

IBM FlashSystem A9000R  
Version 12.0.1

## *Release Notes*



**Fourth Edition (September 2016)**

This edition applies to IBM FlashSystem A9000R version 12.0.1. Newer document editions may be issued for the same product version in order to add missing information, update information, or amend typographical errors. The edition is reset to 'First Edition' for every new product version.

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## Overview

IBM FlashSystem® A9000R is a high-end, all-flash storage system that delivers ultra-fast storage together with mission-critical features, including data reduction by compression and inline deduplication, smart scaling, distributed data, automatic load balancing, and a multitude of advanced enterprise-class features and capabilities.

As a pre-integrated rack offering, IBM FlashSystem A9000R comprises grid controllers and flash enclosures that are interconnected by integrated InfiniBand switches, forming a scale-out grid fabric that delivers exceptional IOPS performance.

In its core architecture, IBM FlashSystem A9000R utilizes IBM FlashCore™ technology together with IBM® MicroLatency® modules, providing high density, low latency, and storage reliability. In addition, IBM FlashSystem Enhanced Endurance Technology reduces flash disk wearout and ensures long-term durability of the flash storage components, even under heavy workloads.

IBM FlashSystem A9000R is ideal for large enterprises that rely on fast, redundant, and high-capacity data storage, offering high service levels for dynamic workloads and easy hyper-scaling, while supporting multi-tenant environments, flexible consumption models, and robust cloud automation and integration capabilities. IBM FlashSystem A9000R offers security and data protection through advanced remote mirroring, hot encryption, and self-healing mechanisms.

For more detailed information about IBM FlashSystem A9000R, refer to its user documentation and online information.

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## What's new in version 12.0.1

Software version 12.0.1 adds support for synchronous remote mirroring. It also includes performance enhancements and resolves miscellaneous issues.

**General availability date:** 15 August 2016

### **Synchronous remote mirroring**

Synchronous remote mirroring allows synchronous replication of data between two IBM FlashSystem A9000R systems, typically located at two geographically remote sites, allowing full data recovery from the backup system in different disaster scenarios.

For more information about this feature, refer to the IBM FlashSystem A9000R Product Overview publication.

### **Performance enhancements**

Software version 12.0.1 provides IOPS performance enhancements. For more information, consult with an authorized IBM representative.

## Additional improvements

For information about additional improvements in version 12.0.1, see “Change log” on page 3.

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## Hot upgrade from earlier versions

Version 12.0.1 supports direct non-disruptive upgrade (hot upgrade) from the following IBM FlashSystem A9000R software versions:

- 12.0.0.c
- 12.0.0.a

Upgrade from version 12.0.0 requires two consecutive hot upgrades, first to version 12.0.0.a and then to version 12.0.1.

The upgrade must be performed only by an authorized IBM service technician.

Prior to initiating software upgrade, consult with IBM Support regarding the required time allocation and expected duration of the upgrade procedure.

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**Note:** The system e-license may automatically prompt in the management GUI upon the first post-upgrade operation, if the e-license was updated since it was last accepted. In such a case, the new e-license must be accepted before any GUI operation can be performed.

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## Management and automation tools

IBM FlashSystem A9000R version 12.0.1 can be managed and monitored with IBM Hyper-Scale Manager version 5.0.1 or later.

IBM Hyper-Scale Manager version 5.0.1 provides an advanced web-based graphical user interface (GUI) from which one or more IBM FlashSystem A9000R (or A9000) systems can be managed and monitored in real time from a web browser.

IBM FlashSystem A9000R can also be managed from its command-line interface (CLI) or through representational state transfer (REST) application programming interfaces (APIs).

IBM FlashSystem A9000R customers are entitled to free use of IBM Hyper-Scale Manager, which can be obtained at any time from the IBM Fix Central website ([ibm.com/support/fixcentral](http://ibm.com/support/fixcentral)).

### IBM Spectrum Control™ Base Edition

IBM FlashSystem A9000R version 12.0.1 is supported by IBM Spectrum Control Base Edition version 3.0.1 or later, which provides the following VMware platform integration tools.

