering protocol high availability cluster, configure any virtual switches to support the FortiGate-VM's operation before you create the FortiGate-VM.

## Management software

If you plan to use the GUI to manage the Xen server, ensure to install the appropriate management software.

## Connectivity

The FortiGate-VM requires an internet connection to contact FortiGuard to validate its license. A FortiGate-VM in a closed environment must be able to connect to a FortiManager to validate the FortiGate-VM license. See [Validating the FortiGate-VM license with FortiManager on an air-gapped environment on page 20](#).

## Configuring resources

Before you start the FortiGate-VM for the first time, ensure that you have configured the following resources as the FortiGate-VM license specifies:

- Disk sizes
- CPUs
- RAM
- Network settings

## OpenXen

Unlike some other FortiGate-VM deployments, Open Xen does not have you configure the resources of the VM before the installation process. The configuration of the resources is done as part of the deployment.

Go to Deploying FortiGate-VM on OpenXen.

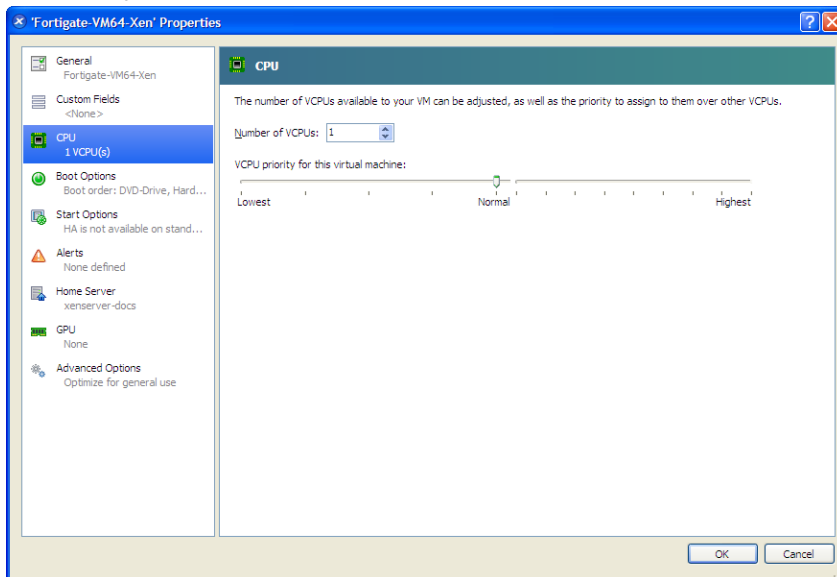
## Citrix Xen

### To access VM settings:

1. Open XenCenter.
2. Select your FortiGate-VM in the left pane. The tabs in the right pane provide access to the virtual hardware configuration. The *Console* tab provides access to the FortiGate console.

### To configure the number of CPUs:

1. In the XenCenter left pane, right-click the FortiGate-VM and select *Properties*. The *Properties* window opens.
2. In the left pane, select *CPU*.

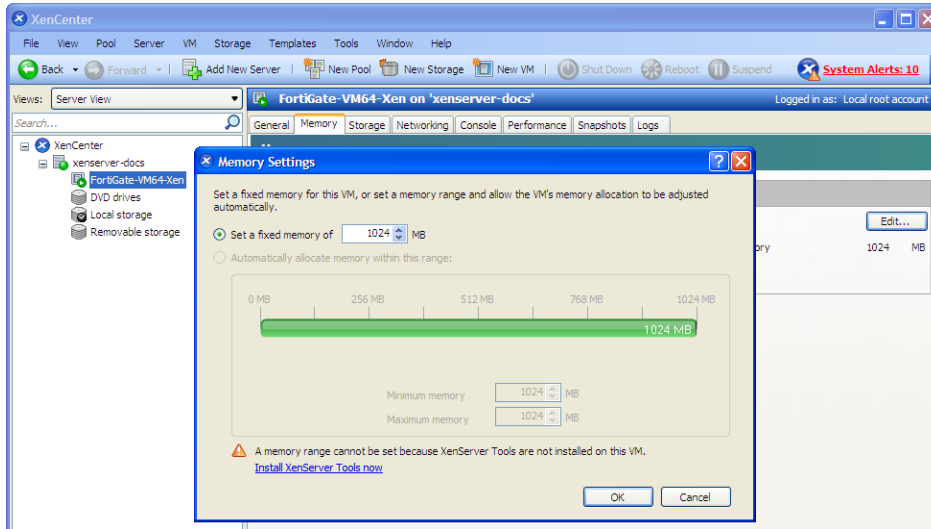


3. Adjust *Number of CPUs*, then select *OK*. XenCenter displays a warning if you select more CPUs than the Xen host computer contains. Such a configuration may reduce performance.

