

iOS 18.7.7: Apple Issues Emergency iPhone Upgrade For All Users

Summary

Apple released iOS 18.7.7, an emergency update for all iPhone users, to protect against the DarkSword exploit chain. This update, which is rare for Apple, is aimed at users still on iOS 18, particularly those with older devices. The DarkSword exploit, discovered by the Google Threat Intelligence Group, is a serious security risk that can compromise devices.

David Phelan Apr 03, 2026 at 02:08 pm EDT



Apple iPhone 16
SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

April 3 update. This post, first published on April 1 (but no April fool) was updated on April 3 with further details of why it's unprecedented and, in Apple's view, urgent.

Apple has just released iOS 18.7.7, an iPhone update which is aimed at protecting users against an exploit chain called DarkSword. Here's who it's aimed at, what it's about and why it's so urgent. And since this release is unprecedented, Apple is focusing minds on how crucial it is.

ForbesApple iPhone 18 Pro: Latest Leak Signals Major Design UpdateBy David Phelan

This is Apple's first iOS 18 release for a wide range of phones for months. Last year, the first releases in iOS 26 were accompanied by iOS 18 updates for those people who were holding off updating to the new cycle. That ended, surprisingly, with iOS 26.1 and iOS 18.7.2. From iOS 18.7.3 onwards, Apple restricted support to phones that could not run iOS 26: iPhone XS, iPhone XS Max and iPhone XR. Those three phones work with the new update, but so do a whole bunch of others which have been restricted to iOS 26 recently.

Which iPhones Can Run iOS 18.7.7?

As well as the iPhone XS, iPhone XS Max and iPhone XR, the new updated will work on every iPhone released in 2019 and later. That means iPhone 11 and all later series. The second-generation and third-generation iPhone SE handsets are included.

Note that if you've upgraded to iOS 26, you can't downgrade to iOS 18, so most users will be people who have held back from updating to iOS 26.

How To Download And Install iOS 18.7.7

Open the Settings app on the iPhone and choose General, followed by Software Update. Here you'll find Download and Install, and it'll be downloaded promptly.

iOS 18.7.7 – What's In The Release

This is all about an exploit called DarkSword. "DarkSword is an exploit chain affecting iOS 18.4 through iOS 18.7 that was discovered by the Google Threat Intelligence Group, or GTIG," 9to5Mac explained. "According to the GTIG, there are 'multiple commercial surveillance vendors and suspected state-sponsored actors utilizing DarkSword in distinct campaigns.' It works by chaining multiple exploits together," it went on.

In other words, it's a serious problem and it's something you should upgrade to immediately. Or, if your iPhone is compatible with iOS 26, it really is time to get on board with the latest software.

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"A particularly nasty threat called [DarkSword](#), a hacking tool that can seriously compromise devices, has gotten much worse since the code for it appeared on GitHub," Macworld reported. "This prompted Apple to issue a rare change: an updated version of iOS 18.7.7 (build number 22H340) that will show up as an automatic update for all iPhone users, not just those with older devices."

Since the latest iOS 26 software is on around three quarters of the iPhones which are supported, there are millions of phones on iOS 18, and these are the users Apple is targeting now.

As Macworld comments, "The update breaks Apple's typical pattern of discontinuing old OS support after new releases, demonstrating the severity of the DarkSword security risk." So far, responses to the new update for iOS 18 diehards has been positive and welcomed.

[*Forbes Apple's Emergency iOS 18 iPhone Patch: Why Millions Who Skipped iOS 26 Must Update Today By David Phelan*](#)