- IBM Storage Provider for VMware VASA
- IBM Storage Enhancements for VMware vSphere Web Client
- IBM Storage Plug-in for VMware vRealize Orchestrator
- IBM Storage Management Pack for VMware vRealize Operations Manager

For more information, see IBM Spectrum Control Base Edition on IBM Knowledge Center ([ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STWMS9](http://ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STWMS9)).

IBM FlashSystem A9000R customers are entitled to free use of IBM Spectrum Control Base Edition, which can be obtained at any time from either the IBM Hyper-Scale Manager software package or from the IBM Fix Central website ([ibm.com/support/fixcentral](http://ibm.com/support/fixcentral)).

## Available cloud storage solutions

IBM FlashSystem A9000R version 12.0.1 can be integrated with various independent software vendor (ISV) platform, application, virtualization, and cloud environments.

To facilitate this integration, IBM provides the following software solutions, also referred to as cloud storage solutions.

| Cloud storage solution  | Version        | Compatibility note  |
|---|----------------|---|
| IBM Storage Host Attachment Kit   | 2.6.0 or later | Available for: HP Unix, IBM AIX®, Linux (Red Hat Enterprise Linux; SUSE Linux Enterprise Server), Microsoft Windows Server, and Oracle Solaris. |
| IBM Storage Driver for OpenStack  | 1.7.0 or later | Version 1.7.0 supports only the OpenStack Mitaka release  |
| IBM Storage Management Pack for Microsoft System Center Operations Manager (SCOM) | 2.5.0 or later |   |
| IBM XIV® Provider for Microsoft Windows Volume Shadow Copy Service (VSS)          | 2.8.0 or later |   |
| IBM XIV Storage Replication Adapter   | 2.3.0 or later | For use with VMware Site Recovery Manager. Requires the use of synchronous remote mirroring.  |

IBM FlashSystem A9000R customers are entitled to free use of the IBM cloud storage solutions, which can be obtained at any time from the IBM Fix Central website ([ibm.com/support/fixcentral](http://ibm.com/support/fixcentral)).

For more information about the available cloud storage solutions for IBM FlashSystem A9000R, see '**Platform and application integration**' section in the IBM FlashSystem A9000R space on IBM Knowledge Center ([ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKN5](http://ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKN5)).

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## Change log

This change log summarizes the enhancements and fixes in the different 12.0.x code level versions of IBM FlashSystem A9000R.

**Note:** New functional features of these versions are only briefly summarized. For a detailed summary of the new functional features of a specific version, refer to the 'What's new' section of its release notes.

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## Version 12.0.1 (August 2016)

Version 12.0.1 of IBM FlashSystem A9000R adds support for synchronous remote mirroring. It also includes performance enhancements and resolves the following issues.

| Ticket ID  | Description  |
|------------|--|
| SYS-281392 | <b>Fixed:</b> In rare cases, if a grid controller fails during a hot upgrade procedure, it might cause all grid controllers to fail.<br><br>Severity: High Impact<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later                      |
| SYS-282017 | <b>Fixed:</b> After the system is operating continuously for a few months, a grid controller might fail.<br><br>Severity: High Impact<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later  |
| SYS-279484 | <b>Fixed:</b> Data-at-rest encryption is not applied on the SSD vault device that holds user data from the write cache during emergency shutdown situations.<br><br>Severity: Moderate<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later |
| SYS-279304 | <b>Fixed:</b> Latency is indicated in the performance statistics, even when the actual Input/Output Operations Per Second (IOPS) rate is close to 0.<br><br>Severity: Low<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later              |

## Version 12.0.0.c (July 2016)

Version 12.0.0.c of IBM FlashSystem A9000R included the following fixes.

