

The Complete Website Migration Checklist

A print-friendly checklist for switching hosting providers without changing URLs

Website:	_____	Migration date:	_____
Old host:	_____	New host:	_____

Use this checklist in order. Each phase builds on the previous one. Do not advance to the DNS cutover phase until the new hosting environment is fully set up and tested. Do not cancel old hosting until post-migration monitoring confirms everything is stable.

Phase 1: Pre-Migration (Do this 24 to 48 hours before cutover)

Done	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full site backup completed (all files and the full database) and stored off-server or in a separate storage location
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS zone exported from current provider with all record types documented: A, AAAA, CNAME, MX, TXT (SPF, DKIM, DMARC, verification tokens), SRV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email records documented separately: MX hostname and priority value; SPF TXT record full value; DKIM selector name and TXT value; DMARC policy TXT value
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current TTFB measured with PageSpeed Insights and noted as a pre-migration performance benchmark
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Search Console baseline noted: current indexed page count and any active crawl errors
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS TTL reduced to 300 seconds at current DNS provider (Google recommends a week in advance where possible; 24 to 48 hours is the reliable practical minimum)
<input type="checkbox"/>	New hosting account set up, plan active and login credentials confirmed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Migration window chosen: low-traffic period confirmed in analytics (weekday overnight is typical)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rollback plan written: what steps to take, in what order, if the migration needs to be reversed

Phase notes:

Phase 2: New Host Setup (Complete before touching DNS)

Done	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	All site files transferred to new hosting account (via FTP, SFTP, cPanel file manager or migration tool); hidden files including .htaccess included
<input type="checkbox"/>	Database exported from old host and imported to new host
<input type="checkbox"/>	Database configuration file updated on new host: database name, username, password and host pointing to new database (wp-config.php for WordPress or equivalent for other platforms)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site URL setting confirmed or updated in CMS if required
<input type="checkbox"/>	PHP version on new host confirmed to match current environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	SSL certificate installed on new host and confirmed active
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Search Console verification confirmed on new host: HTML verification file present if used; meta tag or GA tag present in templates if used instead
<input type="checkbox"/>	robots.txt on new host confirmed: no disallow rules blocking Googlebot or other crawlers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site tested via hosts file override or staging/preview URL before any DNS change
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homepage loads correctly with no errors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Key interior pages load correctly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Images and media display correctly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact forms and lead capture forms submit correctly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Checkout or payment flow works correctly, if applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	SSL and HTTPS active with no mixed content warnings in browser console
<input type="checkbox"/>	No PHP errors or database connection errors visible
<input type="checkbox"/>	All issues found during testing fixed before proceeding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email left unchanged: MX records still pointing to existing mail server at this stage

Phase notes:

Phase 3: DNS Cutover (Make one controlled DNS change and record it)

Done	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	TTL confirmed at 300 seconds (should have been reduced 24 to 48 hours earlier)
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS method confirmed: nameservers change OR individual A record update
<input type="checkbox"/>	IF CHANGING NAMESERVERS: New DNS zone created at new provider with all records recreated (A, CNAME, MX, SPF, DKIM, DMARC, all TXT records, SRV)
<input type="checkbox"/>	IF CHANGING NAMESERVERS: MX, SPF, DKIM and DMARC records confirmed present and correct in new DNS zone before nameservers are changed at registrar
<input type="checkbox"/>	IF CHANGING NAMESERVERS: New nameservers entered at domain registrar and saved
<input type="checkbox"/>	IF UPDATING A RECORDS: Root domain A record updated to new hosting server IP address
<input type="checkbox"/>	IF UPDATING A RECORDS: www A record or CNAME updated to new hosting server
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email MX records confirmed unchanged and still pointing to existing mail server
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPF, DKIM and DMARC records confirmed preserved and unchanged
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date and exact time of DNS change recorded
<input type="checkbox"/>	Old hosting account confirmed still active and running

Phase notes:

Phase 4: Immediately After Cutover (First-hour checks)

Done	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site loading correctly on new host confirmed from multiple devices
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site loading confirmed from a network separate from the one used for pre-migration testing (mobile data recommended)
<input type="checkbox"/>	HTTPS working: padlock visible, certificate valid, no browser SSL warnings
<input type="checkbox"/>	No mixed content warnings in browser developer console
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test email sent from domain email address to external address and received successfully
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test reply sent back to domain address and received successfully
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact form submitted and submission received correctly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Checkout or payment flow tested if applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS propagation checked from multiple geographic locations using a propagation checker tool
<input type="checkbox"/>	Analytics tracking confirmed active and recording sessions on new environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Uptime monitoring confirmed active on new host

Phase notes:

Phase 5: Post-Migration (48 hours and beyond)

Done	Checklist item
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS propagation confirmed complete: old server receiving no meaningful traffic in logs or analytics
<input type="checkbox"/>	TTFB on new host measured and compared against pre-migration baseline
<input type="checkbox"/>	Core Web Vitals reviewed in Google Search Console for any regressions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Search Console checked: indexed page count stable, no spike in crawl errors, no new coverage issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Googlebot crawl rate monitored over following days: a temporary drop immediately after cutover followed by a steady increase over the next few days is normal per Google's documentation; persistent crawl errors are not
<input type="checkbox"/>	All site functionality verified across 48-hour period: forms, media, search, login, transactions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Analytics data reviewed: traffic patterns normal, no unexpected drop in sessions
<input type="checkbox"/>	TTL raised back to normal value (3,600 seconds or provider default)
<input type="checkbox"/>	DNS zone backup saved from new provider for records
<input type="checkbox"/>	Old hosting account cancelled only after all of the above confirmed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Migration documented: new host name, DNS provider, server IP, date completed, any issues encountered and resolved

Phase notes:

Disclaimer

This checklist is for general informational and organizational purposes only. It is not legal, financial, technical or professional advice. It should not replace a personalized plan, provider-specific instructions or guidance from a licensed or qualified professional. Adapt the checklist to your website, hosting setup, DNS provider, email configuration and business needs before using it.

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