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# Development Channels

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OpenClaw ships three update channels:

**stable**: npm dist-tag latest .

**beta**: npm dist-tag beta (builds under test).

**dev**: moving head of main (git). npm dist-tag: dev (when published).

We ship builds to **beta**, test them, then **promote a vetted build to latest** without changing the version number – dist-tags are the source of truth for npm installs.

## Switching channels

Git checkout:

```
openclaw update --channel stable
openclaw update --channel beta
openclaw update --channel dev
```



**stable / beta** check out the latest matching tag (often the same tag).

**dev** switches to **main** and rebases on the upstream.

npm/pnpm global install:

```
openclaw update --channel stable  
openclaw update --channel beta  
openclaw update --channel dev  
>
```



This updates via the corresponding npm dist-tag ( `latest` , `beta` , `dev` ).

When you **explicitly** switch channels with `--channel` , OpenClaw also aligns the install method:

`dev` ensures a git checkout (default `~/openclaw` , override with `OPENCLAW_GIT_DIR` ), updates it, and installs the global CLI from that checkout.

`stable` / `beta` installs from npm using the matching dist-tag.

Tip: if you want stable + dev in parallel, keep two clones and point your gateway at the stable one.

## Plugins and channels

When you switch channels with `openclaw update` , OpenClaw also syncs plugin sources:

`dev` prefers bundled plugins from the git checkout.

`stable` and `beta` restore npm-installed plugin packages.

## Tagging best practices

Tag releases you want git checkouts to land on ( `vYYYY.M.D` or `vYYYY.M.D-<patch>` ).

Keep tags immutable: never move or reuse a tag.

npm dist-tags remain the source of truth for npm installs:

`latest` → `stable`

`beta` → candidate build

`dev` → main snapshot (optional)

# macOS app availability



Beta and dev builds may **not** include a macOS app release. That's OK:

>

The git tag and npm dist-tag can still be published.

Call out “no macOS build for this beta” in release notes or changelog.

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