| Ticket ID  | Description   |
|------------|---|
| SYS-281016 | <b>Fixed:</b> If a grid controller or cache node fails and then at some future point a volume is formatted, a volume is deleted, or VAAI issues a <b>write_same</b> command (with zeros), it is possible that in rare cases, the data which was not explicitly written by the application might contain data other than the expected zeros. This will be undetected.<br><br>Severity: High Impact<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later |
| SYS-281468 | <b>Fixed:</b> If a snapshot of a volume is deleted, a very rare instance of undetected data corruption on a small part of the volume might occur.<br><br>Severity: High Impact<br><br>Affected versions: 12.0.0 or later  |



## Version 12.0.0.a (May 2016)

Version 12.0.0.a of IBM FlashSystem A9000R included the following fixes.

| Ticket ID  | Description  |
|------------|--|
| SYS-278135 | <p><b>Fixed:</b> In some rare cases, a disabled canister in the flash enclosure might still be able to de-stage data slices for which it served as the primary canister. This could potentially compromise the validity of saved data.</p> <p>Severity: High Impact</p> <p>Affected versions: 12.0.0</p> |
| SYS-279855 | <p><b>Fixed:</b> Emergency shutdown is not automatically carried out if more than three grid controllers fail in a rack configuration that contains 6 grid controllers.</p> <p>Severity: Moderate</p> <p>Affected versions: 12.0.0</p>   |
| SYS-279491 | <p><b>Fixed:</b> In some cases, LDAP authentication might fail over an SSL connection, causing a 20-minute delay before the authentication can be carried out again.</p> <p>Severity: Service</p> <p>Affected versions: 12.0.0</p>   |

## Version 12.0 (April 2016)

Version 12.0 was the first software version of IBM FlashSystem A9000R, and included the following functional features:

- Flash-optimized data reduction, including inline deduplication and compression
- Flash-optimized data path and data protection
- Capacity statistics
- Space-efficient snapshots and consistency groups
- Redirect-on-Write (ROW)
- Quality of Service (QoS) performance classes
- Data-at-rest encryption
- Multi-tenancy
- System performance metrics, including history metrics of no less than 300 days
- Remote support and proactive support

For more information about these features, refer to the IBM FlashSystem A9000R Product Overview publication.

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## Limitations

As opposed to known issues, limitations are functionality restrictions that are part of the predefined system design and capabilities in a particular version.

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**Note:** For information about specification-related functional boundaries, such as maximum number of volumes and hosts per storage system, refer to the IBM FlashSystem A9000R specification sheet document, which can be provided to IBM customers under non-disclosure agreement (NDA).

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### MES hardware expansion

In software version 12.0.1 and all previous 12.0.0.x versions, additional grid controllers and flash enclosures cannot be added to an existing rack. Accordingly, a rack system with a sufficient amount of components must be ordered in advance.

In future software versions, check whether this limitation still applies.

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## Known issues

This section details the known issues in IBM FlashSystem A9000R version 12.0.1, along with possible solutions or workarounds (if available).

The following severity levels apply to known issues:

- **High Impact** – Potentially irrecoverable error that might impact data or access to data in rare cases or specific situations/configurations.
- **Moderate** – Limited functionality issue and/or performance issue with a noticeable effect.
- **Service** – Non-disruptive recoverable error that can be resolved through a workaround.
- **Low** – Low-impact usability-related issue.

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### Important:

- **The issues listed below apply to version 12.0.1 or earlier versions.** As long as a newer version has not yet been released, a newer release notes edition for version 12.0.1 might be issued to provide a more updated list of known issues and workarounds.
  - When a newer version is released for general availability, the release notes of version 12.0.1 will no longer be updated. Accordingly, check the release notes of the newer version to learn whether any newly discovered issues affect version 12.0.1 or whether the newer version resolves any of the issues listed below.
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| Ticket ID  | Severity    | Affected versions | Description  |
|------------|-------------|-------------------|--|
| SYS-276739 | High Impact | 12.0.0 or later   | In rare cases when synchronous mirroring is used, a component failure on the slave volume side might cause I/Os served by the master volume to fail.<br><br><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available. |

