

The Complete First Website Launch Checklist

A print-friendly launch worksheet for first-time website owners

Work through each step in order. Do not advance to the next step until the current one is complete. DNS needs to be connected before SSL can be issued, SSL should be active before CMS is installed and everything should be tested before the URL is shared publicly.

Launch Details

Website/domain	_____	Hosting provider	_____
Registrar	_____	Launch date	_____
Reviewed by	_____	Primary contact email	_____

Quick Launch Snapshot

<input type="checkbox"/> Domain connected	<input type="checkbox"/> SSL active	<input type="checkbox"/> Forms tested
<input type="checkbox"/> Search visibility open	<input type="checkbox"/> Analytics connected	<input type="checkbox"/> Backups active

Step 1: Domain Registration

<input type="checkbox"/>	Domain name registered at a reputable registrar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Auto-renew enabled immediately after registration
<input type="checkbox"/>	WHOIS/RDAP privacy protection enabled if available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registrar account secured: strong unique password set and two-factor authentication enabled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Payment card on file at registrar confirmed current
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domain expiry date noted and calendar reminder set for 60 days before renewal

Notes for this step

Step 2: Hosting Account Setup

<input type="checkbox"/>	Hosting plan purchased and account active
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Hosting control panel login confirmed and bookmarked
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nameservers provided by hosting noted (ns1.host.com and ns2.host.com or equivalent)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Server IP address noted from hosting dashboard
<input type="checkbox"/>	One-click CMS installer confirmed available in control panel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Backup situation confirmed: daily automated backups included in plan or available to configure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hosting account secured: strong password set and two-factor authentication enabled if available

Notes for this step

Step 3: Connecting Domain to Hosting

<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS connection method chosen: nameserver update at registrar OR A record update at DNS provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	If nameservers: hosting provider's nameservers entered at registrar and saved
<input type="checkbox"/>	If domain email already exists: MX, SPF, DKIM and DMARC records copied into the new DNS zone before nameservers are changed
<input type="checkbox"/>	If A record: root domain A record updated to hosting server IP; www A record or CNAME updated
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS propagation checked using DNSChecker.org: domain resolving to hosting server IP from multiple locations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site loads when domain is typed into browser (may show a default hosting page at this stage; that is normal)

Notes for this step

Step 4: SSL Certificate and HTTPS

<input type="checkbox"/>	SSL certificate installed and active in hosting control panel
<input type="checkbox"/>	HTTPS working on root domain: https://yourdomain.com loads with padlock visible
<input type="checkbox"/>	HTTPS working on www: https://www.yourdomain.com loads with padlock visible

<input type="checkbox"/>	HTTP to HTTPS redirect active: typing http://yourdomain.com redirects to HTTPS automatically
<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress Address and Site Address confirmed using https:// under Settings > General, or host HTTPS enforcement enabled
<input type="checkbox"/>	No mixed content warnings in browser developer console

Notes for this step

Step 5: CMS Installation and Site Setup

<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress or CMS installed via one-click installer
<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress admin login credentials saved securely in password manager
<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress admin account secured with a strong unique password
<input type="checkbox"/>	Default "admin" username avoided or replaced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Two-factor authentication enabled for WordPress admin if supported
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site title and tagline set under Settings > General
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct timezone set under Settings > General
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permalink structure set under Settings > Permalinks (post name recommended)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Theme installed and activated; unused demo themes deleted and one current default WordPress theme kept as a fallback if desired
<input type="checkbox"/>	WordPress core, active theme and plugins updated before launch
<input type="checkbox"/>	Placeholder and demo content removed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Core pages created: Home, About, Contact, Privacy Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Search engine visibility confirmed: Settings > Reading > "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" is UNCHECKED
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site loads correctly in browser on desktop and mobile
<input type="checkbox"/>	robots.txt confirmed: not blocking crawlers

Notes for this step

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Step 6: Contact Form and Functionality Testing

<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact form installed and configured to send submissions to business email address
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test submission sent from a different email account and confirmed received at destination inbox
<input type="checkbox"/>	If form emails do not arrive reliably, SMTP or a transactional email service configured
<input type="checkbox"/>	Form tested on mobile: submits correctly on a phone
<input type="checkbox"/>	All navigation menu items tested: each links to the correct page
<input type="checkbox"/>	All buttons and calls to action tested: each works as expected
<input type="checkbox"/>	Logo confirmed linking to homepage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site tested on mobile device: layout correct, text readable, buttons tappable
<input type="checkbox"/>	404 error page confirmed: a non-existent URL shows a useful page not a server error
<input type="checkbox"/>	If ecommerce: full purchase flow tested including checkout, sandbox/test-mode payment where available and confirmation email

Notes for this step

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Step 7: Analytics, Search Console, Backups and Monitoring

<input type="checkbox"/>	Privacy policy and consent setup reviewed for analytics, contact forms, cookies, ecommerce or remarketing tools based on applicable laws
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Analytics 4 property created and tracking code installed on site
<input type="checkbox"/>	GA4 tracking confirmed: Realtime report shows a live session when site is visited (allow up to 30 minutes for data collection to begin)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Search Console property created and domain ownership verified
<input type="checkbox"/>	XML sitemap generated and submitted in Google Search Console under Sitemaps
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bing Webmaster Tools property created and sitemap submitted
<input type="checkbox"/>	Automated daily backups confirmed active: first backup has run and file size is reasonable

Disclaimer

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