### To configure memory:

1. In the XenCenter left pane, select the FortiGate-VM.
2. In the right pane, select the *Memory* tab.

3. Select *Edit*, modify the value in the *Set a fixed memory of* field and select *OK*.



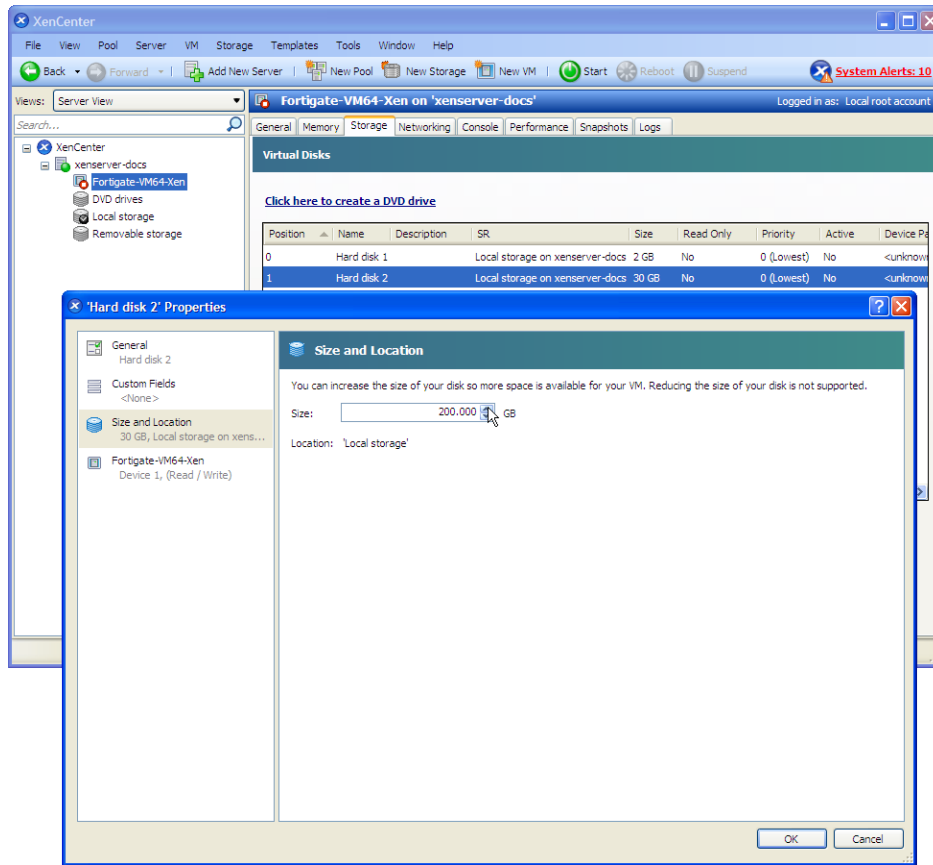
## Disk storage

By default the FortiGate-VM data disk size is 30 GB. You probably want to increase this. You must resize the disk before you start the VM for the first time.

### To resize the FortiGate data disk

1. In the XenCenter left pane, select the FortiGate-VM.
2. Select the *Storage* tab. Select *Hard disk 2* (the 30GB drive), then select *Properties*. The '*Hard disk 2*' *Properties* window opens.

3. Select *Size and Location*. Adjust *Size* and select *OK*.



## Registering the FortiGate-VM

Registering the FortiGate-VM with [Customer Service & Support](#) allows you to obtain the FortiGate-VM license file.

**To register the FortiGate-VM:**

1. Log in to the [Customer Service & Support site](#) using a support account, or create an account.
2. In the main page, under *Asset*, select *Register Now*.
3. In the *Registration* page, enter the registration code that you received via email, and select *Register* to access the registration form.
4. If you register the s-series subscription model, the site prompts you to select one of the following:
  - a. Click *Register* to newly register the code to acquire a new serial number with a new license file.
  - b. Click *Renew* to renew and extend the licensed period on top of the existing serial number, so that all features on the VM node continue working uninterrupted upon license renewal.
5. Complete and submit the registration form.
6. In the registration acknowledgment page, click the *License File Download* link.

7. Save the license file (.lic) to your local computer. See [Uploading the FortiGate-VM license on page 19](#) or [Validating the FortiGate-VM license with FortiManager on an air-gapped environment on page 20](#) for information about uploading the license file to your FortiGate-VM via the GUI.

## Downloading the FortiGate-VM deployment package

FortiGate-VM deployment packages are found on the [Customer Service & Support](#) site. In the *Download* drop-down menu, select *VM Images* to access the available VM deployment packages.

### To download the FortiGate-VM deployment package:

1. In the *Select Product* drop-down menu, select *FortiGate*.
2. In the *Select Platform* drop-down menu, select *Xen*.
3. Select the FortiOS version you want to download.  
There are two files available for download: the file required to upgrade from an earlier version and the file required for a new deployment.
4. Click the *Download* button and save the file.

For more information, see the [FortiGate datasheet](#).



You can also download the following resources for the firmware version:

- FortiOS Release Notes
- FORTINET-FORTIGATE MIB file
- FSSO images
- SSL VPN client

## Deployment package contents

### OpenXen

The \*FORTINET.out.OpenXen.zip file contains only fortios.qcow2, the FortiGate-VM system hard disk in qcow2 format. You must manually:

- Create a 32GB log disk
- Specify the virtual hardware settings

## Citrix XenServer

The \*FORTINET.out.CitrixXen.zip file contains:

- fortios.vhd: the FortiGate-VM system hard disk in VHD format
- fortios.xva: binary file containing virtual hardware configuration settings
- in the ovf folder:
  - FortiGate-VM64.ovf: Open Virtualization Format (OVF) template file, containing virtual hardware settings for Xen
  - fortios.vmdk: the FortiGate-VM system hard disk in VMDK format
  - datadrive.vmdk: the FortiGate-VM log disk in VMDK format

The ovf folder and its contents is an alternative method of installation to the .xva and VHD disk image.

# Deployment

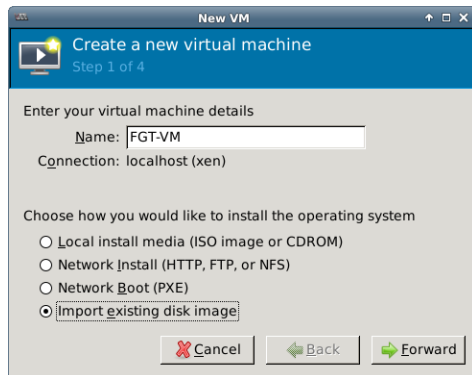
Before you deploy a FortiGate-VM, ensure that you have met the requirements that [Preparing for deployment on page 6](#) describes and that you have extracted the correct deployment package to a folder on the local computer. See [Downloading the FortiGate-VM deployment package on page 10](#).

After you deploy a FortiGate-VM and upload a full license to replace the default evaluation license, you can power on the FortiGate-VM and test connectivity.

