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Disk space nearly full on your hosting plan: what to delete first, step by step

cPanel & WHM

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The short answer: when space gets close to the limit, start with what weighs a lot and is not needed: **full backups left inside the account**, the **File Manager trash**, the **Trash and Spam of your mailboxes**, **error logs** that have grown and **old copies of the site**. Only then touch photos, databases and e-mail that matters. This article is the order to follow. To learn how to read the screen that shows the folders, see **finding what fills your account**.

What to delete first, in this order

What	Where it usually is	How to remove it without losing anything
1. Forgotten full backups (.tar.gz, .zip)	In the account's home folder, or in the application installer's backups folder	Download to your computer and only then delete from the account.
2. The File Manager trash	In a hidden folder, **.trash**	What you delete in the File Manager goes there and keeps taking space. Empty it with the File Manager's own button.
3. Trash, Spam and heavy attachments	On the e-mail line, in Disk Usage	Sort by size and empty Trash and Spam: **your mailbox is full**.
4. Logs that have grown (error_log, archived access logs)	An **error_log** in the folder of each script with errors; archived access logs in the **logs** folder	Read the error_log, fix the cause, and only then delete it: **where the PHP error log is**.
5. Old copies of the site	Folders such as public_html_old, old-site, test, and forgotten test installs	Check no domain points there. Compress, download and delete.
6. The database	On the databases line	Revisions, spam and temporary data: **slimming the WordPress database**.
7. Photos and videos	In wp-content/uploads or the site's images folder	Optimise the photos (**image optimisation**) and put videos on a video platform, with the site showing them.

Step by step, from the safest to the most delicate

1. **Write down where you start.** In cPanel, the **Statistics** sidebar shows the space used and the limit. That is how you will see whether the clean-up worked.

2 **Have a copy before you delete.** You can make a full backup and download it (**making a full cPanel backup**), but **do not leave it inside the account**: it takes the very space you want to free. The automatic daily backups also help if you delete something by mistake: **getting a deleted file back**.

3 **Open Disk Usage,** sort the folders by size and find the three biggest. The problem is nearly always in one of them.

4 **Take out the full backups and forgotten archives:** download each one, check it opens on your computer, and only then delete it from the account.

5 **Clean up e-mail:** empty Trash and Spam in every mailbox, not just yours. Mailboxes of people who have left the company are usually the fullest.

6 **Deal with logs and old folders:** read and delete the error_log files, delete old copies of the site and test installs you no longer use.

7 **Finally, empty the File Manager trash** and go back to Statistics. The figures can take a little while to update: if the total has not dropped straight away, wait and open it again.

If you use SSH (or the cPanel Terminal), these two commands only read, they delete nothing. The first shows the heaviest folders in the account; the second, files over 100 MB:

```
du -h -d 1 ~ | sort -h | tail -15
```

```
find ~ -type f -size +100M -exec du -h {} + | sort -h | tail -20
```

Optimise or upgrade?

Situation	Optimise or upgrade?
A good part of the space is clutter: backups, Trash, Spam, logs, old sites	**Optimise.** An afternoon of clean-up fixes it.
You keep your own backups inside the account	**Optimise.** Move them out (**off-site backups**): do not pay for space to keep the copy next to the original.
The space is years of e-mail the company needs to keep	**It depends.** Keep the history elsewhere (**keeping your own copy of your e-mail**); if the team needs it on the server, upgrade.
Photos, products and site files that grow with the business	**Upgrade.** That is growth, not clutter.
You cleaned everything and are still above 85%	**Upgrade.**

Bigger plans

Current plan	Space	Next upgrade
Pro	10 GB	Plus, with 20 GB
Plus	20 GB	Ultra, with 30 GB
Ultra	30 GB	Business Pro, with 50 GB
Business Pro	50 GB	Business Plus, with 100 GB
Business Plus	100 GB	Business Ultra, with 200 GB
Business Ultra	200 GB	A **VPS** or a **Cloud server**

All on NVMe SSD. If today's usage is already close to the next step, skip one. The upgrade is done in Meu Interweb and moves nothing: **how to upgrade your plan**. To go beyond Business Ultra, see **which hosting plan comes next**.

Never delete the mail, etc or ssl folders, the whole public_html, or hidden folders you do not recognise. They hold your mail, your settings and your site. If in doubt, download first and ask us.

To stop it filling up again: set Trash and Spam to empty themselves, and if you have a backup script, make it delete the old copies. It is in **how many backups to keep**.

Cleaned up and still short of space? Upgrade in Meu Interweb: the site, the e-mail and the files stay where they are.

See my services

SEE ALSO

Disk Usage: finding what fills your account

Your mailbox is full: what to delete and how to stop it happening

The database has grown: where to see its size, and what can go

Making a full cPanel backup and downloading it

Too many inodes: cutting the number of files in your account without breaking it

Which hosting plan comes next: upgrading Pro, Plus, Ultra and Business for more room

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