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Installing WHMCS on your account

Choosing the Right Plan

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Choosing the Right Plan Created on **September 27, 2026** Updated on **October 18, 2026** 4 min read



The install itself is short. What usually goes wrong is everything done before and after it, which is why this article spends more lines on the ends than on the middle.

> **The licence does not come from us.**
> It is bought from the maker of WHMCS and you need it **before** you start: with no key, the install finishes and the program refuses to work. What is ours and what is not is set out in **what WHMCS is**.

The list of what you need first

Item	Detail
The licence key	Bought from the maker. Note that the licence is tied to the address and IP you install it on: move house and you have to reissue it with them.
Where it is going to live	A subdomain of its own is the cleanest. Avoid putting it inside your main website: the day you touch the site must not be the day billing goes down.
An empty database and a user	Created in cPanel and attached with full privileges. See **creating databases and using phpMyAdmin**.
A PHP version with the right loader	This is the point that stops most installs. It has its own section, right below.
A certificate on the chosen address	Money and customer details are going to pass through it. Without a padlock, do not even start.

The loader WHMCS needs

WHMCS ships with its code protected, and to run it needs a **loader**, which is a PHP extension. On our accounts that extension **is not switched on out of the box**, but it is available and it takes two minutes to enable, with nobody's permission required.

1. **In cPanel, open the PHP version selector**, in the software section.

2. **Pick the PHP version** that your WHMCS release supports. The maker publishes that list; picking a version outside it produces errors that look like something else entirely.

3. **In the extension list, tick the loader** and save. The list is per version: change version later and you have to tick it again.

4. **Confirm on a PHP information page** that it really is loaded. See **viewing and adjusting your PHP configuration**. If it is not there, do not go on: the install will fail in a confusing way.

Installing through the application installer

The cPanel application installer carries WHMCS in its catalogue, in several versions. It is the quickest route, and it handles the database for you.

1. **Open the application installer** and search for it by name.

2. **Choose the version.** There is more than one in the catalogue, from different lines. Pick the one your licence covers and your PHP version supports.

3. **Choose the address and the folder.** If you want the program to answer directly on the subdomain, leave the folder field **empty**. Leaving the name the installer suggests bolts an extra piece onto every address, forever.

4. **Set the administration user** with a name that is not obvious and a long password. That account opens all of your billing.

5. **Install and wait.** At the end it shows two addresses: the customer one and the administration one. Keep both.

If you would rather install by hand, the principle is the same: download from the maker, upload over FTP, create the database, run the installer in the browser. See **uploading files with FileZilla**.

What comes next, and what almost everybody puts off

1. **Delete the install folder.** Left there, anybody can run the installer again. It is the first thing to do, before anything else.

2 **Protect the configuration file.** It holds the database keys. Make it read-only, as the program itself recommends on its health check screen.

3 **Rename the administration folder.** The name it ships with is known to everyone and is where the bots knock first. The program supports the change and there is a configuration line to go with it.

4 **Create the scheduled job.** Without it there are no invoices, no reminders, no suspensions, and orders sit still. The program shows you the exact line to paste; the cPanel screen you paste it into is the scheduled jobs one: **cron jobs**.

5 **Turn on two-step authentication** on your administration account. You are holding customer data.

6 **Configure outgoing mail.** Use an authenticated mailbox on your own domain rather than plain PHP sending. This server's settings are in **sending e-mail from your own code**.

! **Do not start selling the same day.**
Place an order with yourself, start to finish: choose the plan, pay, watch the account be created, receive every e-mail. It is the only way to find what is missing before a customer finds it.

The link to WHM, which is what makes accounts appear on their own, is in **connecting WHMCS to WHM**. And what tends to break afterwards is in **the most common WHMCS problems**.

NEED A HAND?

The install stops and the error means nothing to you? Tell us the address and the PHP version you picked.

Open a support ticket →

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