



**VMBACKUP**  
Hyper-V | VMware

# Altaro VM Backup vs. Symantec Backup Exec

Product comparison

# Altaro VM Backup 6 vs. Symantec Backup Exec 2015

The Backup Exec product is a long-standing member of the data protection market. Some aspects have not aged well, diminishing its attractiveness in the modern datacenter era.

## Executive Summary

- **Backup Exec is not priced well in comparison to Altaro VM Backup.** The confusing array of editions and individually-priced features makes it likely that a consultation will be necessary just to determine what a customer will need to purchase.
- While day-to-day usage of Backup Exec is likely to not be draining, **initial deployment can be very difficult**; it could take a substantial amount of time before options are correctly configured such that a backup job finishes successfully.
- **Backup Exec has a very complicated installation path**, made even more difficult by the need to select and purchase components separately.

## Backup Exec Weaknesses against Altaro VM Backup

- **Heavy application requirements:** Backup Exec is intended to be installed on a dedicated server, and its console and primary backup components are resource-intensive enough to justify it. It cannot be installed on Hyper-V Server or a Core installation of Windows Server. A Microsoft SQL instance is required (the Express edition is acceptable). Conversely, Altaro VM Backup can be installed directly on the system to manage and works perfectly well in Core environments, all without a heavy database system.
- **Feature limitations:** Backup Exec is designed as a modular system with a great many feature that are simply not available in the basic package. If a customer inadvertently chooses the wrong edition, it's not even possible to back up a virtual machine with purchasing additional features. The virtual machine module is also lacking in some industry-standard areas, such as full support for Linux guests on Hyper-V. Furthermore, Symantec typically does not introduce support for new versions of Windows operating systems for several months after their release which could force customers to delay server upgrades and deployments. Altaro's simplistic licensing tiers make it easy to choose the product with the best-matched feature set and they support new Windows versions as they release.
- **Ease of Use:** Backup Exec's interface is well-laid out and the most commonly used actions and features are fairly simple to find. However, setting up backup jobs can be difficult and time-consuming with a great deal of trial-and-error. Choosing the wrong options can cause a job to fail entirely and the application does not generally provide any advance warnings about such misconfigurations.
- **Unstable software:** Backup Exec is not one of the more stable backup applications on the market. Many problems are difficult to diagnose and repair. If one virtual machine fails to back up properly, Backup Exec might fail the entire job without even trying to protect other virtual machines. To make matters worse, Symantec is not known for quality support. Whenever possible, they dismiss customers with a, "That's a Microsoft problem" response.



Altaro’s software includes comprehensive diagnostic packages that can transmit directly to Altaro’s support staff. Altaro is dedicated to providing an excellent support experience and will happily help customers, even if a Microsoft component is causing trouble.

- **Uncertain corporate backing:** The Backup Exec product has been through several owners in its long lifetime. Its current owner, Symantec, is in the process of separating the Veritas company, along with its Backup Exec product, into a distinct entity that it hopes to sell ([source](#)). Any current and potential customers have no way to be certain about the future of the product. Altaro VM Backup is made by a solid, growing company.

## Backup Exec Strengths over Altaro VM Backup

- **Larger feature set:** Backup Exec’s roots extend into the pre-virtualization days, so it covers physical systems and some special applications. However, Altaro VM Backup’s feature set for VMware and Hyper-V is comparable and in some ways, superior (ex. Full support for Linux guests on Hyper-V).
- **More hypervisors:** Backup Exec includes support for Citrix XenServer; Altaro VM Backup does not.
- **More storage choices:** Backup Exec has one of the widest options for backup storage targets in the industry, including tape.

## Feature comparison

	Altaro VM Backup 6	Symantec Backup Exec 2015
Size of install files	<b>183MB</b> Main installer.	<b>2 GB DVD image</b> Does not include patches or service packs, so may need over 400MB of additional files immediately after install
Time to Install	<b>Less than 5 minutes</b> If the .Net Framework is already installed.	<b>Over 30 minutes</b> for a basic installation with local SQL database.
Time to first backup	<b>Less than 5 minutes</b> Depends mainly on the speed in which the operator can configure a backup target.	<b>15 Minutes or more</b> after installation (not including patching) is a reasonable estimate.  Depends on operator's understanding of the software and complexity of the environment.
Major Requirements	<b>Hyper-V: No separate system necessary.</b> The entire product can be installed on a Hyper-V host.	Needs a <b>Windows installation</b> and should be dedicated. <b>SQL is required</b> , although Express is adequate for small organizations.

	<b>VMware:</b> The management console can be installed on any compatible Windows system, including a desktop operating system. Does not need to be a dedicated environment.	
Ease of use	<b>Very simple to use</b> A novice user should be able to perform both backups and restores without much effort.	<b>Moderately difficult to use</b> Settings are not well-explained and there are no warnings about error-causing misconfigurations. Error messages are not clear.
Admin maintenance required	<b>Minimal</b>	<b>Minimal to moderate</b> If all is well, should require minimal intervention. Problems could take time to sort out. Patches can sometimes cause the application to fail completely.
Cost of ownership	<b>Low</b> Maximum \$585 per host.	<b>Expensive</b> Minimum of approximately \$1,000 for the first year (includes maintenance).
Price for 1 virtualization host (2 sockets)	<b>\$395 - \$585</b> (Standard / Unlimited Edition, incl. 1 year SMA*)	<b>\$1,994</b> (incl. 1 year SMA)
Price for 5 virtualization hosts (2 sockets per server)	<b>\$1,975 - \$2,925</b> (Standard / Unlimited Edition, incl. 1 year SMA)	<b>\$11,210</b> (incl. 1 year SMA)
Pricing structure	<b>Straightforward</b> Priced per host.	<b>Extremely complicated</b> Multi-edition with a long list of à la carte features. Difficult to know which licenses to purchase.
Maintenance and Support cost	<b>25% Of initial license fee</b> First year included with initial license purchase.	<b>\$300 Annually</b> Annual renewal priced at \$300 per year for 2-6 sockets for Essential Maintenance.
Quality of Support	<b>99% client satisfaction</b> 56s avg response time – phone 95m avg response time – email 76s avg response time – live chat	<b>Symantec support is generally disliked</b> Common complaints include extended delays, unhelpfulness, and inability/unwillingness to address issues.



Fit for SMB organizations (1-50 hosts)	<b>Perfect fit</b> Altaro provides a product with a feature set and pricing model that fits well with SMB needs and budgets.	<b>Too complicated and expensive.</b>
CSV-aware / Support for vCenter		
Agentless		 (for virtual machines)
Offsite Replication w/ WAN Acceleration		
Start VM Directly from Backup		
Live Backups of Windows VMs		
Live Backups of non-Windows VMs		Struggles with Linux VMs as Hyper-V guests
Hyper-V and VMware Support		
Tape Support		

\* SMA = Software Maintenance Agreement that covers software updates and Technical Support.