## Deploying the FortiGate-VM on OpenXen

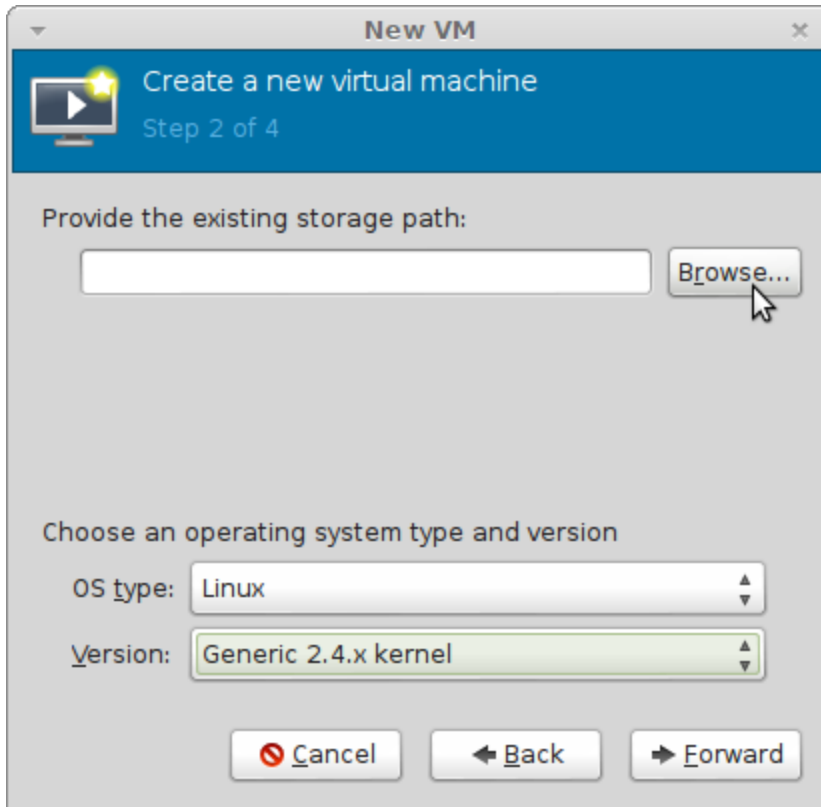
### To create the FortiGate-VM:

1. Launch Virtual Machine Manager (virt-manager) on your OpenXen host server.
2. In the toolbar, select *Create a new virtual machine*.

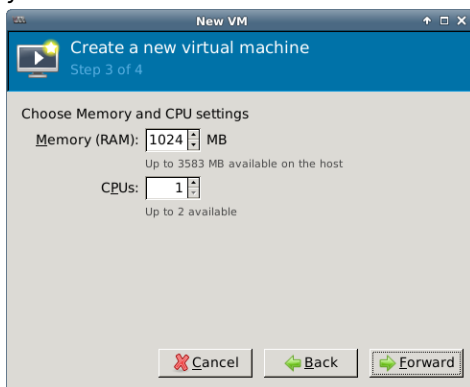


3. Enter a *Name* for the VM, FGT-VM for example.
4. Ensure that *Connection* is localhost. (This is the default.)
5. Select *Import existing disk image*.
6. Select *Forward*.

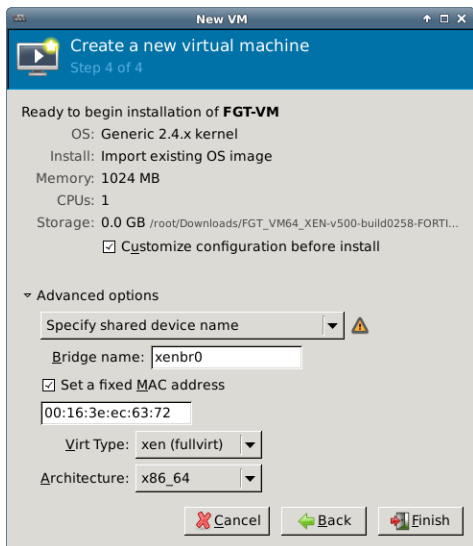
- In *OS Type* select *Linux*.



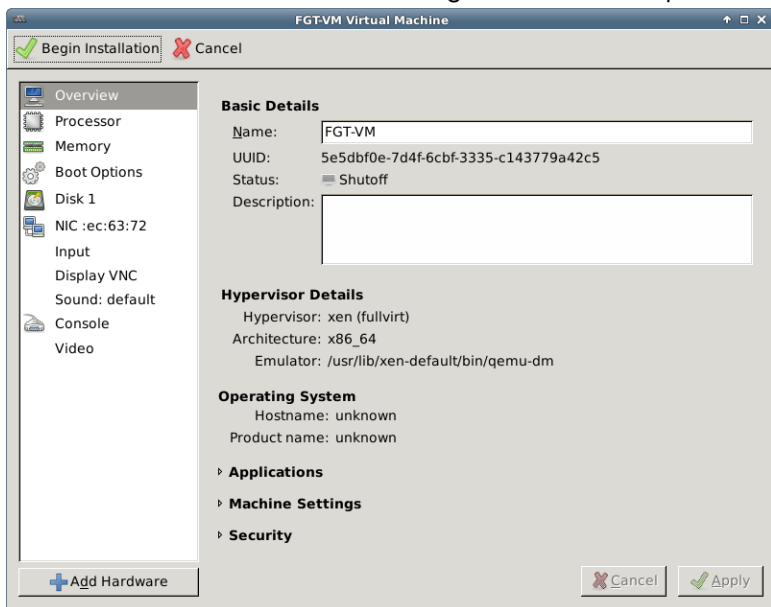
- In *Version*, select *Generic 2.4.x.kernel*.
- Select *Browse*. The *Locate or create storage volume* window opens.
- Select *Browse Local*, and locate the *fortios.qcow2* disk image file.
- Select *fortios.qcow2* and select *Choose Volume*.
- Select *Forward*.
- Specify the amount of memory and number of CPUs to allocate to this VM. The amounts must not exceed your license limits.



- Select *Forward*.
- Select *Customize configuration before install*. This enables you to make some hardware configuration changes before VM creation is started.



16. Expand *Advanced options*. A new VM includes one network adapter by default. Select *Specify shared device name* and enter the name of the bridge interface on the OpenXen host. Optionally, set a specific MAC address for the virtual network interface. *Virt Type* and *Architecture* are set by default and should be correct.
17. Select *Finish*. The VM hardware configuration window opens.



You can use this window to add hardware such as network interfaces and disk drives.

18. Select *Add Hardware*. In the *Add Hardware* window select *Storage*.
19. Select *Create a disk image on the computer's harddrive* and set the size to 30GB.



If you know your environment will expand in the future, it is recommended to increase the hard disk size beyond 30GB. The VM license limit is 2TB.

