

Amazon has finally done it!!

The Vega OS Fire TV rollout is here.

After years of speculation, Amazon has quietly launched its new Linux-based operating system on select devices. The transition began in late 2025 with the release of the **Fire TV Stick 4K Select**, the first streaming stick to ship with Vega OS out of the box.

However, contrary to early fears, Amazon has confirmed it is **not** killing Fire OS entirely. Instead, we are entering a “Two-Tier” era where some devices run Android (Fire OS), and others run the new Vega OS.

Is the Vega OS Fire TV Update Replacing Android?

For months, reports suggested Vega would completely replace Android on all Fire TV devices. Amazon has now clarified its stance on their [developer forum](#), stating:

“*We’ve always been a multi-OS company. We have launched and will continue to launch new devices on Fire OS. Are Fire OS apps going away? No. We continue to launch new features and devices on Fire OS and support existing experiences.*”

What This Means for You: Amazon seems to be positioning Vega OS for **entry-level and smart home devices** (where lightweight speed matters), while keeping Fire OS (Android) for **premium performance devices** (where app compatibility matters).

What Is the Vega OS Fire TV System?

Vega OS is a completely new operating system built by Amazon from the ground up. Unlike Fire OS, which was a “fork” of Android (AOSP), Vega OS is built on a **Linux foundation**.

- **The Tech:** Apps now run on **React Native**, built with HTML and JavaScript, rather than Android’s Java or Kotlin.

As of January 2026, Vega OS is confirmed on the following devices:

- **Fire TV Stick 4K Select** (Released Oct 2025)
- **Echo Show 21**
- **Echo Show 15 (Gen 2)**
- **Echo Hub**

Safe List (Still Running Fire OS / Android):

- **Fire TV Stick 4K Max (2nd Gen)**
- **Fire TV Stick 4K Plus**
- **Fire TV Cube (3rd Gen)**

The Big Question: Sideloading & APKs

This is the most critical difference between the two operating systems.

- **On Fire OS Devices (4K Max/Cube):** Sideloading works exactly as it always has. You can install Downloader and IPTV Smarters.
- **On Vega OS Devices (4K Select): Sideloading is impossible.** Because Vega is Linux-based, it cannot read Android .apk files.
 - **Downloader App:** Even if you find it in the store, it cannot install Android packages.
 - **Developer Options:** The “Install Unknown Apps” toggle is missing from the settings menu.

What About VPNs?

There is a silver lining. At launch, VPN support was missing, but Amazon has since patched this. Currently, **NordVPN** and **IPVanish** have released native Vega OS apps. You can still protect your privacy, but you cannot install third-party streaming apps to go with it.

Will My Old Firestick Get Updated to Vega?

No. Amazon has confirmed that existing devices running Fire OS (like the 4K Max or Cube) will not be forced to upgrade to Vega OS. They will continue to receive security updates, but the underlying OS will remain Android-based.

The Verdict

The release of the Fire TV Stick 4k Select proves that Vega OS is real, but Amazon’s commitment to being a “multi-OS” company gives power users a lifeline.

However, the “golden era” of buying the cheapest Firestick and modding it is officially over. If you love the freedom of Android – the ability —the ability to install custom launchers, and third-party movie apps—you now have to pay for the premium Fire TV models. Or, it might be time to look at alternatives like the [ONN 4K Plus](#) (for budget users) or the [NVIDIA Shield TV Pro](#) (for power users) to guarantee that freedom forever.

FAQ

- Is Amazon replacing Fire OS with Vega OS?
 - Not entirely. Amazon has stated they are a “Multi-OS company.” While entry-level devices like the Fire TV Stick 4K Select now use Vega OS, Amazon has confirmed they will continue to launch and support high-performance devices running Fire OS (Android).
- Will my current Firestick still work?

- Yes. Existing devices running Fire OS will continue to receive updates. Amazon has confirmed that Fire OS apps are not going away and they will continue to support the existing ecosystem.
- Can I still sideload apps on Vega OS?
 - No, This is the main limitation of the new OS. Vega OS devices (like the 4K Select) cannot install Android APKs. If you need sideloading, you must buy a Fire OS device like the Fire TV Stick 4K Max.
- Do VPNs work on Vega OS?
 - Yes. Major providers like NordVPN and IPVanish have released native apps for Vega OS, available in the official Amazon Appstore.
- When will Vega OS launch on Firestick?
 - It is available now. Vega OS launched in late 2025 on the Fire TV Stick 4K Select. We expect the next generation of the Fire TV Cube (likely coming later in 2026) to potentially run Vega OS, though this is unconfirmed.

The Bottom Lins, if you currently have a Firestick and have loaded Smarters you will not be affected. If you purchase a new Firestick you need to be aware of the model you are purchasing, see below...

Buying Advice: The 2026 Strategy

If you are looking to buy a new Firestick today, you must check the model name carefully to ensure you get the OS you want.

- **Avoid: The Fire TV Stick 4K Select.** It runs Vega OS, meaning no sideloading and a “walled garden” experience.
- **Buy: The Fire TV Stick 4K Max (2nd Gen) or the Fire TV Stick 4K Plus.** These remain on Fire OS, giving you the freedom of Android with the speed of premium hardware.

We will be posting future KCTV Tech Tips on alternatives to the Amazon Firestick.

Stay Tuned...