



# FlexCache volumes management with the CLI

ONTAP 9

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# FlexCache volumes management with the CLI

## FlexCache volumes management overview with the CLI

This content describes how to configure and manage FlexCache volumes for accelerating data access.

You should use this content if you want to configure FlexCache volumes in the following way:

- You are running ONTAP 9.5 or later.
- You want to use the ONTAP command-line interface (CLI), not ONTAP System Manager or an automated scripting tool.
- You want to use best practices, not explore every available option.

Details about command syntax are available from the CLI help and the ONTAP man pages.

- You do not want to read a lot of conceptual background.
- You have cluster administrator privileges, not SVM administrator privileges.

## Use FlexCache volumes to accelerate data access overview

A FlexCache volume is a sparsely populated volume that is backed by an origin volume. The FlexCache volume can be on the same cluster as or on a different cluster than that of the origin volume. The FlexCache volume provides access to data in the origin volume without requiring that all of the data be in the FlexCache volume.

In ONTAP 9.5, the origin volume is a FlexVol volume and the FlexCache volume is a FlexGroup volume. An origin volume supports NFSv3, NFSv4, and SMB protocols. A FlexCache volume supports only NFSv3 protocol in ONTAP 9.5. Beginning with ONTAP 9.8, a FlexCache volume also supports SMB protocol. Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, a FlexCache volume supports the NFSv4 protocol. For a table summary of supported features in FlexCache volumes, refer to [Supported and unsupported features for FlexCache volumes](#).

Beginning with ONTAP 9.7, FlexGroup volumes are also supported as source volumes.



In ONTAP 9 releases earlier than 9.5, origin FlexVol volumes can only serve data to FlexCache volumes created on systems running Data ONTAP 8.2.x operating in 7-Mode. Beginning in ONTAP 9.5, origin FlexVol volumes can also serve data to FlexCache volumes on ONTAP 9 systems. For information about migrating from 7-mode FlexCache to ONTAP 9 FlexCache, [NetApp Technical Report 4743: FlexCache Volumes in NetApp ONTAP](#).

A FlexCache volume directly serves read requests if the volume contains the data requested by the client. Otherwise, the FlexCache volume requests the data from the origin volume and stores the data before serving the client request. Subsequent read requests for the data are then served directly from the FlexCache volume. This improves performance when the same data is accessed repeatedly, because after the first request, the data no longer has to travel across the network, or be served from an overloaded system.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.9.1, FlexCache volumes cache a directory listing for "file not found" errors that occur when a file no longer exists on the origin volume. This helps reduce network traffic by removing the need to

send multiple calls to the origin when clients search for non-existent files.

Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, global file locking can be enabled across FlexCache volumes to favor consistency, ensuring modifications to an origin volume are distributed simultaneously to FlexCache volumes. Global file locking can only be enabled from the CLI.

You can use FlexCache volumes to speed up access to data or to offload traffic from heavily accessed volumes. FlexCache volumes help improve performance, especially when clients need to access the same data repeatedly, because the data can be served directly without having to access the origin volume. Therefore, you can use FlexCache volumes to handle system workloads that are read-intensive.

Any write operation is applied at the origin volume.

## Typical FlexCache deployments

FlexCache volumes are typically used for read-intensive workloads. You can have a FlexCache volume in the same cluster to accelerate performance for frequently accessed data or “hot objects”. You can also have FlexCache volumes to distribute data across multiple clusters to reduce WAN latencies.

You can have FlexCache deployments with AFF, FAS, or ONTAP Select systems. Starting with ONTAP 9.6, FlexCache deployments are also supported with Cloud Volumes ONTAP.

### Performance acceleration for hot volumes

In a LAN deployment, the FlexCache volume is in the same cluster as the origin cluster. The FlexCache volume can be located in the same SVM as or in a different SVM than that of the origin volume.

The FlexCache volume is used for CPU-intensive workloads to offload work from busy file servers and to free system resources. You can use multiple mount points corresponding to different FlexCache volumes for reducing network latency because the data access load is shared among all of the caching systems. This type of LAN deployment reduces the workload of an overloaded storage system.