20. Enter:

<b>Device type</b>	Virtio disk
<b>Cache mode</b>	Default
<b>Storage format</b>	raw

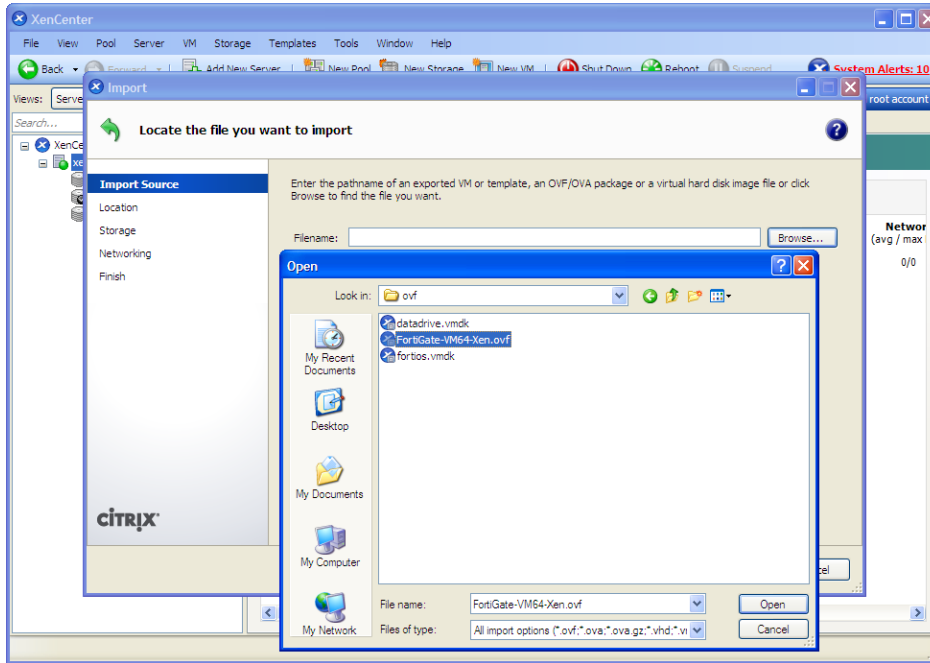
21. Select *Network* to configure the network interfaces. The *Device type* must be *Virtio*.  
A new virtual machine includes one network adapter by default. You can add more through the Add Hardware window. FortiGate-VM requires four network adapters. You can configure network adapters to connect to a virtual switch or to network adapters on the host computer.
22. Select *Finish*.
23. Select *Begin Installation*. After the installation completes successfully, the VM starts and the console window opens.

## Deploying the FortiGate-VM on Citrix Xen

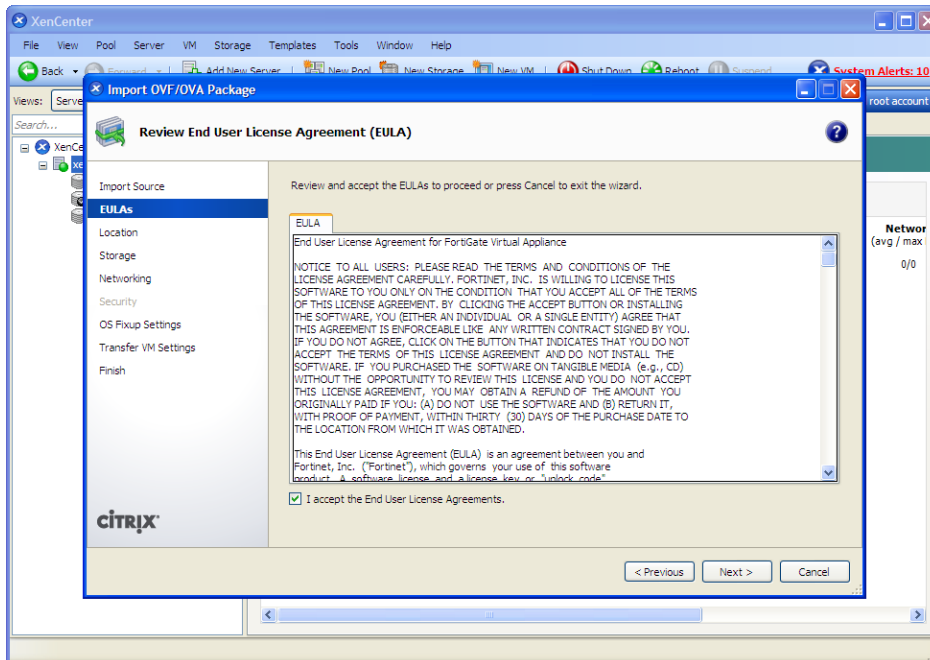
### To create the FortiGate-VM from the OVF file:

1. Launch XenCenter on your management computer. The management computer can be any computer that can run Citrix XenCenter, a Windows application.
2. If you have not already done so, select *ADD a server*. Enter your Citrix XenServer IP address and the root logon credentials required to manage that server.  
Your Citrix XenServer is added to the list in the left pane.  
The *Virtual Machine Manager* homepage opens.
3. Go to *File > Import*. An import dialog appears.

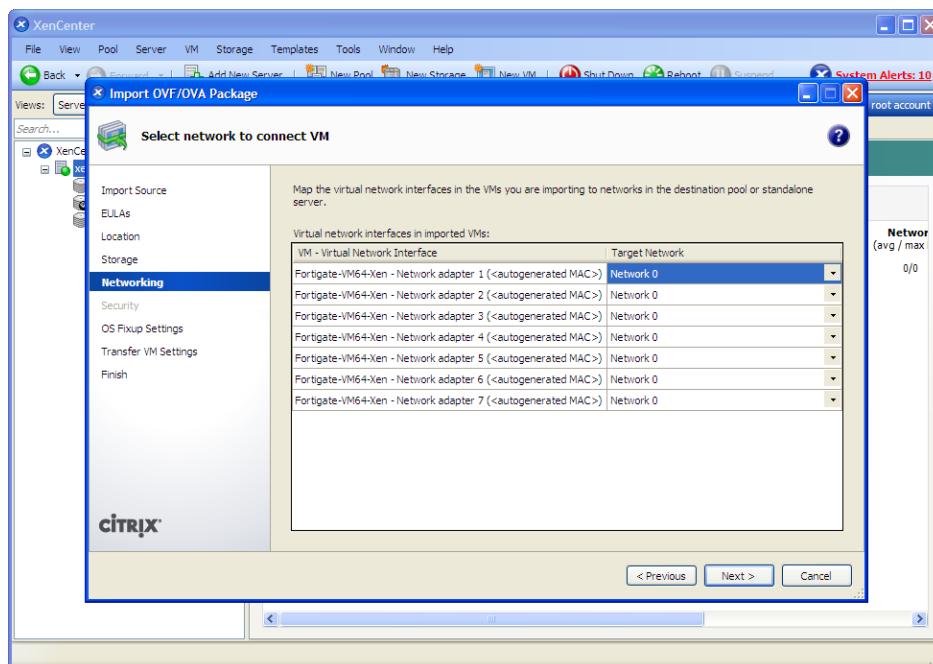
- Click the *Browse* button, find the FortiGate-VM64-Xen.ovf template file, then click *Open*.



