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Making WordPress send e-mail properly, with SMTP

WordPress & CMS

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Making WordPress send e-mail properly, with SMTP

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The site's form messages never arrive. Password recovery never arrives. Shop notifications never arrive. And there is no error at all: WordPress says it sent them.

The reason is nearly always the same. Out of the box, WordPress sends through PHP's mail function, authenticating against no mailbox at all, often with an invented sender such as `wordpress@asuaempresa.co.mz`. The receiving side cannot confirm the message really was yours, so it files it as spam or refuses it.

> **The cure is simple and permanent: make WordPress sign in to a mailbox of yours and send from there**
> , the way any mail program would. Now there is authentication, the sender is real, and the messages get accepted.

Step 1: the mailbox

You need a mailbox on your own domain, just for the site. If you do not have one yet, create it: **how to create an e-mail account in cPanel**.

1. Pick a name that makes sense, such as `site@asuaempresa.co.mz` or `noreply@asuaempresa.co.mz`.
2. Generate a long password and keep it: **password generator**.
3. If you want to read the replies, create it as a real mailbox. If not, forward it to the mailbox you actually use.

Step 2: the plugin and the settings

Install an SMTP *plugin* from the official repository. There are several good free ones. Pick one, and once it is configured **do not install another**: two *plugins* handling delivery give unpredictable results.

These are the settings for **our server**. Do not copy values from other providers' guides:

Field	Value
Outgoing server	`mail.asuaempresa.co.mz`, with your own domain
Encryption	**SSL**
Port	**465**
Authentication	On
Username	The full mailbox address, for example `site@asuaempresa.co.mz`. Not just the part before the at sign.
Password	That mailbox's password
From address	**Exactly the same address** as the mailbox above
From name	Your company name, which is what the recipient sees first

> **The From address has to be the mailbox that authenticates.**
> This is the mistake that ruins everything else: the authentication is set correctly and the «From» field is left holding a free webmail address, or the address of the visitor who filled in the form. That domain does not authorise our server to send on its behalf, and the message lands in spam or is refused. The visitor's address goes in **Reply-To**, never in **From**.

Most *plugins* let you keep the password in `wp-config.php` rather than in the database, using a constant of their own. It is cleaner: anyone who gets into the dashboard no longer sees it written in a field.

Step 3: test, and test properly

1. Use the *plugin*'s test message. If it fails, it nearly always says why: wrong password, incomplete username, or a closed port.
2. Send the test to an address **outside your own domain**. A message to yourself never leaves the server, so it proves nothing.
3. See where it landed: inbox or spam. If it went to spam, sending works and what is missing is the domain authentication: **SPF, DKIM and DMARC**.

4 Only then test what matters: the contact form, password recovery and, if you have a shop, a test order.

If it still fails

What you see	What it is
Authentication refused	Username or password. The username is the **full** address. If you are unsure of the password, change it in cPanel and use the new one.
Connection timed out	Check port 465 and SSL encryption. If the *plugin* defaulted to TLS on 587, correct it to what the table above says.
It sends, but nothing arrives	The message was accepted and refused further along. The route is **why your e-mail is not sending or receiving**.
It works and then stops	You may have reached the plan's hourly sending limit. The limits of each plan are on **hosting plans**.
All correct and the form is still silent	The problem is not SMTP, it is the form: **a contact form that actually reaches your inbox**.

To READ the mail in that box

, on a phone or in a mail program, the values are different: IMAP on port **993** with **SSL**, on the same `mail.asuaempresa.co.mz` . The step by step for each program is in the e-mail setup articles in this Knowledge Base.

Once it works

Sending is half the job; the other half is being accepted. Check the domain has SPF and DKIM, and that the sender is the same across everything the site sends: **SPF, DKIM and DMARC** and **how to write an e-mail that does not land in spam**.

NEED A HAND?

Set it all up and the test fails? Send us the plugin's error message.

Open a request →

In our plans

If WordPress works and then stops, compare how many messages the site sends in an hour with your plan's hourly ceiling:

- Pro: 100 e-mails per hour.
- Plus: 200 e-mails per hour.
- Ultra: 300 e-mails per hour.
- Business Pro, Plus and Ultra: no fixed number published.

Mailbox accounts are unlimited in every plan. To see what happened to a message, open Track Delivery in cPanel and search for the recipient and the time; the plugin's own test message or log, if it keeps one, shows what the server answered. A shop that sends receipts and newsletters through the same mailbox can pass the ceiling quickly: spread the sending out, or move up a plan without losing the site.

SEE ALSO

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- **WordPress hosting** →
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