### Cross-cluster data distribution


In a WAN deployment, the FlexCache volume is remote from the data center and is in a different cluster than the origin volume. When clients request data, the FlexCache volume caches popular data, giving the end user faster access to information. This type of WAN deployment decreases the average access time for remote clients.


The FlexCache volume is placed as close as possible to the remote office. Client requests are then explicitly directed to the FlexCache volume. If valid data exists in the cache, that data is served directly to the client. If the data does not exist in the cache, the data is retrieved across the WAN from the origin system, cached in the FlexCache volume, and then served to the client.

## Supported and unsupported features for FlexCache volumes

You must be aware of the features that are supported by FlexCache volumes and their origin volumes.

Feature	Supported at the origin volume?	Supported at the FlexCache volume?
Antivirus	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7	Not applicable
Auditing	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7
Cloud Volumes ONTAP	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6
Compaction	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7
Compression	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6
Deduplication	Yes	Yes  Inline deduplication is supported on FlexCache volumes starting with ONTAP 9.6. Cross-volume deduplication is supported on FlexCache volumes starting with ONTAP 9.7.
FabricPool	Yes	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7
FlexCache DR	Yes	Yes  Supported starting in ONTAP 9.9.1, with NFSv3 protocol, only. FlexCache volumes must be in separate SVMs or in separate clusters.

Feature	Supported at the origin volume?	Supported at the FlexCache volume?
FlexGroup volume	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7	Yes
FlexVol volume	Yes	No
FPolicy	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7	Yes Supported for NFS beginning with ONTAP 9.7
MetroCluster configuration	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7
NetApp Volume Encryption (NVE)	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6
NFSv3	Yes	Yes
NFSv4	Yes	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1
QoS	Yes	Yes   File-level QoS is not supported for FlexCache volumes.
Qtrees	Yes Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.6	No

Feature	Supported at the origin volume?	Supported at the FlexCache volume?
Quotas	Yes	No   Starting with ONTAP 9.6, remote quota (rquota) is supported at FlexCache volumes.
SMB	Yes	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.8.
SnapLock volumes	No	No
SnapMirror Asynchronous relationships	Yes	No  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary volume or secondary volume in a SnapMirror relationship cannot be a FlexCache volume.</li> <li>• Only the primary volume of a SnapMirror relationship can be a FlexCache origin volume.</li> </ul> <p>Starting with ONTAP 9.8, a SnapMirror secondary volume can be a FlexCache origin volume.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can have a FlexCache volume from an origin primary volume in SnapMirror relationship, but not from a secondary volume.</li> </ul>
SnapMirror Synchronous relationships	No	No
SnapRestore	Yes	No
Snapshot copies	Yes	No