- Select *Next*.
- Accept the EULA, then select *Next*.



- Choose the pool or standalone server to host the VM, then select *Next*.
- Select the storage location for FortiGate-VM disk drives or accept the default. Select *Next*.
- Configure how each vNIC (virtual network adapter) in FortiGate-VM will map to each vNetwork on the Citrix XenServer, then click *Next*.



10. Click *Next* to skip OS fixup.
11. Select *Next* to use the default network settings for transferring the VM to the host.
12. Select *Finish*.

The Citrix XenServer imports the FortiGate-VM files and configures the VM as specified in the OVF template. Depending on your computer's hardware speed and resource load, and also on the file size and speed of the network connection, this might take several minutes to complete.



When VM import is complete, the XenCenter left pane includes the FortiGate-VM in the list of deployed VMs for your Citrix XenServer.

## Initial settings

After you deploy a FortiGate-VM on the Xen server, perform the following tasks:

- Connect the FortiGate-VM to the network so that it can process network traffic and maintain license validity.
- Connect to FortiGate-VM GUI via a web browser for easier administration.
- Ensure that the full license file is uploaded to the FortiGate-VM.
- If you are in a closed environment, enable validation of the FortiGate-VM license against a FortiManager on your network.

## Network configuration

The first time you start the FortiGate-VM, you will have access only through the console window of your Xen server environment. After you configure one FortiGate network interface with an IP address and administrative access, you can access the FortiGate-VM GUI.

### Configuring port 1

VM platform or hypervisor management environments include a guest console window. On the FortiGate-VM, this provides access to the FortiGate console, equivalent to the console port on a hardware FortiGate unit. Before you can access the GUI, you must configure FortiGate-VM port1 with an IP address and administrative access.

#### To configure the port1 IP address:

1. In your hypervisor manager, start the FortiGate-VM and access the console window. You may need to press *Enter* to see a login prompt.
2. At the FortiGate-VM login prompt enter the username `admin`. By default there is no password. Press *Enter*.
3. Using CLI commands, configure the port1 IP address and netmask:

```
config system interface
  edit port1
    set mode static
    set ip 192.168.0.100 255.255.255.0
  next
end
```

4. To configure the default gateway, enter the following CLI commands:

```
config router static
  edit 1
    set device port1
    set gateway <class_ip>
  next
end
```



You must configure the default gateway with an IPv4 address. FortiGate-VM must access the Internet to contact the FortiGuard Distribution Network to validate its license.

5. To configure your DNS servers, enter the following CLI commands:

```
config system dns
  set primary <Primary DNS server>
  set secondary <Secondary DNS server>
end
```



The default DNS servers are `208.91.112.53` and `208.91.112.52`.

## Connecting to the FortiGate-VM GUI

You connect to the FortiGate-VM GUI via a web browser by entering the IP address assigned to the port 1 interface (see [Configuring port 1 on page 18](#)) in the browser location field. You must enable HTTP and/or HTTPS access and administrative access on the interface to ensure that you can connect to the GUI. If you only enabled HTTPS access, enter "https://" before the IP address.



When you use HTTP rather than HTTPS to access the GUI, certain web browsers may display a warning that the connection is not private.

On the FortiGate-VM GUI login screen, enter the default username "admin", then select *Login*. FortiOS does not assign a default password to the admin user.

The screenshot shows the login interface of the FortiGate-VM GUI. At the top is a green header bar with a white grid icon on the left. Below the header are two input fields: 'Username' and 'Password'. Below the input fields is a green button with the text 'Login' in white.

Fortinet recommends that you configure a password for the admin user as soon as you log in to the FortiGate-VM GUI for the first time.

## Uploading the FortiGate-VM license

Before using the FortiGate-VM, you must enter the license file that you downloaded from [Customer Service & Support](#) upon registration.

### To upload the FortiGate-VM license file via the GUI:

1. Do one of the following to access the license upload window:
  - In *Dashboard > Status* window, in the *Virtual Machine* widget, click the *FGVMEV* (FortiGate-VM Evaluation) *License* icon. This reveals a menu of selections to take you directly to the *FortiGate VM License* window or to the *FortiGuard Details* window.
  - Go to *System > FortiGuard*. In the *License Information* section, go to the *Virtual Machine* row and click *FortiGate VM License*.
2. In the *Evaluation License* dialog, select *Enter License*. The license upload page opens.
3. Select *Upload* and locate the license file (.lic) on your computer.
4. Select *OK* to upload the license file.
5. Refresh the browser to log in.
6. Enter *admin* in the *Name* field and select *Login*. The VM registration status appears as valid in the *License Information* widget after the FortiGuard Distribution Network or FortiManager for closed networks validates the license.



Modern browsers can have an issue with allowing connecting to a FortiGate if the encryption on the device is too low. If this happens, use an FTP/TFTP server to apply the license.

### To upload the FortiGate-VM license file via the CLI:

You can also upload the license file using the following CLI command:

```
execute restore vmlicense {ftp | tftp} <filename string> <ftp server>[:ftp port]
```

### Example:

The following is an example output when using a TFTP server to install a license:

```
execute restore vmlicense tftp license.lic 10.0.1.2
  This operation will overwrite the current VM license!Do you want to continue? (y/n)y
  Please wait...Connect to tftp server 10.0.1.2 ...
  Get VM license from tftp server OK.
  VM license install succeeded.
  Rebooting firewall.
```



This command automatically reboots the firewall without giving you a chance to back out or delay the reboot.

