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Moving to cPanel from Plesk, DirectAdmin or another panel: what moves and what you rebuild

Moving a Website

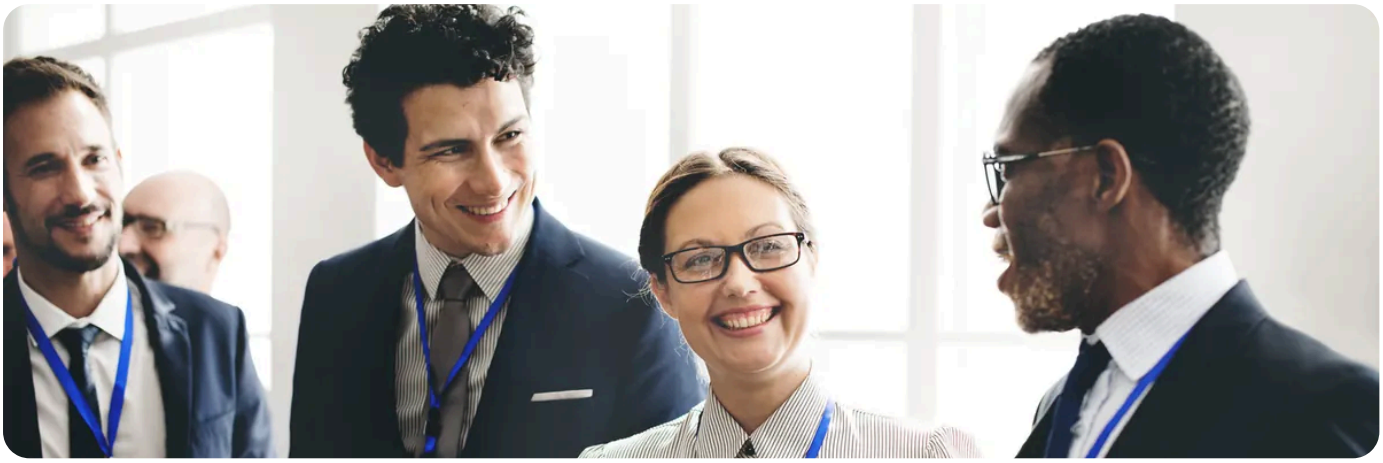
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Moving to cPanel from Plesk, DirectAdmin or another panel: what moves and what you rebuild

Moving a Website Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



A control panel is just the shop window for five things that exist on any server: **files, databases, mailboxes, DNS records and scheduled tasks**. So changing panels means copying those five, and redoing the settings each panel stores in its own way. Do not assume cPanel will restore a backup in another panel's format with a button; what always travels is the content. If you would rather not do it yourself, our migration department handles it, and the **hosting migration** page explains how to ask.

What comes and what you rebuild

Item	Comes with the copy?	How it travels or is rebuilt
The site files	Yes, but the folder changes name.	Each panel has its own site folder (Plesk usually uses `httpdocs`; in cPanel it is `public_html`). Copy the contents into the domain's folder.
Databases	Yes, by export.	Export each database (phpMyAdmin or `mysqldump`), create the new database and user, import, and update the configuration file. The names change.
Mailboxes and messages	No.	Recreate the mailboxes and bring the messages over IMAP: **bringing your mailboxes from another provider**.
Forwarders and filters	No.	Redo them by hand. Note them down before you move.
DNS records	No.	Recreate them, or take the nameservers. See **moving the DNS zone**.
Scheduled tasks	No.	Create them again under Cron Jobs (**cron jobs**), with the new paths.

Item	Comes with the copy?	How it travels or is rebuilt
PHP version and extensions	No.	Set them per folder in Select PHP Version (**which PHP version to use**).
SSL certificate	No.	It is issued again once the domain points to the account.
Web server rules	Partly.	Rules that lived in the server configuration, like nginx directives, do not move into `.htaccess` by themselves. Rewrite them.

Step by step

1. **Take inventory in the old panel.** Domains and subdomains, databases, mailboxes and forwarders, scheduled tasks, DNS records, PHP version, special rules. It is the list you check against at the end.
2. **Make a full backup** and keep it off the server (**your own backup**).
3. **Add the domain to the new account** without touching its DNS (**adding another domain or a subdomain**).
4. **Copy files and databases** as in **moving a site by hand**.
5. **Rebuild the rest** from the table above, line by line.
6. **Test with the hosts file** (**testing before you change the DNS**) and only then change the DNS (**migrating without downtime**). Keep the old panel until the new one answers everywhere.

A site built for Windows may not run on Linux.
If your site uses ASP.NET, a SQL Server database or IIS, it is not just a change of panel: it is a change of technology. See **moving a site between Linux and Windows**. PHP, WordPress and HTML sites pass without trouble.

Understanding the differences between panels
saves surprises: **cPanel, DirectAdmin or Plesk: what actually differs**. Almost everything has the same name elsewhere, in a different menu.

NEED A HAND?

Want us to handle the migration from your current panel? Tell us where the site comes from and which panel it uses.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- How to migrate a site without downtime →
- Moving your site to us: what comes across, and how long you are offline →
- cPanel, DirectAdmin or Plesk: what actually differs between control panels →
- Hosting migration →

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