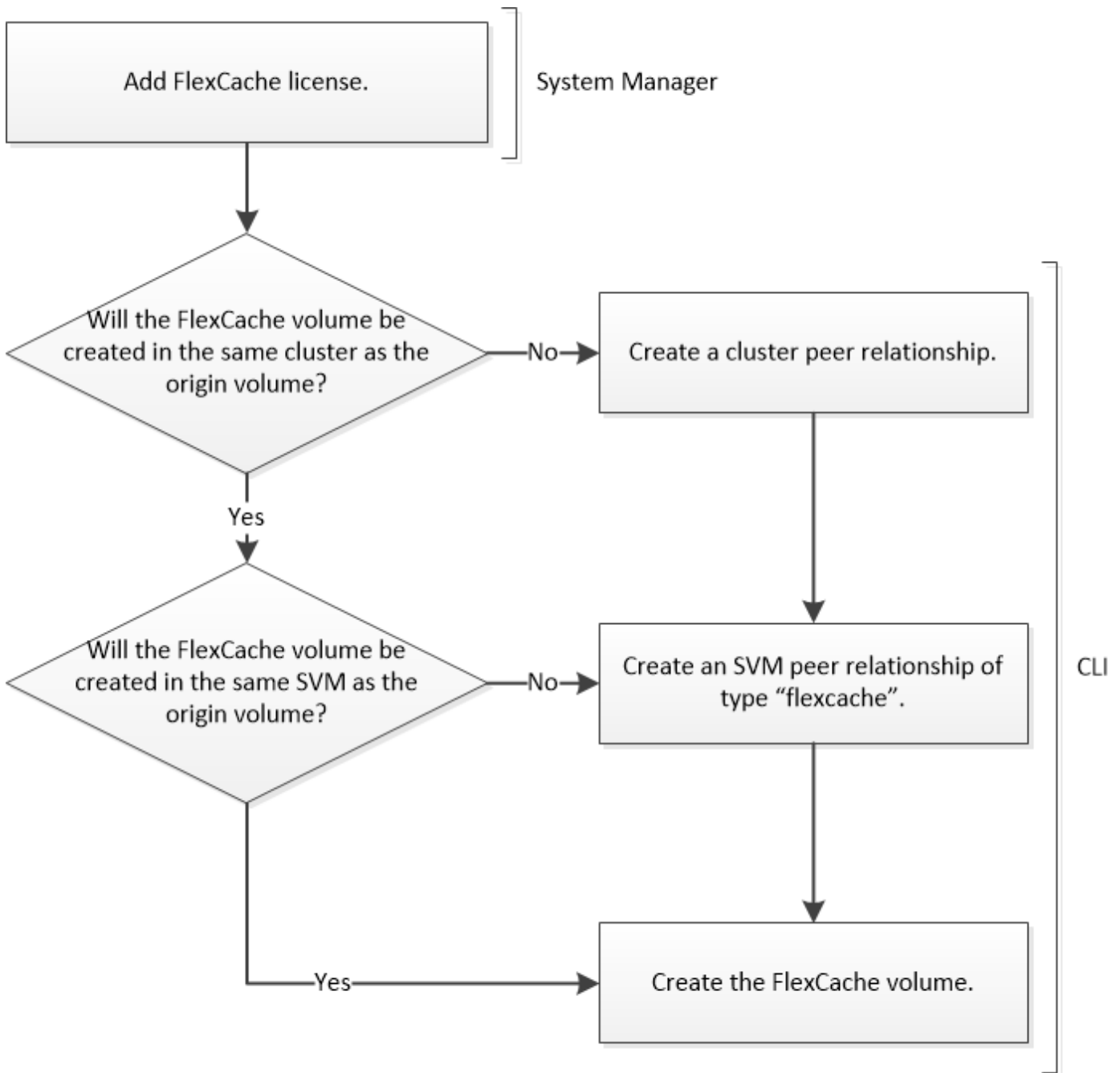
Feature	Supported at the origin volume?	Supported at the FlexCache volume?
SVM DR configuration	Yes  Supported starting with ONTAP 9.5. The primary SVM of an SVM DR relationship can have the origin volume; however, if the SVM DR relationship is broken, the FlexCache relationship must be re-created with a new origin volume.	No  You can have FlexCache volumes in primary SVMs, but not in secondary SVMs. Any FlexCache volume in the primary SVM is not replicated as part of the SVM DR relationship.
Storage-level Access Guard (SLAG)	No	No
Thin provisioning	Yes	Yes  Supported beginning with ONTAP 9.7
Volume cloning	Yes  Cloning of an origin volume and the files in the origin volume is supported starting with ONTAP 9.6.	No
Volume move	Yes	Yes (only for volume constituents)  Moving volume constituents of a FlexCache volume is supported from ONTAP 9.6 onwards.
Volume rehost	No	No

## FlexCache volume creation

### FlexCache volume creation workflow

You must first install the FlexCache license from ONTAP System Manager. You can then create a FlexCache volume in the same cluster or in a remote cluster by using the CLI.





You must be running ONTAP 9.5 or later.

You can use FlexCache volumes in the same cluster for accelerated performance when accessing hot volumes. You can use FlexCache volumes in different clusters for improving the performance of cross-cluster data distribution.

