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General product settings: stock, tax and downloads

Site Builder & AI

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General product settings: stock, tax and downloads

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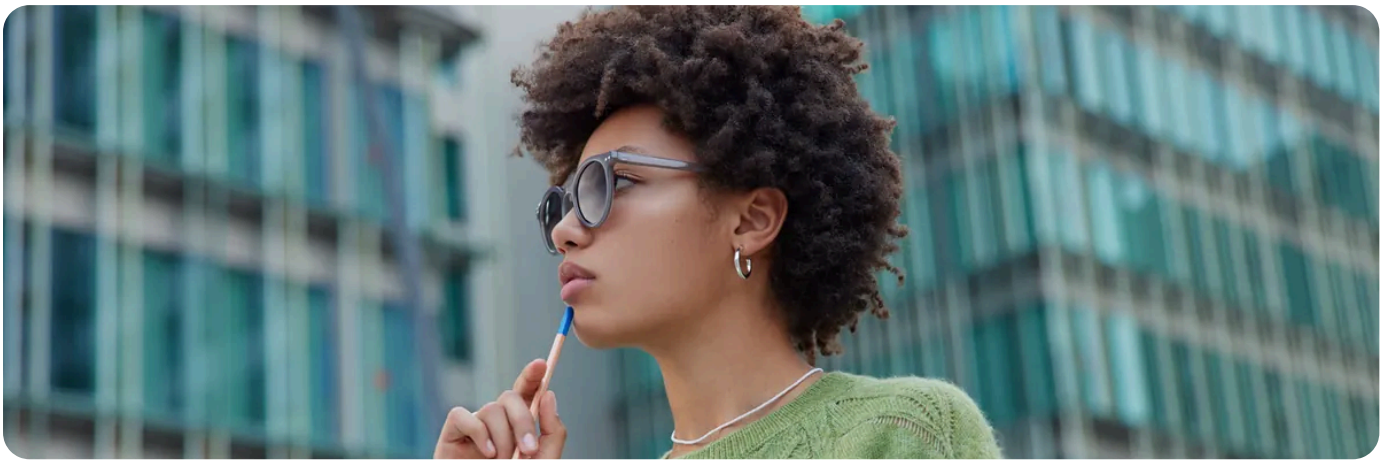

Some settings are filled in product by product, and some are decided once for the whole shop, under **WooCommerce**, **Settings** and **Products**. It is the second kind that causes trouble later, because nobody remembers where they came from.

Inventory: counting or not counting

Stock management is switched on for the whole shop and then tuned per product. If you sell services, or you always have units available, leave it off: it is one less thing to keep accurate.

Setting	What it does
Manage stock	Makes WooCommerce deduct units on every sale
Hold stock for a limited time	Reserves the units of an unpaid order for a few minutes and releases them if payment never arrives
Low stock notification	E-mails you when the quantity drops below the number you set
Backorders	Decides whether people can buy with no units left. Allowing it silently is the source of half the complaints
Hide out-of-stock items	Removes them from the shop instead of showing them without a button
Sold individually	This one is per product: it limits the order to one unit

Stock is not a promise.
Two people can reach the cart at the same moment with the last unit. The hold time reduces the problem, it does not remove it. If you sell one-off items, answer quickly and keep a sentence ready for when it happens.

Tax

Tax is switched on in the general settings and opens a tab of its own. There are three questions to answer, and none of them is technical.

1. **Do the prices I type already include tax?** It is the first choice and it changes everything after it. Get it wrong and you either undercharge, or show figures that change at checkout.

2. **Which address is the calculation based on?** The customer's, the billing one, or the shop's. If you only sell domestically, the shop address is enough.

3. **How do I display prices in the shop and in the cart?** You can show tax-inclusive prices in the shop and break them down only in the cart. What you cannot do is show one figure and charge another without explaining.

> **We do not give tax advice.**
> Which rate applies to what you sell, whether you must issue an invoice per sale, and what the law asks of your business are questions for your accountant. We look after the server. For the billing of our own services, see **your invoice: billing details, tax and receipts**.

Downloadable products

A downloadable product hands over a file after payment. You tick **Virtual** and **Downloadable** in the product data, then upload the file or point at it.

1. **Download limit.** How many times the same buyer can download it. Leaving it unlimited invites the link to travel.

2. **Link expiry.** After how many days the link stops working. If you sell updates, think twice before closing it.

3. **Access method.** In the shop settings you choose whether the file is served through a disguised address, forced as a download, or linked directly. The direct link is the fastest and the least protected.

4. **Check the file folder is not public.** WooCommerce keeps them in a folder of its own inside the uploads directory, protected by a configuration file. If you copied files by hand somewhere else, they are visible to anyone who knows the address.

> **Large files do not belong on a shared plan.**
> Selling videos or heavy bundles fills the disk, burns bandwidth and drags the rest of the server down. See **what you can host here**: if that is the business, it is a different conversation.

Two settings people forget

Where	What to check
Measurements	The weight unit and the length unit. If they are wrong, shipping comes out wrong and nobody works out why
Reviews	Whether comments are allowed, whether a verified purchase is required, and whether stars are shown. Open, unmoderated reviews are a spam target

Write your choices down.
A text file with the decisions on this page, dated, saves you an afternoon a year from now, when somebody asks why prices display without tax.

NEED A HAND?

Download files failing, or the disk filling up?

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- What you can host here: media, streaming and the limits →
- The limits nobody advertises: inodes, processes and memory →
- Your invoice: billing details, tax and receipts →
- Putting products on sale in WooCommerce →
- Shipping and delivery rates in WooCommerce →

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