## Validating the FortiGate-VM license with FortiManager on an air-gapped environment

You can validate your FortiGate-VM license with some FortiManager models. To determine whether your FortiManager has the VM activation feature, see the [FortiManager datasheet](#).

In an air-gapped environment, the FortiGate and FortiManager do not have internet connectivity.

### To validate your FortiGate-VM with your FortiManager:

1. To configure your FortiManager as a closed network, enter the following CLI command on your FortiManager:
 

```
config fmupdate publicnetwork
  set status disable
end
```
2. To configure FortiGate-VM to use FortiManager as its override server, enter the following CLI commands on your FortiGate-VM:
 

```
config system central-management
  set mode normal
  set type fortimanager
  set fmg <FortiManager IPv4 address>
config server-list
  edit 1
    set server-type update
    set server-address <FortiManager IPv4 address>
end
```

```

end
set fmg-source-ip <Source IPv4 address when connecting to the FortiManager>
set include-default-servers disable
set vdom <Enter the virtual domain name to use when communicating with the FortiManager>
end

```

3. Request the account entitlement file from [Fortinet Customer Service & Support](#) as [Requesting account entitlement files](#) describes.
4. Upload the received entitlement file to FortiManager as [Uploading account entitlement files](#) describes.
5. Load the FortiGate-VM license file in the FortiOS GUI:
  - a. Go to *System > Dashboard > Status*.
  - b. In the *License Information* widget, in the *Registration Status* field, select *Update*.
  - c. Browse for the `.lic` license file and select *OK*.
6. To activate the FortiGate-VM license, enter the `execute update-now` command on your FortiGate-VM.
7. To check the FortiGate-VM license status, enter the following CLI commands on your FortiGate-VM:

```

get system status
Version: Fortigate-VM v8.0,buildXXXX,120910
Virus-DB: 15.00361(2024-08-24 17:17)
Extended DB: 15.00000(2024-08-24 17:09)
Extreme DB: 14.00000(2024-08-24 17:10)
IPS-DB: 3.00224(2024-10-28 16:39)
FortiClient application signature package: 1.456(2024-01-17 18:27)
Serial-Number: FGV02Q105060000
License Status: Valid
BIOS version: 04000002
Log hard disk: Available
Hostname: Fortigate-VM
Operation Mode: NAT
Current virtual domain: root
Max number of virtual domains: 10
Virtual domains status: 1 in NAT mode, 0 in TP mode
Virtual domain configuration: disable
FIPS-CC mode: disable
Current HA mode: standalone
Distribution: International
Branch point: 511
Release Version Information: MR3 Patch 4
System time: Wed Jan 18 11:24:34 2024

```

```

diagnose hardware sysinfo vm full
UUID: 564db33a29519f6b1025bf8539a41e92
valid: 1
status: 1
code: 200 (If the license is a duplicate, code 401 displays)
warn: 0
copy: 0
received: 45438
warning: 0
recv: 201201201918
dup:

```

## Licensing timeout

In closed environments without internet access, you must license the FortiGate-VM offline using a FortiManager as a license server. If the FortiGate-VM cannot validate its license within the 30-day license timeout period, the FortiGate discards all packets, effectively ceasing operation as a firewall.

The license status goes through some changes before it times out. See [VM license](#).



There is only a single log entry after the FortiGate-VM cannot access the license server for the license expiration period. When you search the logs for the reason that the FortiGate is offline, there is no long error log list that draws attention to the issue. There is only one entry.

## Testing connectivity

The ping utility is the usual method to test connectivity to other devices. For this, you need the console on the FortiGate-VM.



In FortiOS, the command for the ping utility is `execute ping` followed by the IP address you want to connect to.

Before you configure the FortiGate-VM for use in production, ensure that connections between it and all required resources can be established.

- If the FortiGate-VM will provide firewall protection between your network and the internet, verify that it can connect to your internet access point and to resources on the internet.
- If the FortiGate-VM is part of a Fortinet Security Fabric, verify that it can connect to all devices in the Fabric.
- Verify that each node on your network can connect to the FortiGate-VM.

## Configuring your FortiGate-VM

For information about configuring and operating the FortiGate-VM after successful deployment and startup on the hypervisor, see the [FortiOS Administration Guide](#).

## HA

FortiGate-VM high availability (HA) supports having two virtual machines (VM) in an HA cluster on the same physical server or on different physical servers. In both cases, the two VMs run on the same hypervisor, such as

Xen. The primary consideration is that all interfaces involved can communicate efficiently over TCP/IP connection sessions.

## Heartbeat

There are two options for setting up the HA heartbeat: unicast and broadcast. Broadcast is the default HA heartbeat configuration. However, the broadcast configuration may not be ideal for FortiGate-VM because it may require special settings on the host. In most cases, the unicast configuration is preferable.

Differences between the unicast and broadcast heartbeat setups are:

- The unicast method does not change the FortiGate-VM interface MAC addresses to virtual MAC addresses.
- Unicast HA only supports two FortiGate-VMs.
- Unicast HA heartbeat interfaces must be connected to the same network and you must add IP addresses to these interfaces.

## Unicast

You can configure the unicast settings in the FortiOS CLI:

```
config system ha
  set unicast-hb {enable/disable}
  set unicast-hb-peerip {Peer heartbeat interface IP address}
end
```

Setting	Description
unicast-hb	Enable or disable default unicast HA heartbeat.
unicast-hb-peerip	IP address of the HA heartbeat interface of the other FortiGate-VM in the HA cluster.

## Broadcast

Broadcast HA heartbeat packets are non-TCP packets that use Ethertype values 0x8892, 0x8891, and 0x8890. These packets use automatically assigned link-local IPv4 addresses in the 169.254.0.x range for HA heartbeat interface IP addresses.

For FortiGate-VMs to support a broadcast HA heartbeat configuration, you must configure the virtual switches that connect heartbeat interfaces to operate in promiscuous mode and support MAC address spoofing.