## Add a FlexCache license

If you are running ONTAP 9.6 or earlier, you must install a FlexCache license, which is a capacity-based and term-based license, by using ONTAP System Manager.

### About this task

The FlexCache license is a cluster-wide license. The license includes an entitled usage limit that you purchase for using FlexCache volumes in the cluster. The space usage by FlexCache volumes across the cluster must

not exceed the capacity of the entitled usage limit. If you need to increase the usage limit of the license, you should contact your sales representative.

Starting with ONTAP 9.7, the capacity-based license is not required. The FlexCache license is bundled with the ONTAP package.

### Steps

1. Download the NetApp License File for the FlexCache license from the NetApp Support Site.

[NetApp Support](#)

2. Use ONTAP System Manager to upload the FlexCache license to the cluster:
  - a. Click the **Configurations > Cluster > Licenses** tab.
  - b. In the **Packages** window, click **Add**.
  - c. In the **Add License Packages** dialog box, click **Choose Files** to select the NetApp License File that you downloaded, and then click **Add** to upload the file to the cluster.

## Process to create a FlexCache volume

### Create a FlexCache volume

You can create a FlexCache volume in the same cluster for improving performance when accessing a hot object. If you have data centers in different locations, you can create FlexCache volumes on remote clusters for accelerating data access.

### About this task

The FlexCache volume is always a FlexGroup volume, and not a FlexVol volume.

Starting with ONTAP 9.7, FlexGroup volumes are also supported at the origin of the FlexCache relationship.

### Steps

1. If the FlexCache volume to be created is in a different cluster, create a cluster peer relationship:
  - a. On the destination cluster, create a peer relationship with the data protection source cluster:

```
cluster peer create -generate-passphrase -offer-expiration MM/DD/YYYY  
HH:MM:SS|1...7days|1...168hours -peer-addr peer_LIF_IPs -initial-allowed  
-vserver-peers svm_name,..|* -ip-space ip-space_name
```

Starting with ONTAP 9.6, TLS encryption is enabled by default when creating a cluster peer relationship. TLS encryption is supported for the intercluster communication between the origin and FlexCache volumes. You can also disable TLS encryption for the cluster peer relationship, if required.

```
cluster02::> cluster peer create -generate-passphrase -offer
-expiration 2days -initial-allowed-vserver-peers *
```

Passphrase: UCa+6lRVICXeL/gq1WrK7ShR  
Expiration Time: 6/7/2017 08:16:10 EST  
Initial Allowed Vserver Peers: \*  
Intercluster LIF IP: 192.140.112.101  
Peer Cluster Name: Clus\_7ShR (temporary generated)

Warning: make a note of the passphrase - it cannot be displayed again.

- b. On the source cluster, authenticate the source cluster to the destination cluster:

```
cluster peer create -peer-addr peer_LIF_IPs -ip-space ip-space
```

```
cluster01::> cluster peer create -peer-addr
192.140.112.101,192.140.112.102
```

Notice: Use a generated passphrase or choose a passphrase of 8 or more characters.

To ensure the authenticity of the peering relationship, use a phrase or sequence of characters that would be hard to guess.

```
Enter the passphrase:
Confirm the passphrase:
```

Clusters cluster02 and cluster01 are peered.

2. If the FlexCache volume is in a different SVM than that of the origin volume, create an SVM peer relationship with flexcache as the application:

- a. If the SVM is in a different cluster, create an SVM permission for the peering SVMs:

```
vserver peer permission create -peer-cluster cluster_name -vserver svm-name
-applications flexcache
```

The following example illustrates how to create an SVM peer permission that applies for all of the local SVMs:

```
cluster1::> vserver peer permission create -peer-cluster cluster2
-vserver "*" -applications flexcache
```

```
Warning: This Vserver peer permission applies to all local Vservers.
After that no explicit
"vserver peer accept" command required for Vserver peer relationship
creation request
from peer cluster "cluster2" with any of the local Vservers. Do you
want to continue? {y|n}: y
```

b. Create the SVM peer relationship:

```
vserver peer create -vserver local_SVM -peer-vserver remote_SVM -peer
cluster cluster_name -applications flexcache
```

