In-place upgrade of Windows Server 2012 in vSphere is not recommended by Microsoft. However, if you must perform an in-place upgrade, follow these steps:

**In-place upgrade of the guest operating system (between major OS release versions, such as Windows Server 2012 R2 or Windows Server 2016 to Windows Server 2019) is not recommended. The best practice is to install a new major OS releases in a new VM.**

Upgrade VMware Tools to the latest version available for Windows Server 2012.

Take a snapshot of the virtual machine.

Download the Windows Server 2019 Standard ISO file.

Mount the Windows Server 2019 Standard ISO file to the virtual machine.

Start the Windows Server 2019 Standard setup program.

Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the in-place upgrade.

Once the upgrade is complete, shut down the virtual machine.

Edit the settings of the virtual machine and change the Guest OS Version to Windows Server 2019 Standard (64-bit).

Start the virtual machine.

Here are some additional things to keep in mind when performing an in-place upgrade of Windows Server 2012 in vSphere:

The in-place upgrade process can take several hours to complete.

There is a risk of data loss during the in-place upgrade process.

You may experience compatibility issues with applications after the in-place upgrade is complete.

If you are concerned about the risks of performing an in-place upgrade, you may want to consider performing a fresh installation of Windows Server 2019 instead.

Before guest OS upgrade, upgrading VMware tools to the latest version available for current Windows release, test installation on a cloned VM firstly, taking snapshot of the VM or saving backup of the VM are recommended.

### If you have a Windows Server 2019 ISO image used for Windows Server 2019 installation, you can follow below procedure:

1. Mount this ISO file to the VM, select “Virtual Machine -> Edit Settings -> CD/DVD drive -> Datastore ISO file”, click “Browse” to select the Windows Server 2019 ISO file from datastore as CD/DVD media.
2. Logon to the guest OS and double-click CD-ROM from the File Explorer.
3. Follow the installation prompts to complete the OS upgrade.
4. Upgrade or reinstall VMware tools after OS upgrade is done.
5. Shutdown VM, select “Virtual Machine -> Edit Settings -> VM Options -> General Options”, change “Guest OS Version” to “Microsoft Windows Server 2019 (64-bit)” or “Microsoft Windows Server 2016 or later (64-bit)”.