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| Ticket ID  | Severity | Affected versions | Description  |
|------------|----------|-------------------|--|
| SYS-280320 | Moderate | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>In rare cases of workloads that include a mixture of 4KB random write and read, an increase in latency might occur upon intensive access to a volume with snapshots.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> To avoid this issue, consider the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain a high cache hit ratio.</li> <li>2. Use a larger block size.</li> <li>3. Disable snapshot usage for that specific volume.</li> </ol> |
| SYS-281258 | Moderate | 12.0.0.a or later | <p>Wrong compression and deduplication ratio values are reported after volume deletion, due to inaccurate available space optimization.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p>  |
| SYS-279815 | Service  | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>If a MicroLatency module card that is pulled out of the flash enclosure when the enclosure's internal redundancy state is either 'Synching' or 'Degraded', the management GUI indicates that the card has a spare, even if no spare is available.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> Use the <b>flash_card_list</b> CLI command to display the correct status of spares.</p>   |
| SYS-280124 | Service  | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>Numerous MODULE_BBU_IS_CHARGING and MODULE_BBU_IS_FULL events are issued during the periodic discharge of a grid controller's battery backup unit (BBU).</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> These events can be ignored.</p>   |
| SYS-280653 | Service  | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>Some CLI commands might hang when storage pools are being cleaned from snapshots.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> In such a case, wait until the command is carried out.</p>  |
| SYS-281973 | Service  | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>Inaccurate physical capacity usage might be reported when deleting a volume or a storage pool after the volume or storage pool was at full capacity.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p>  |
| SYS-276870 | Low      | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>When a grid controller is replaced, or whenever the system is undergoing a software initiation process, data reduction saving statistics could be temporarily inaccurate. The statistics accuracy is regained as data is being accessed and processed again.</p> <p>This issue has a noticeable effect only after 1TB or less has been written to the system.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p>               |
| SYS-279421 | Low      | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>Time stamp is incorrect in statistics reported over SMI-S.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p>  |

| Ticket ID  | Severity | Affected versions | Description   |
|------------|----------|-------------------|---|
| SYS-280703 | Low      | 12.0.1 or later   | <p>If snapshot space is not configured, a misleading error appears when trying to create a mirror snapshot and the operation fails.</p> <p>To avoid this error, make sure that the snapshot space is configured before trying to create a snapshot mirror.</p>  |
| SYS-280926 | Low      | 12.0.0 or later   | <p>Capacity optimization is not applied on the data migration target. The occupied space is identical to the size of the original volume, even if the original volume contains a large amount of zeros. However, this empty space is eventually cleared through the inline pattern detection mechanism.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p> |
| SYS-281410 | Low      | 12.0.1 or later   | <p>Several asynchronous mirroring arguments might be noticeable in the CLI, even though asynchronous mirroring is not supported in version 12.0.1.</p> <p><b>Workaround:</b> No workaround is currently available.</p>  |

## Related information and publications

You can find additional information and publications related to IBM FlashSystem A9000R on the following information sources.

- IBM Flash Storage marketing website ([ibm.com/systems/storage/flash](http://ibm.com/systems/storage/flash))
- IBM FlashSystem A9000R on IBM Knowledge Center ([ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKN5](http://ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKN5))
- IBM FlashSystem A9000 on IBM Knowledge Center ([ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKMM](http://ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/STJKMM))
- IBM Storage Redbooks® website ([redbooks.ibm.com/portals/storage](http://redbooks.ibm.com/portals/storage))

## Getting information, help, and service

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- IBM Support Portal website ([ibm.com/storage/support](http://ibm.com/storage/support))
- IBM Directory of Worldwide Contacts website ([ibm.com/planetwide](http://ibm.com/planetwide))
- IBM service requests and PMRs ([ibm.com/support/servicerequest/Home.action](http://ibm.com/support/servicerequest/Home.action))

Use the Directory of Worldwide Contacts to find the appropriate phone number for initiating voice call support. Voice calls arrive to Level 1 or Front Line Support.

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