3. Create a FlexCache volume:

```
volume flexcache create -vserver cache_svm -volume cache_vol_name -auto
-provision-as flexgroup -size vol_size -origin-vserver origin_svm -origin
-volume origin_vol_name
```

The following example creates a FlexCache volume and automatically selects existing aggregates for provisioning:

```
cluster1::> volume flexcache create -vserver vs_1 -volume fc1 -auto
-provision-as flexgroup -origin-volume vol_1 -size 160MB -origin-vserver
vs_1
[Job 443] Job succeeded: Successful
```

The following example creates a FlexCache volume and sets the junction path:

```
cluster1::> flexcache create -vserver vs34 -volume fc4 -aggr-list
aggr34,aggr43 -origin-volume origin1 -size 400m -junction-path /fc4
[Job 903] Job succeeded: Successful
```

4. Verify the FlexCache relationship from the FlexCache volume and the origin volume.

a. View the FlexCache relationship in the cluster:

```
volume flexcache show
```

```

cluster1::> volume flexcache show
Vserver Volume      Size      Origin-Vserver Origin-Volume Origin-
Cluster
-----
vs_1    fc1          160MB    vs_1          vol_1
cluster1

```

b. View all of the FlexCache relationships in the origin cluster:

```
volume flexcache origin show-caches
```

```

cluster::> volume flexcache origin show-caches
Origin-Vserver Origin-Volume  Cache-Vserver  Cache-Volume  Cache-
Cluster
-----
vs0            ovoll         vs1            cfg1          clusA
vs0            ovoll         vs2            cfg2          clusB
vs_1          vol_1         vs_1           fc1
cluster1

```

## Result

The FlexCache volume is successfully created. Clients can mount the volume by using the junction path of the FlexCache volume.

## Related information

[Cluster and SVM peering](#)

[ONTAP 9 commands](#)

## Guidelines for sizing a FlexCache volume

You must be aware of the limits for FlexCache volumes before you start provisioning the volumes.

The size limit of a FlexVol volume is applicable to an origin volume. The size of a FlexCache volume can be less than or equal to the origin volume. The best practice for the size of a FlexCache volume is to be at least 10 percent of the size of the origin volume.

You must also be aware of the following additional limits on FlexCache volumes:

Limit	ONTAP 9.5-9.6	ONTAP 9.7	ONTAP 9.8-9.10.1
Maximum number of FlexCache volumes that you can create from an origin volume	10	10	100
Recommended maximum number of origin volumes per node	10	100	100
Recommended maximum number of FlexCache volumes per node	10	100	100
Recommended maximum number of FlexGroup constituents in a FlexCache volume per node	40	800	800
Maximum number of constituents per FlexCache volume per node	32	32	32

## Related information

[NetApp Interoperability](#)

## Considerations for auditing FlexCache volumes

Beginning with ONTAP 9.7, you can audit NFS file access events in FlexCache relationships using native ONTAP auditing and file policy management with FPolicy. FPolicy is not supported for FlexCache volumes with CIFS. Native auditing and FPolicy are configured and managed with the same CLI commands used for FlexVol volumes. However, there is some different behavior with FlexCache volumes.

### • Native auditing

- You can't use a FlexCache volume as the destination for audit logs.
- If you want to audit read and writes on FlexCache volumes, you must configure auditing on both the cache SVM as well as on the origin SVM.

This is because file system operations are audited where they are processed. That is, reads are audited on the cache SVM and writes are audited on the origin SVM.

- To track the origin of write operations, the SVM UUID and MSID are appended in the audit log to identify the FlexCache volume from which the write originated.
- Although system access control lists (SACLs) can be set on a file using NFSv4 or SMB protocols, FlexCache volumes support only NFSv3. Therefore, SACLs can only be set on the origin volume.

### • FPolicy

- Although writes to a FlexCache volume are committed on the origin volume, FPolicy configurations monitor the writes on the cache volume. This is unlike native auditing, in which the writes are audited

on the origin volume.

