Terminal Server Licensing overview

Terminal Server has its own method for licensing clients that log on to terminal servers, separate from the licensing method for Microsoft® Windows Server 2003 family operating system clients. Clients must receive a valid license issued by a Terminal Server License Server before they are allowed to log on to a terminal server.

◆ Important

- If you use Remote Desktop for Administration, two concurrent connections can log on. You do not need a Terminal Server License Server for these connections. For more information on Remote Desktop for Administration, see Remote Desktop for Administration overview.

To use Terminal Server, you must also have a Terminal Server License Server. Before licenses can be issued to clients, you must first install a Terminal Server License Server on your network and activate it through the Microsoft Clearinghouse. Once activated, the Terminal Server License Server provides a secure way to install client license key packs and issue licenses to Terminal Server clients. When a client attempts to log on to a terminal server for the first time, that terminal server contacts the Terminal Server License Server and requests a license for the client.

Microsoft Clearinghouse

The Microsoft Clearinghouse is the database that Microsoft maintains to activate license servers and install client license key packs on Terminal Server License Servers that request them. The Clearinghouse stores information about all activated Terminal Server License Servers and key packs that have been issued. This helps you track client usage of the terminal servers within your organization to ensure that you have purchased a sufficient number of client licenses. The Microsoft Clearinghouse is accessed from the Terminal Server License Server Activation Wizard.

License server

A Terminal Server License Server stores all client licenses that have been installed for a terminal server. A terminal server must be able to connect to an activated Terminal Server License Server before clients can be issued licenses. One Terminal Server License Server can serve several terminal servers concurrently. The Terminal Server License Server should not be the same server on which you have installed Terminal Server.

Before installing the Terminal Server License Server, consider which of two types of license servers you require--a domain license server or an enterprise license server. During Terminal Server Licensing setup, you select which type of license server is required for your system-- either a domain license server or an enterprise license server. By default, a license server is installed as an enterprise license server. For more information, see Terminal Server Licensing modes.

⚠ Warning

- Terminal servers allow unlicensed clients to connect for 120 days from the date of the first client logon. After this evaluation period ends, a terminal server can no longer allow clients to connect unless it locates a Terminal Server License Server to issue client licenses.

Use the Terminal Server License Server Activation Wizard to activate a Terminal Server License Server. When a Terminal Server License Server is activated, the wizard confirms the identity of the terminal server and allows it to obtain licenses and issue them to your Terminal Server clients. For information about activating a Terminal Server License Server, see Activating a Terminal Server License Server.

Terminal server

A terminal server is a server on which the Terminal Server component of the Windows Server 2003 family operating systems is installed. A terminal server gives client computers access to Windows-based applications that run entirely on the server, and supports multiple client sessions on the server. If a client does not have a license, the terminal server requests one from the Terminal Server License Server. For instructions on installing Terminal Server, see

Installing Terminal Server.

✏ **Note**

- You can use any computer running Windows Server 2003 family operating systems to administer servers remotely with Remote Desktop for Administration (formerly Terminal Services in Remote Administration mode). You do not need to install Terminal Server. A Terminal Server License Server and the Terminal Server Licensing administrative tool are not required for Remote Desktop for Administration. For more information on Remote Desktop for Administration, see Remote Desktop for Administration.

Client licenses

Each client computer or terminal that connects to a terminal server must be licensed. For information about specific license requirements, see the Microsoft Web Site.

To view the Terminal Server Licensing privacy statement, see Terminal Server license management and your privacy.