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Password protecting a folder with Directory Privacy

cPanel & WHM

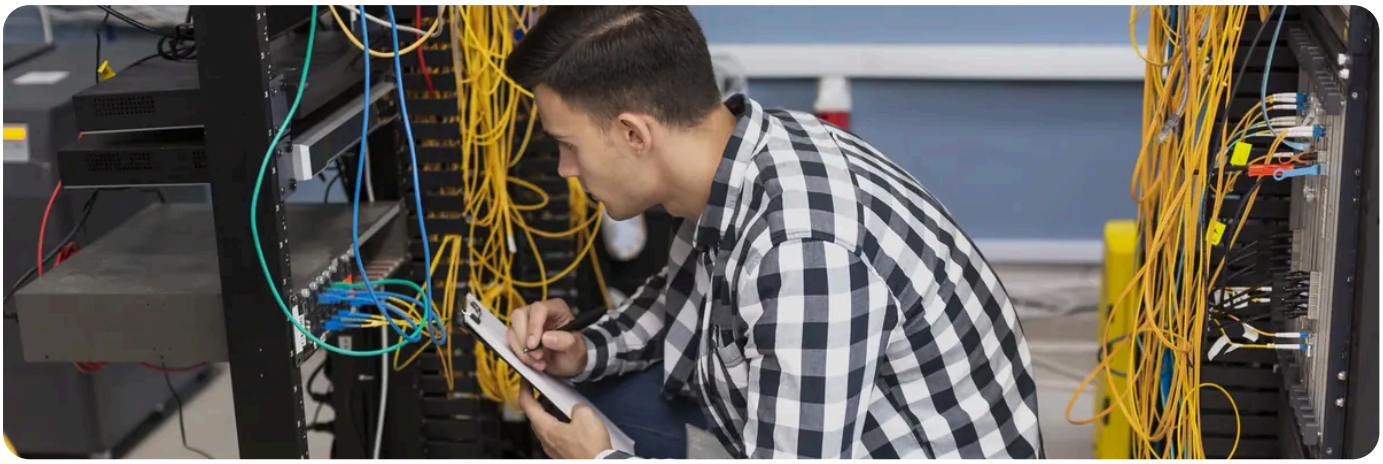
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Password protecting a folder with Directory Privacy

cPanel & WHM Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



To make sure only people with a username and password can open a folder of the site (a private area, a test site, a folder of files for a customer), use cPanel's **Directory Privacy**. Whoever opens the address sees a browser box asking for credentials before seeing anything. It takes five minutes and needs no code.

Step by step

1. In cPanel, in the **Files** section, open `Directory Privacy`. If you have several domains, pick the domain whose folder you want to protect.

2. Browse to the folder and click its **name** to select it. Clicking the icon only opens the folder; it is the name that picks it.

3. Tick **Password protect this directory.** and, in the next field, type the name that appears on the sign-in box (for example "Private area"). Click **Save**.

4. In the users section, fill in the user name, the password and its confirmation, and click **Create User**. Use the password generator: **password generator**.

5. **Test in a private window.** Open the folder's address: the credentials box should appear. If the browser opens the folder without asking, it stayed in memory from an earlier visit.

What happens underneath

cPanel adds authentication rules to that folder's `.htaccess` file and keeps the encrypted password in a file of the account, outside the public folder. The protection covers the folder **and everything inside it**, subfolders included. To remove it, go back to the same screen and untick the option.

Works well for	Does not work for
A test site you do not want visible (see a test site before touching what is live)	Holding sensitive data: it is a door with a simple key, not a vault
A folder of files for a customer	Folders that outside programs must reach with no person: they cannot answer the box
Temporarily hiding a site under construction	Stopping copies by someone who already has the password

The box sends the credentials with every request.
Without HTTPS they travel unencrypted. Only use this protection on an address with the padlock; if it does not show, see **no padlock on your site: the causes, in order**.

It can break things that rely on automatic requests.
Webhooks, links from other services and WordPress tasks that call addresses inside the folder end up knocking on a door with no answer. If you protected a folder and something stopped working, that is the first suspect. For the specific case of `wp-admin`, the warning and the fix are in **protecting the WordPress login**.

Do not hand-edit the `.htaccess` cPanel has just written
without keeping a copy. One slip and the folder is open, or the server returns error 500. When you only want to block one address, the road is another: **blocking an IP address**.

NEED A HAND?

The credentials box does not appear, or appears where it should not? Tell us the folder's address.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Protecting the WordPress login: three steps in order of effect** →
- **A test site before touching what is live** →
- **Blocking an IP address from visiting your site** →

What can you do in cPanel?

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