- While ONTAP does not require the same FPolicy configuration on cache and origin SVMs, it is recommended that you deploy two similar configurations. You can do so by creating a new FPolicy policy for the cache, configured like that of the origin SVM but with the scope of the new policy limited to the cache SVM.

## Manage a FlexCache relationship

### View the connection status of a FlexCache relationship

Starting with ONTAP 9.6, you can view the connection status of a FlexCache relationship and take any corrective action if the connection status between the origin and FlexCache volumes goes to the disconnected mode.

#### About this task

A FlexCache relationship can have one of the following connection status:

- connected
- disconnected
- unknown

#### Steps

1. Log in to the advanced privilege mode:

```
set -privilege advanced
```

2. Verify the connection status of all the FlexCache relationships in the cluster:

```
volume flexcache connection-status show
```

```
cluster::*> volume flexcache connection-status show
```

```
Node: cluster-01
```

```

                                     Remote                               Remote
Connection
+Vserver      Volume      Vserver      Remote Volume      Endpoint
Status
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
vs_1         vol_origin   vs_2         fc_11__0001        cache
connected
vs_1         vol_origin   vs_2         fc_11__0002        cache
connected
vs_1         vol_origin   vs_2         fc_11__0003        cache
connected
vs_1         vol_origin   vs_2         fc_11__0004        cache
connected
vs_2         fc_11       vs_1         vol_origin         origin
connected
```

## Synchronize properties of a FlexCache volume from an origin volume

Some of the volume properties of the FlexCache volume must always be synchronized with those of the origin volume. If the volume properties of a FlexCache volume fail to synchronize automatically after the properties are modified at the origin volume, you can manually synchronize the properties.

### About this task

The following volume properties of a FlexCache volume must always be synchronized with those of the origin volume:

- Security style (-security-style)
- Volume name (-volume-name)
- Maximum directory size (-maxdir-size)
- Minimum read ahead (-min-readahead)



## Step

1. From the FlexCache volume, synchronize the volume properties:

```
volume flexcache sync-properties -vserver svm_name -volume flexcache_volume
```

```
cluster1::> volume flexcache sync-properties -vserver vs1 -volume fc1
```

## Update the configurations of a FlexCache relationship

After events such as volume move, aggregate relocation, or storage failover, the volume configuration information on the origin volume and FlexCache volume is updated automatically. In case the automatic updates fail, an EMS message is generated and then you must manually update the configuration for the FlexCache relationship.

If the origin volume and the FlexCache volume are in the disconnected mode, you might need to perform some additional operations to update a FlexCache relationship manually.

### About this task

If you want to update the configurations of a FlexCache volume, you must run the command from the origin volume. If you want to update the configurations of an origin volume, you must run the command from the FlexCache volume.

## Step

1. Update the configuration of the FlexCache relationship:

```
volume flexcache config-refresh -peer-vserver peer_svm -peer-volume  
peer_volume_to_update -peer-endpoint-type [origin | cache]
```

## Enable global file locking

Beginning with ONTAP 9.10.1, global file locking can be applied to prevent reads across all related cached files.

By default, FlexCache volumes favor availability over consistency. Without global file lock, any modification to an origin will be distributed to FlexCache volumes, but they may not be updated simultaneously. Global file locking favors consistency across volumes over availability. With global file locking enabled, modifications to the origin will be suspended until all FlexCache volumes are online.



You should only enable global file locking when you have control over the reliability of the connections between cache and origin due to suspension and possible timeouts of modifications when FlexCache volumes are offline.

Global file locking requires the clusters containing the origin and all associated caches to be running ONTAP 9.9 or higher. Global file locking can be enabled on new or existing FlexCache volumes. The command can be run on one volume and will apply to all associated volumes. You must be in the advanced privilege level to enable global file locking.

The process to enable global file lock depends on whether the origin has existing caches.