In addition, you must configure the VM platform to allow MAC address spoofing for the FortiGate-VM data interfaces. This is required because in broadcast mode, the FGCP applies virtual MAC addresses to FortiGate data interfaces, and these virtual MAC addresses mean that matching interfaces of the FortiGate-VM instances in the cluster have the same virtual MAC addresses.

## Promiscuous mode for broadcast HA

This section describes how to support promiscuous mode for the heartbeat interfaces of a FortiGate-VM running on XenServer to support broadcast HA heartbeat.

On XenServer, FortiGate-VM HA interfaces are directly attached to a virtual network interface (VIF). The VIF is connected to a virtual switch (xenbr) that segments network traffic between a physical network interface (PIF) and one or more VIFs. Enabling promiscuous mode as described allows all traffic crossing the PIF to become transparent across the xenbr and visible to the VIF that the FortiGate-VM HA interface is connected to.

**To enable promiscuous mode for the PIF from the XenServer host CLI:**

1. Find and record the UUID of the PIF that the HA heartbeat interface is connected to by entering the following command:  

```
xe pif-list network-name-label=<network>
```

Where <network> is the common name for the network as it appears in XenCenter (for example, Network 0).
2. Enter the following command to enable promiscuous mode for the PIF:  

```
xe pif-param-set uuid=<uuid> other-config:promiscuous="true"
```

Where <uuid> is the UUID for the PIF.
3. Enter the following command to verify that you have set the promiscuous option:  

```
xe pif-param-list uuid=<uuid>
```

A line similar to the following should appear in the command output to indicate that promiscuous mode is enabled:  

```
other-config (MRW): promiscuous: true
```

**To enable promiscuous mode for the VIF from the XenServer host CLI:**

1. Find and record the UUID of the VIF that the HA heartbeat interface is connected to by entering the following command:  

```
xe vif-list vm-name-label=<vm-name>
```

Where <vm-name> is the common name of the FortiGate-VM as it appears in XenCenter.
2. Enter the following command to enable promiscuous mode for the VIF:  

```
xe vif-param-set uuid=<uuid> other-config:promiscuous="true"
```

Where <uuid> is the UUID for the PIF.
3. Enter the following command to verify that you have set the promiscuous option:  

```
xe vif-param-list uuid=<uuid_of_vif>
```

A line similar to the following should appear in the command output to indicate that promiscuous mode is enabled:  

```
other-config (MRW): promiscuous: true
```
4. Enter the following commands to activate promiscuous mode for the VIF:  

```
xe vif-unplug uuid=<uuid_of_vif>
xe vif-plug uuid=<uuid_of_vif>
```

These commands disconnect and reconnect the VIF to the VM. When the VIF reconnects, promiscuous mode is active. The unplug command takes the FortiGate-VM HA interface offline, and brings down the interface to the VM until you enter the vif-plug command.  
You can use tcpdump utility to compare traffic on the PIF and VIF to ensure that the VIF is behaving promiscuously.

# Optimizing FortiGate-VM performance

You can optimize FortiGate-VM performance by configuring interrupt-affinity and packet-distribution-affinity attributes to improve efficiency and resource utilization.

## SR-IOV

FortiGate-VMs installed on Xen platforms support Single Root I/O virtualization (SR-IOV) to provide FortiGate-VMs with direct access to physical network cards. Enabling SR-IOV means that one PCIe network card or CPU can function for a FortiGate-VM as multiple separate physical devices. SR-IOV reduces latency and improves CPU efficiency by allowing network traffic to pass directly between a FortiGate-VM and a network card, bypassing Xen host software and without using virtual switching.

FortiGate-VMs benefit from SR-IOV because SR-IOV optimizes network performance and reduces latency and CPU usage. FortiGate-VMs do not use Xen features that are incompatible with SR-IOV, so you can enable SR-IOV without negatively affecting your FortiGate-VM. SR-IOV implements an I/O memory management unit (IOMMU) to differentiate between different traffic streams and apply memory and interrupt translations between the physical functions (PF) and virtual functions (VF).

Setting up SR-IOV on Xen involves creating a PF for each physical network card in the hardware platform. Then, you create VFs that allow FortiGate-VMs to communicate through the PF to the physical network card. VFs are actual PCIe hardware resources and only a limited number of VFs are available for each PF.

### SR-IOV hardware compatibility

SR-IOV requires that the hardware and operating system on which your Xen host is running has BIOS, physical NIC, and network driver support for SR-IOV.

To enable SR-IOV, your Xen platform must run on hardware that is compatible with SR-IOV and with FortiGate-VMs. FortiGate-VMs require network cards that are compatible with the supported drivers. See [PF and VF SR-IOV driver and virtual SPU support](#) for supported driver versions. As well, the host hardware CPUs must support second level address translation (SLAT).

For optimal SR-IOV support, install the most up-to-date network drivers. Fortinet recommends i40e/lavf drivers because they provide four TxRx queues for each VF and ixgbevf only provides two TxRx queues.

### Creating an SR-IOV network from XenCenter

The following procedure may require rebooting the XenServer host, so you should only perform it during a maintenance window.

From the XenCenter GUI:

1. Under the *Networking* tab, select *Add Network*.
2. On the *Select Type* page, select *SR-IOV Network*.
3. Name the new network.
4. On the *Network Settings* page, select a NIC that supports SR-IOV.
5. Select *Finish* to build the network and select *Create SR-IOV anyway* when prompted.
6. On the *Network* tab, confirm that you added the new network. The SR-IOV column should indicate that the new network is an SR-IOV network. The column could also indicate whether you must reboot the XenServer host.
7. Restart the XenServer host if required.

## Assigning an SR-IOV network to a FortiGate-VM from XenCenter

The following procedure requires shutting down and restarting the FortiGate-VM, so you should only perform it during a maintenance window.

From the XenCenter GUI:

1. From the *Networking* tab, select a FortiGate-VM that you want to assign the SR-IOV network to.
2. Shut down the FortiGate-VM.
3. Select *Add Interface* to add a new interface.
4. Set *Network* to the SR-IOV network added above and configure other network settings as required.
5. Start the FortiGate-VM.

## Creating an SR-IOV network from the xe CLI

The following procedure may require rebooting the XenServer host, so you should only perform it during a maintenance window.

