

# Web Hosting Buyer's Checklist

## What to verify before you sign up

### How to use this checklist

Use this checklist when evaluating any hosting provider before purchasing. Work through each group systematically. Record answers for each provider you are comparing so your decision is based on real information, not sales page impressions.

<b>Provider</b>	_____	<b>Plan</b>	_____
<b>Intro Price</b>	_____	<b>Renewal Rate</b>	_____
<b>Billing Term</b>	_____	<b>Review Date</b>	_____
<b>Reviewer</b>	_____	<b>Decision</b>	_____

### Quick Decision Snapshot

Use this area to compare the plan at a glance before working through the full checklist.

<b>Best fit for</b>	_____	<b>Potential red flags</b>	_____
<b>Must-have add-ons</b>	_____	<b>Overall confidence</b>	_____
<b>Follow-up questions</b>	_____	<b>Final decision</b>	_____

### Group 1: Pricing and True Cost

- Introductory price for the plan noted
- Standard renewal rate confirmed and noted (not from the sales page; from the terms or a direct support question)
- Two-year blended monthly cost calculated: (intro term total + renewal term total) divided by total months
- Billing term options reviewed: monthly, annual, biennial; and how each affects pricing

- Domain registration cost confirmed: free first year only or included ongoing
- SSL certificate confirmed included at no charge
- Daily backup cost confirmed: included in plan or paid add-on
- Email hosting confirmed: included in plan or separate cost
- CDN confirmed: included in plan or paid add-on
- Any other required features identified and costed: security tools, staging, priority support
- Money-back guarantee terms confirmed: window length, what is excluded (domains, add-ons), how to claim

**Group 1 notes**

---

---

---

---

**Group 2: Uptime and Reliability**

- Uptime guarantee percentage confirmed and converted to hours of permitted downtime per year
- SLA document reviewed: not the marketing page, the actual service level agreement
- SLA exclusions listed: scheduled maintenance, customer-caused outages, third-party failures, force majeure
- Compensation structure confirmed: credit amount, how to claim, claim window after outage
- Independent uptime monitoring verified: does provider use third-party monitoring or self-reported data
- Server redundancy confirmed: load balancing, failover systems, data center infrastructure

**Group 2 notes**

---

---

---

---

## Group 3: Support

- Live chat availability confirmed: 24/7 or limited hours
- Support channels confirmed: live chat, ticket, phone; which are available on this plan tier
- Pre-sales support tested: technical question asked and answer evaluated for speed, accuracy and communication quality
- Support tested at an off-hours time if possible: evening, weekend
- Knowledge base quality reviewed: plain language, current documentation, covers common tasks
- Response time expectations for ticket support confirmed

### Group 3 notes

---

---

---

---

## Group 4: Security and Backups

- SSL certificate confirmed: included, covers domain and required subdomains, auto-renews
- Backup frequency confirmed: daily, weekly or less frequent
- Backup retention window confirmed: how many days of backups are kept
- Restore process confirmed: self-service from control panel or requires support ticket
- Granular restore confirmed: can individual files or database tables be restored separately
- Restore cost confirmed: included or charged per restore
- Two-factor authentication confirmed: available on hosting account login
- Malware scanning scope confirmed: included at plan level, paid add-on or not available
- Firewall and DDoS protection confirmed: what is included at infrastructure level

#### Group 4 notes

---

---

---

---

### Group 5: Plan Features

- Email hosting confirmed: professional email at domain included or excluded from this plan
- Staging environment confirmed: included, paid add-on or unavailable on this plan
- Upgrade path confirmed: can site be upgraded to higher tier within same account without full migration
- Migration assistance confirmed: free assisted migration, tools only, or charged service
- Number of sites or domains confirmed: single site only or multiple sites permitted on this plan
- Control panel reviewed: cPanel, proprietary panel, or custom dashboard; accessibility and documentation quality assessed
- One-click installer confirmed: available for WordPress or required CMS
- Resource limits confirmed: CPU, RAM, concurrent connections, storage caps and what happens when limits are hit

#### Group 5 notes

---

---

---

---

### Group 6: Performance Infrastructure

- Storage type confirmed: NVMe SSD, SATA SSD or HDD
- Server location options confirmed: data centers in or near primary audience region

- Server-side caching confirmed: OPcache included, Redis or Memcached available, full-page caching included
  - CDN integration confirmed: included in plan, available as add-on, or not offered
  - PHP version options confirmed: current supported versions available and easily switchable
  - HTTP/2 confirmed as supported on this plan; HTTP/3 support noted if available (not yet universal across shared hosting providers)
  - Bandwidth or data transfer limits confirmed: metered, unmetered with fair use policy, or genuinely unlimited
- 

**Group 6 notes**

---

---

---

---

# Disclaimer

## General informational use only

This checklist is for general informational and organizational purposes only. It is not financial or professional advice. It should not replace a personalized plan, provider-specific documentation or guidance from a licensed or qualified professional. Hosting plans, pricing structures, renewal rates, SLA terms, security features and included services vary by provider and can change over time. Always verify current details directly with the hosting provider before purchasing or making account decisions. Adapt this checklist to your situation, website requirements, budget and risk tolerance.

If this checklist is reprinted or republished online, please credit Web Hosting Services ([webhostingservices.co](http://webhostingservices.co)).



Website: <https://webhostingservices.co>  
Email: [support@webhostingservices.co](mailto:support@webhostingservices.co)  
Support: <https://webhostingservices.co/contact-us>

Web Hosting Services helps individuals and businesses find, set up and manage shared hosting, VPS, managed environments and cloud infrastructure with straightforward guidance and honest recommendations. Our Education Center publishes in-depth articles, practical guides and free checklists covering every stage of the hosting journey, from choosing your first plan to migrating an established site. We also publish the best web hosting coupons, deals and verified discount codes updated regularly, so you can get the hosting you need at the right price.