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# HTTP or HTTPS: what changes for visitors, forms and the services that call your site

Domains & Addresses

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# HTTP or HTTPS: what changes for visitors, forms and the services that call your site

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**Short answer:** use HTTPS, always. Here every domain gets a free SSL certificate automatically, so the real question is almost never "do I have to buy one?" but **"is my site actually using it?"** Because `http://` and `https://` are two different addresses, and a site can answer on both at once.

## What changes, point by point

| | HTTP | HTTPS |
|---|---|---|
| **What travels** | Everything in the clear: the page, what you type into a form, passwords, the session cookie. | Everything encrypted. Whoever is on the path cannot read the content, though they can still see which domain you connect to. |
| **Tampering on the way** | The content can be changed on the way without anyone noticing. | Any change is detected and the connection is refused. |
| **What the browser shows** | A "not secure" warning, especially on pages with forms. | The padlock. |
| **Services that call your site** | Many refuse the address. Webhooks and payment notifications usually require HTTPS. | Accepted. It is the normal requirement. |
| **Search** | At a disadvantage. | Google treats HTTPS as a ranking signal in your favour. |

The fourth row deserves a note. For services that call your site, the practical rule is simple: if the callback address is `http://`, many will not even try. One example is the WhatsApp Cloud API webhooks, which according to Meta's documentation require an HTTPS address: **Meta webhooks**. And the padlock only appears if everything the page loads also comes over HTTPS: a single image at an `http://` address is enough to spoil it.

## How to tell whether your site is really on HTTPS

1. **Confirm the certificate exists.** In cPanel, open SSL/TLS Status: it lists each domain's certificate and the date it renews. If a new domain does not have one yet, it can take from a few minutes to an hour.

2. **Type the address with `http://` in the browser.** It should move to `https://` by itself. If it stays on HTTP, the redirect is missing.

3. **Look at the code the server returns.** In a terminal, `curl -I http://asuaempresa.ao` should show a 301 and a `location` line with the `https://` address. More on reading this in **301 or 302**.

4. **Add the redirect** if it is missing: **redirecting HTTP to HTTPS with .htaccess**.

5. **On WordPress, set both addresses** (the WordPress one and the site one, under Settings › General) to the https version, and fix whatever stayed mixed: **changing the site address** and **mixed content**.

**Do not force HTTPS before the certificate is valid.**
If you do, the browser shows an insecure-connection warning instead of your site. And if the padlock does not appear once everything is right, follow **the causes, in order**.

Once everything has been stable for a while, you can go further and tell browsers to always use HTTPS (HSTS). It is a hard decision to undo, though: read **HSTS explained** first.

NEED A HAND?

The padlock is missing or the site still opens on HTTP? Tell us the address and what you see.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- What is an SSL certificate and why does it matter? →
- How to redirect HTTP to HTTPS with .htaccess →
- No padlock on your site: the causes, in order →

**SSL certificates**

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