



Product Lifecycle Policy

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Product Life Expectancy Objective

Embedded systems technology evolves at an extremely rapid rate. Processor and support chip lifetimes can be as low as 12 to 18 months. In order to support the requirements of OEMs seeking extended lifetimes for their products, EKF uses all reasonable efforts to provide processor products for a minimum of five years from new product release through final shipment at end-of-life (EOL).

To achieve this five-year product lifecycle objective - beginning with board design - EKF selects strategic components such as Intel processors and chipsets exclusively from the EIA (Embedded Intel Architecture) products line, which have long life support (sustained components). Generally (if possible), only parts which have at least one reliable second source available are chosen for EKF designs. Furthermore EKF invests considerable resources in tracking and warehousing critical components, and implementing compatible product redesigns when components become obsolete. In addition, EKF takes care to cooperate with proven suppliers and vendors only, based on the maintained ISO 9000 quality management system, and more than 30 years experience in industry electronics.

EKF's strategy is to keep a product available as long as possible. EKF has never discontinued a product for economic reasons, so in fact some products are still available which were released more than 25 years ago!

Product Change Notification

From time to time during a product's lifecycle, product modifications may be required to correct deficiencies, reduce costs, upgrade performance, or substitute alternate components for ones that have become obsolete. When "form, fit, or function" is impacted, EKF will use all reasonable commercial efforts to notify OEM customers of the pending change at least sixty days prior to its implementation in production shipments, except when the change is required in order to continue production of the product. EKF defines a "form, fit or function" change as product changes that affect software or third party hardware used with the product. Changes that are transparent to customer software or mechanical design, or do not impact the use of the product with third party hardware that adheres to industry standards are not subject to notification. When possible, customers are also offered the option to order additional pre-change units, for delivery within six months following implementation of the change.

Product Discontinuation Notification

EKF will use its best commercial efforts to notify customers of pending end-of-life (EOL) for processor products at least twelve months prior to final shipments. At the time of EOL announcement, orders for the product will normally be accepted for a period of three months, with deliveries scheduled over an additional nine months. This constitutes the final year of the product's life. EKF's policy to provide twelve months notice regarding pending product EOL, will occasionally be compromised due to unexpected chip discontinuations by manufacturers of critical components. In cases when it is not possible to provide the intended twelve months of EOL notification, EKF will either: Modify the impacted product's design so that the product can continue to be produced; recommend the substitution of an alternate EKF product with equivalent or greater functionality; or refer the customer to a third-party supplier of an alternate product having equivalent or greater functionality.

Please contact your EKF sales representative to help you with your product planning.