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When a WordPress install fails: the causes and what to do

Errors & Troubleshooting

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When a WordPress install fails: the causes and what to do

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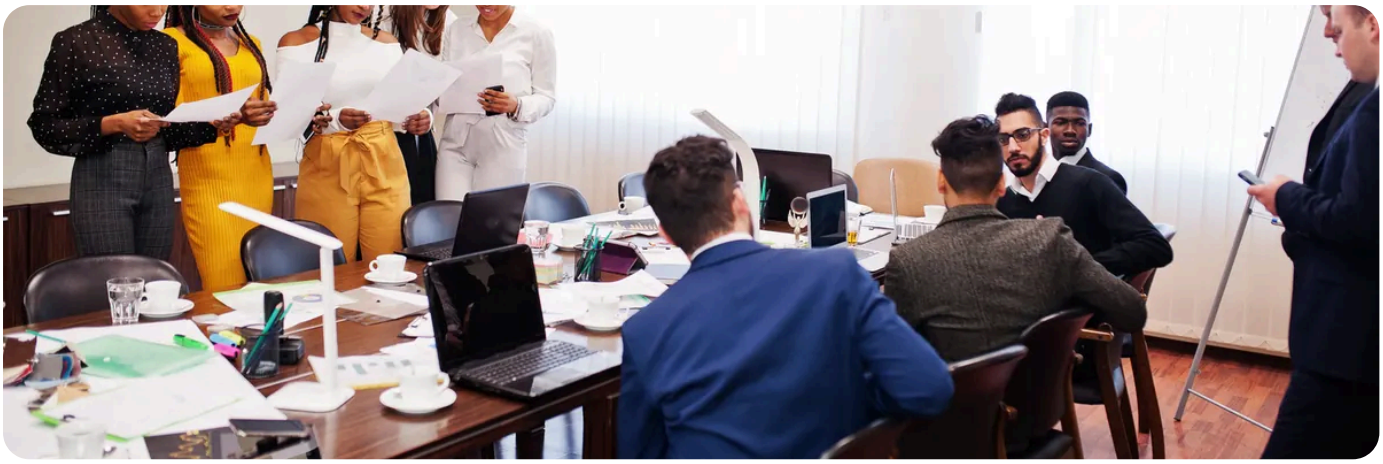

An installer that stops halfway almost always leaves the same clue: **the error says where it stopped**. It is worth reading before you try again, because trying again without changing anything usually leaves two half-finished installs instead of one.

> **Do not run the install again on top of one that failed.**
> Clean up first: delete the folder and the database it left behind. Installing over leftovers is the recipe for errors that make no sense at all. To clean up properly, see **removing WordPress without leaving anything behind**.

The causes, in order of how often we see them

Symptom	Likely cause	What to do
"The directory is not empty"	There are already files at the destination, often from an earlier attempt or from the placeholder page the account shipped with.	Choose another folder, or clear the one you chose. Look in File Manager before you delete anything.
It stops while creating the database	The account has hit the plan limit on databases, or the chosen name already exists.	Look at the databases you have and delete the ones left over from failed attempts. See **databases and phpMyAdmin**.
It stops while copying files	Disk full, or the account file count limit reached.	See **the limits nobody advertises** and free space before trying.
It hangs and never finishes	The process hit the maximum execution time or the memory available to PHP.	See **PHP limits**. Try again outside peak hours.

Symptom	Likely cause	What to do
A PHP version error	The version active on that folder is too old for the WordPress release you picked.	Change it in **Select PHP Version**, carefully: **changing it without breaking the site**.
It installs, but the site does not open	The domain does not point here yet, or points at a different folder.	Check the domain with **WHOIS** and see **pointing your domain to us**.
A file listing appears instead of the site	WordPress landed in a folder other than the one the domain serves.	See **the Index of listing**.

The clean-up before the second attempt

1. **Delete the target folder**, or at least everything the failed install left in it. File Manager is in the **Files** section of cPanel.
2. **Delete the database** the attempt created, and its user. They sit there eating into your plan limit.
3. **Check the PHP version** for that domain, in the **Software** section.
4. **Check you have disk space**, and that you are not at the account file count ceiling.
5. **Install again**, and this time write down the database name and the administrator user you chose.

If it fails twice with the same error, stop.
The third attempt will fail too and only leaves more debris. Send us the error exactly as it appears, with the domain and the folder, and we will save you the afternoon.

NEED A HAND?

Send us the error message word for word, with the domain and the folder. It is usually sorted on the first reply.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- WordPress hosting
- Support Policy
- Frequently asked questions

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