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Moving your site to https with Really Simple SSL

Security

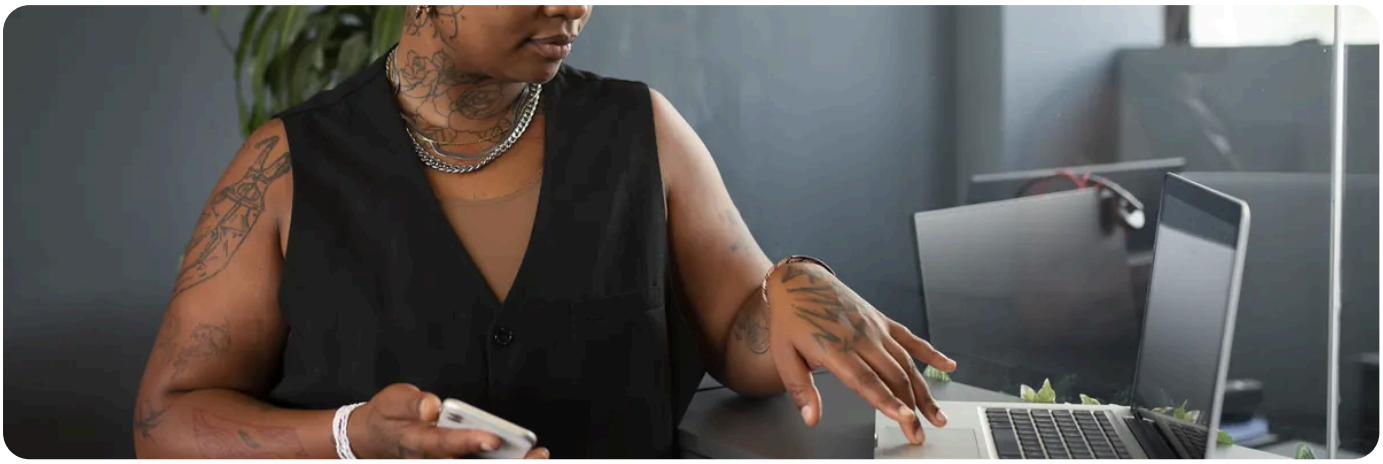
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-644	v2026.09.27	Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/644

Moving your site to https with Really Simple SSL

Security Created on **September 27, 2026** 4 min read



Read this before installing anything: the certificate is already ours and already there.
Domains hosted with us get a certificate issued and **renewed automatically**, with no request, no cost and no *plugin*. You do not need any software to have https: **what an SSL certificate is and why it matters**.

So what is the *plugin* for? Something else, and the difference is worth understanding. The certificate is the lock, and that is already fitted. What is missing, on older sites, is WordPress no longer asking for its own images, stylesheets and links over `http://`. That is what keeps the padlock away, even with a valid certificate.

First, work out where you stand

1. Open the site typing `https://` in front of the address. If the browser does not complain about the certificate, it is there and valid.

2. If it does complain, the problem comes before all of this and the *plugin* will not fix it: **no padlock on your site: the causes, in order**.

3. If it does not complain about the certificate but the padlock still is not closed, it is mixed content: the page came over https and something inside it came over http. This is where the *plugin* helps.

Three routes, and which one is yours

Your situation	What to do
A new site, built in https already	Install nothing. Check in **Settings › General** that both addresses start with `https://` and you are done.

Your situation	What to do
An old site with hundreds of http addresses saved in the database	This is the *plugin*'s case. It rewrites the content as the page is served, without touching the database, and settles in an afternoon what would otherwise take a week.
You want the permanent fix	Swap the addresses inside the database itself, in one go, plus a redirect in `.htaccess` : **redirecting HTTP to HTTPS with .htaccess**. After that you can uninstall the *plugin*.

Installing and setting it up

1. **Take a backup first.** This *plugin* changes the site addresses: **how to restore your data**.
2. In the dashboard, **Plugins › Add New**, search for **Really Simple SSL** and install.
3. Activate. It detects the certificate by itself and shows a button to switch https on. Press it.
4. **You will be signed out**, because the site address changed. That is normal. Sign back in, now on the `https://` address.
5. Walk through the site: home page, an inner page, a form, and the shop if you have one. Check the padlock on each.
6. In the settings, choose the **`.htaccess` redirect** rather than the code-based one. It is faster and does not depend on WordPress starting.

> **If the site becomes unreachable after activating.**
> That happens when the certificate was not actually good. The way out is the usual one: in cPanel's File Manager, rename the *plugin* folder in `wp-content/plugins` , adding `-off` . The site goes back to http. Then sort out the certificate.

The Cloudflare trap

If the domain goes through Cloudflare and the SSL mode there is **Flexible**, Cloudflare talks to our server over `http` . Ours redirects to `https` . Cloudflare asks again over `http` . The result is an infinite loop and the site stops opening.

The cure is to set the mode to **Full** or **Full (strict)**, which is the correct one given we have a valid certificate. More on this in **Cloudflare: when it helps and the cache that fools you**.

Once it is working

What to do	Why
Clear the cache	Pages stored as `http` keep being served that way. Clear the *plugin* cache and, if you use Cloudflare, theirs too: **installing and tuning a page cache**.
Update whatever points at the site	Analytics tools, sitemaps submitted to search engines, and links in campaigns.
Check the forms and the payments	They are the first to break with mixed content, and the most expensive if nobody notices.
Plan the permanent fix	The *plugin* rewrites on every visit, which costs something on every page. Once the content is swapped in the database, it can step aside.

NEED A HAND?

Padlock missing and you cannot see why? Send us the page address.

Open a request →

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