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# Cron job e-mails flooding your inbox: MAILTO and where the output should go

cPanel & WHM

CODE

RLX-AO-KB-1932

VERSION

v2026.10.15

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

Angola · English

## Interweb Angola

RLX Angola, Lda. · Group RLX Holdings

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<https://www.meu.interweb.ao/knowledgebase/1932>



**The short answer:** whenever a scheduled task (cron job) writes anything to the screen, the system **e-mails that text** to the cron address. A task that runs every five minutes can send hundreds of messages a day. The fix is to tell the task where the output goes: **to a file, or nowhere**.

## Where the output goes

| End of the command                                           | What happens                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>&gt;/dev/null 2&gt;&amp;1</code>                       | Throws everything away, errors included. Total silence. Careful: it hides failures.                                                  |
| <code>&gt;/dev/null</code>                                   | Throws away the normal output, but <b>errors are still e-mailed</b> . Usually the best.                                              |
| <code>&gt;&gt; /home/account/cron.log<br/>2&gt;&amp;1</code> | Keeps everything in a file, to read when you need. Remember to clear it now and then.                                                |
| <b>Nothing</b>                                               | Everything the task writes goes by e-mail.                                                                                           |
| <b>Changing the address</b>                                  | In cPanel, the “Cron Email” field is at the top of the cron jobs page. On a VPS, it is the MAILTO= line at the start of the crontab. |

## Step by step

**1**

**Open scheduled tasks** (Cron Jobs, in cPanel) and see the “Cron Email” field at the top. Choose an address you read, or leave it empty.

2

**Decide what you want to know:** only errors, or nothing, or everything in a file.

3

**Edit the task's command** and add the right ending, for example:

```
/usr/bin/php /home/account/script.php >/dev/null
```

**Running a PHP script from a cron job.**

4

**On a VPS,** put `MAILTO=""` at the start of the crontab to switch e-mail off for all of them, or the address you want.

5

**Clear the mailbox** and confirm, days later, that the messages stopped: **Mailbox full.**

**Do not hide everything from a task you never tested.** If the output goes nowhere and the task fails, nobody knows. First confirm it works, then silence it: **A cron job that does not run.**

For the schedule syntax: **Schedule examples.** A task every five minutes is not always needed: **Cron jobs worth setting up.** On WordPress: **WP-Cron for a real cron job.**

Getting hundreds of cron messages and do not know which task? Open a ticket with the subject of one of them.

[Open a support ticket](#)

## SEE ALSO

**[Cron jobs: what they are for and how to create one](#)**

**[A cron job that does not run or sends no output: a checklist](#)**

**[Cron schedule examples: every 15 minutes, weekdays at 8, the first of the month](#)**

**[Running a PHP script from a cron job](#)**

**[Swapping WP-Cron for a real server cron job](#)**

**[Your mailbox is full: what to delete and how to stop it happening](#)**



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