From the xe CLI:

1. Create the SR-IOV network with the following `network-create` command. This command also returns the UUID of the newly created network:  
`xe network-create name-label=<network-name>`
2. Determine the PIF UUID of the NIC on which SRIOV Network would be configured.  
`xe pif-list`
3. Configure the network as an SR-IOV network. The following command also returns the UUID of the newly created SR-IOV Network:  
`xe network-sriov-create network-uuid=<network-uuid> pif-uuid=<physical-pif-uuid>`
4. Enter the following command to determine if the XenServer host needs to be rebooted:  
`xe network-sriov-param-list uuid=<SR-IOV Network_uuid>`

The output should contain a line similar to the following that indicates whether or not the XenServer host needs to be restarted:

```
requires-reboot ( R0): false
```

## Assigning an SR-IOV network to a FortiGate-VM from the xe CLI

The following procedure requires shutting down and restarting the FortiGate-VM, so you should only perform it during a maintenance window.

From the xe CLI:

1. Determine the vif mac address of the FortiGate-VM by entering the following command:  

```
xe vm-vif-list vm="<fortigate-vm-instance-name>"
```
2. Assign the SR-IOV Network to the FortiGate-VM:  

```
xe vif-create device=<device-index> mac=<vf-mac-address> network-uuid=<sriov-network> vm-uuid=<vm-uuid>
```

This command also returns the UUID of the newly created network.

## Interrupt affinity

In addition to enabling SR-IOV in the VM host, to fully take advantage of SR-IOV performance improvements you must configure interrupt affinity for your FortiGate-VM. Interrupt affinity (also called CPU affinity) maps FortiGate-VM interrupts to the CPUs that are assigned to your FortiGate-VM. You use a CPU affinity mask to define the CPUs that the interrupts are assigned to.

A common use of this feature is to improve your FortiGate-VM's networking performance by:

- On the VM host, add multiple host CPUs to your FortiGate-VM.
- On the VM host, configure CPU affinity to specify the CPUs that the FortiGate-VM can use.
- On the VM host, configure other VM clients on the VM host to use other CPUs.
- On the FortiGate-VM, assign network interface interrupts to a CPU affinity mask that includes the CPUs that the FortiGate-VM can use.

In this way, all available CPU interrupts for the configured host CPUs are used to process traffic on your FortiGate interfaces. This configuration could lead to improve FortiGate-VM network performance because you have dedicated VM host CPU cycles to processing your FortiGate-VM's network traffic.

You can use the following CLI command to configure interrupt affinity for your FortiGate-VM:

```
config system affinity-interrupt
  edit <index>
    set interrupt <interrupt-name>
    set affinity-cpumask <cpu-affinity-mask>
  next
end
```

Where:

- <interrupt-name> is the name of the interrupt to associate with a CPU affinity mask. You can view your FortiGate-VM interrupts using the `diagnose hardware sysinfo interrupts` command. Usually you associate all of the interrupts for a given interface with the same CPU affinity mask.
- <cpu-affinity-mask> is the CPU affinity mask for the CPUs that will process the associated interrupt.

For example, consider the following configuration:

- The port2 and port3 interfaces of a FortiGate-VM send and receive most of the traffic.
- On the VM host you have set up CPU affinity between your FortiGate-VM and four CPUs (CPU 0, 1, 2, and 3).
- SR-IOV is enabled and SR-IOV interfaces use the i40evf interface driver.

The output from the `diagnose hardware sysinfo interrupts` command shows that port2 has the following transmit and receive interrupts:

```
i40evf-port2-TxRx-0
i40evf-port2-TxRx-1
i40evf-port2-TxRx-2
i40evf-port2-TxRx-3
```

The output from the `diagnose hardware sysinfo interrupts` command shows that port3 has the following transmit and receive interrupts:

```
i40evf-port3-TxRx-0
i40evf-port3-TxRx-1
i40evf-port3-TxRx-2
i40evf-port3-TxRx-3
```

Use the following command to associate the port2 and port3 interrupts with CPU 0, 1, 2, and 3.

```
config system affinity-interrupt
  edit 1
    set interrupt "i40evf-port2-TxRx-0"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000001"
  next
  edit 2
    set interrupt "i40evf-port2-TxRx-1"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000002"
  next
  edit 3
    set interrupt "i40evf-port2-TxRx-2"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000004"
  next
  edit 4
    set interrupt "i40evf-port2-TxRx-3"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000008"
  next
  edit 1
    set interrupt "i40evf-port3-TxRx-0"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000001"
  next
  edit 2
    set interrupt "i40evf-port3-TxRx-1"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000002"
  next
  edit 3
    set interrupt "i40evf-port3-TxRx-2"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000004"
  next
  edit 4
    set interrupt "i40evf-port3-TxRx-3"
    set affinity-cpumask "0x0000000000000008"
  next
end
```

## Packet-distribution affinity

With SR-IOV enabled on the VM host and interrupt affinity configured on your FortiGate-VM there is one additional configuration you can add that may improve performance. Most common network interface hardware has restrictions on the number of RX/TX queues that it can process. This can result in some CPUs being much busier than others and the busy CPUs may develop extensive queues.

You can get around this potential bottleneck by configuring affinity packet redistribution to allow overloaded CPUs to redistribute packets they receive to other less busy CPUs. This may result in a more even distribution of packet processing to all available CPUs.

You configure packet redistribution for interfaces by associating an interface with an affinity CPU mask. This configuration distributes packets sent and received by that interface to the CPUs defined by the CPU affinity mask associated with the interface.

You can use the following CLI command to configure affinity packet redistribution for your FortiGate-VM:

```
config system affinity-packet-redistribution
  edit <index>
    set interface <interface-name>
    set affinity-cpumask <cpu-affinity-mask>
  next
end
```

Where:

- <interface-name> the name of the interface to associate with a CPU affinity mask.
- <cpu-affinity-mask> the CPU affinity mask for the CPUs that will process packets to and from the associated interface.

For example, you can improve the performance of the interrupt affinity example shown in the following command to allow packets sent and received by the port3 interface to be redistributed to CPUs according to the 0xE CPU affinity mask.

```
config system affinity-packet-redistribution
  edit 1
    set interface port3
    set affinity-cpumask "0xE"
  next
end
```

# Change log

Date	Change description
2026-04-21	Initial release.



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