### Procedure to enable global file locking on new FlexCache volumes:

1. Create the FlexCache volume with `-is-global-file-locking` set to `true`:

```
volume flexcache create volume volume_name -is-global-file-locking-enabled true
```

The default value of `-is-global-file-locking` is `false`. When running any subsequent `volume flexcache create` commands run on a volume, they must be passed with `-is-global-file-locking enabled` set to `true`.

### Procedure to enable global file locking on existing FlexCache volumes

1. Global file locking must be set from the origin volume.
2. The origin cannot have any other existing relationships (for example, SnapMirror). Any existing relationships must be dissociated. All caches and volumes must be connected at the time of running the command. To check the connection status, run:

```
volume flexcache connection-status show
```

The status for all the listed volumes should display as “connected.” For more information, see [Viewing the status of a FlexCache relationship](#) or [Synchronizing properties of a FlexCache volume from an origin](#).

3. Enable global file locking on the caches:

```
volume flexcache origin config show/modify -volume volume_name -is-global-file-locking-enabled true
```

If reverting to a version of ONTAP before 9.9, global file lock must first be disabled on the origin and associated caches. This can be managed by running: `volume flexcache prepare-to-downgrade -disable -feature-set 9.10.0`

## Prepopulate a FlexCache volume

You can prepopulate a FlexCache volume to reduce the time it takes to access cached data.

### What you'll need

- You must be a cluster administrator at the advanced privilege level
- The paths you pass for prepopulation must be valid or the prepopulate operation fails.

### About this task

- Prepopulate reads files only and crawls through directories
- The `is-recursion` flag applies to the entire list of directories passed to prepopulate

### Steps

1. Prepopulate a FlexCache volume:

```
volume flexcache prepopulate -cache-vserver vserver_name -cache-volume -path -list path_list -is-recursion true|false
```

This example includes a single directory path for prepopulation:

```
cluster1::*> flexcache prepopulate start -cache-vserver vs2 -cache
-volume fg_cachevol_1 -path-list /dir1
(volume flexcache prepopulate start)
[JobId 207]: FlexCache prepopulate job queued.
```

This example includes a list of several paths for prepopulation:

```
cluster1::*> flexcache prepopulate start -cache-vserver vs2 -cache
-volume fg_cachevol_1 -path-list /dir1,/dir2,/dir3,/dir4
(volume flexcache prepopulate start)
[JobId 208]: FlexCache prepopulate job queued.
```

2. Display the number of files read:

```
job show -id job_ID -ins
```

## Delete a FlexCache relationship

You can delete a FlexCache relationship and the FlexCache volume if you no longer require the FlexCache volume.

### Steps

1. From the cluster that has the FlexCache volume, take the FlexCache volume offline:

```
volume offline -vserver svm_name -volume volume_name
```

2. Delete the FlexCache volume:

```
volume flexcache delete -vserver svm_name -volume volume_name
```

The FlexCache relationship details are removed from the origin volume and the FlexCache volume.



If the `volume flexcache delete` command fails to clean up the origin side configuration, you are prompted to run the `volume flexcache origin cleanup-cache-relationship` command. In this scenario, go to Step 3.

3. From the origin cluster, clean up the FlexCache relationship details from the origin volume:

```
volume flexcache origin cleanup-cache-relationship -origin-volume
origin_volume -origin-vserver origin_svm -cache-vserver flexcache_svm -cache
-volume flexcache_vol
```



If you run the `volume flexcache origin cleanup-cache-relationship` command, the FlexCache relationship is deleted and cannot be reestablished.

```
cluster1::> volume flexcache origin cleanup-cache-relationship -origin  
-volume origin1 -origin-vserver vs34 -cache-vserver vs56 -cache-volume  
fc1
```

Warning: This command only needs to be run if "volume flexcache delete"  
fails on

the FlexCache cluster and prompts you to run this command. The  
cache

configuration will be deleted and cannot be reestablished for  
the

cache relationship between origin of a FlexCache volume

"origin1" in Vserver "vs34" and FlexCache volume

"fc1" in Vserver "vs56".

Do you want to continue? {y|n}: y

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