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Gmail bounced your message: how to read the refusal and what each kind of reason means

E-mail

CODE

RLX-AO-KB-2046

VERSION

v2026.10.16

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

Angola · English

Interweb Angola

RLX Angola, Lda. · Group RLX Holdings

Tax ID (NIF) 500 260 5724 · Commercial registration no. 26464-25/250724

<https://www.meu.interweb.ao/knowledgebase/2046>



The short answer: when Gmail refuses a message of yours, our server sends you a notice back (often with “Undelivered” or “Mail delivery failed” in the subject). Inside it is **the reply from Google’s server**: a code and a sentence, and nearly always a **link to Google’s help page** for that exact case. You do not need to memorise codes: read the **first digit** (temporary or permanent) and the **kind of reason**, and follow the link.

The kinds of reason, and what to do

What the refusal says	What it means	What to do
The code starts with 4	A temporary refusal. Our server retries by itself for a while, and may tell you delivery is delayed.	Wait. Only resend if a permanent refusal arrives later.
The code starts with 5	A permanent refusal. Nobody tries again.	Read the reason, fix it, and only then resend.
The address does not exist (second part of the code of the x.1 kind)	A typo in the address, or a closed Gmail account.	Check the address with the person another way. See bounce message 550 .
Recipient's mailbox full (x.2 kind)	The problem is on the receiving side.	Tell the person another way and try later.
Message too large (x.3 kind)	The message with its attachments is more than Gmail accepts.	Send the file as a sharing link: attachment too large .
Not authenticated, SPF or DKIM failing (x.7 kind)	Gmail could not confirm the message really comes from your domain.	Fix SPF, DKIM and DMARC: SPF, DKIM and DMARC .
Too many messages, or an unusual rate (x.7 kind, often temporary)	You sent a lot in a short time, or to many addresses that do not respond.	Slow down, clean the list, and use a bulk-sending tool: e-mail marketing .
Suspected spam, reputation or blocked content (x.7 kind)	Gmail does not trust the domain, the server, the links or the type of attachment (executable programs, for example).	Check blacklists and content: domain or IP on a blacklist .

How to read a Gmail refusal

1

Find the bounce notice in the Inbox of the address that sent the message. Open it in **webmail** if your program hides it.

2

Look for the remote server's reply: it is the part that mentions Google's server and carries a three-digit code, often followed by another with dots (something like 5.x.x). The sentence in English comes below.

3

Look at the first digit: 4 is temporary, 5 is permanent. Then the second part tells you the kind: x.1 address, x.2 mailbox, x.3 size, x.7 security or policy.

4

Open the Google link in the refusal. It is the official explanation of the case, more current than any list.

5

Check in cPanel: the **Track Delivery** page shows the same reply and whether other messages to Gmail met the same fate: **Track Delivery**.

6

Fix the cause and resend once. If the refusal is about the server rather than your domain (IP reputation or reverse DNS, for example), send us the full refusal: on a shared hosting plan we check it on our side; on a VPS or dedicated server the IP and reverse DNS are managed by you.

Do not resend the same message over and over. Every refused attempt counts against your domain and the server, and makes the next refusal more likely. Fix first, resend after.

In the support ticket, paste the whole refusal, not just the first line. The code, the name of Google's server and the time are what let us find the message in the logs.

Got a refusal from Gmail and cannot tell why? Open a ticket with the complete bounce notice.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

Bounce message 550: user unknown, relay denied and rejected, what each one means

Track Delivery: finding out what happened to a message you sent

SPF, DKIM and DMARC: why your e-mail lands in spam

Your domain or IP is on a blacklist: how to check and how to get off it

Attachment too large: why the message bounces and how to send big files

Your e-mails land in Gmail spam or Promotions: what Show original tells you and what to fix



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