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Composer on shared hosting: installing it and running it

Frameworks, Composer & Git

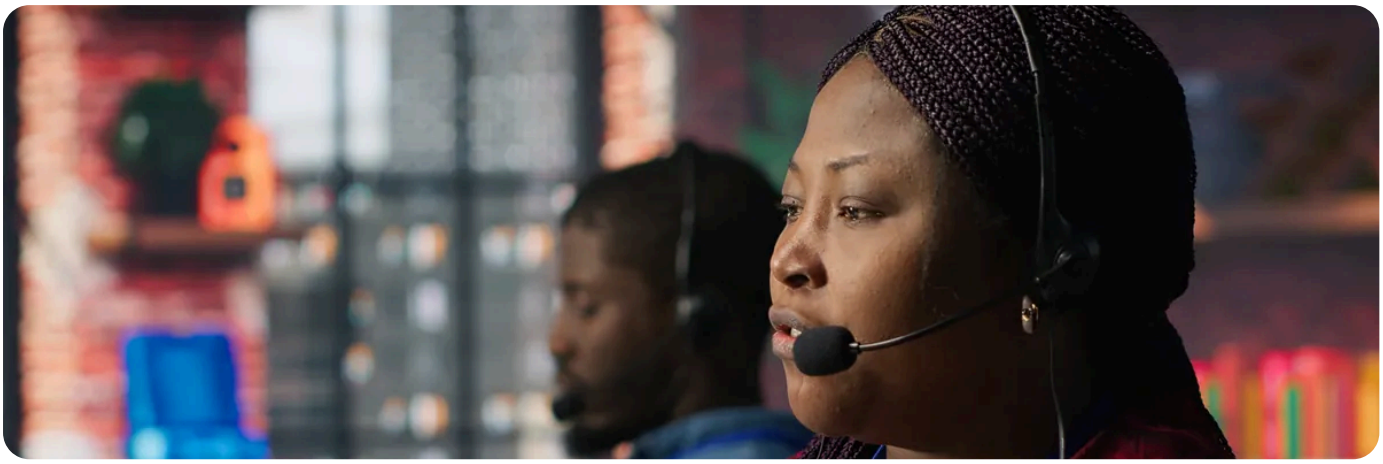
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
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Composer on shared hosting: installing it and running it

Frameworks, Composer & Git · Created on **October 10, 2026** · Updated on **October 18, 2026** · 2 min read



Composer is not installed as a command on the server, but you do not need it that way. You download a single file, **composer.phar**, into your account and run it with PHP: `php composer.phar install`. You need a command line, which means the cPanel Terminal or SSH, both available on every plan.

Installing composer.phar

1. Open the **cPanel Terminal** (or connect over SSH, on port 2299) and go into the project folder, for example `cd ~/my-project`.

2. Check **which PHP** the `php` command uses: type `php -v`. If it is not the project's version, use the full path of the right one in the commands below, which looks like `/opt/alt/php82/usr/bin/php` (swap 82 for the version you want, without the dot).

3. Download the installer: `php -r "copy('https://getcomposer.org/installer', 'composer-setup.php');"`. The Composer download page also publishes the installer's checksum; it is worth checking it before running the file.

4. Run it: `php composer-setup.php`. The file `composer.phar` appears.

5. Delete the installer: `php -r "unlink('composer-setup.php');"`.

6. Install the project's dependencies: `php composer.phar install`. In production, `php composer.phar install --no-dev --optimize-autoloader` leaves out what is only for development.

install or update?

Command	What it does
composer install	Installs **exactly** what the composer.lock file says. This is the one to run on the server, so it matches what you tested.
composer update	Looks for newer versions and rewrites composer.lock. Run it on your own computer, test, then take the result to the server.
composer require package	Adds a package to the project and installs it.

"Killed", or the command stops halfway.
The account has memory and process limits (see **the limits nobody advertises**), and Composer uses a lot while it resolves dependencies. Try `php -d memory_limit=-1 composer.phar install`. If it still gets killed, run `install` on your computer and send the `vendor` folder over SFTP.

Do not leave composer.phar or the vendor folder where site visitors can reach them
when the project allows it: keep the application outside the public folder and leave only the entry file inside. And never publish the `.env` file. See **keeping passwords out of your code**.

Prefer not to use the command line? Run `composer install` on your own computer, with the same PHP version, and send `vendor` and `composer.lock` over SFTP. The result is the same.

The libraries Composer installs and your application's code are yours, and we do not maintain them. The boundary is written in **how far our support goes**. For Laravel, which uses Composer from end to end, see **getting a Laravel application running**.

NEED A HAND?

Cannot find Terminal in your cPanel? Ask us, with your domain name.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

The cPanel Terminal: a command line with nothing to install →

- **Getting a Laravel application running**
- **Viewing and adjusting your PHP configuration**
- **SFTP instead of FTP**

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