

HTTPS Migration Checklist for SEO Ranking Preservation

A step-by-step guide to migrating your website to HTTPS without losing search engine rankings.

Based on [Https Migration Checklist Without Losing Seo Rankings](#) by Casey's SEO

Step 1: Conduct a Pre-Migration Audit

Before making any changes, document your current website's performance. This includes crawling all pages, links, and embedded resources. Gather data on current traffic, conversions, and rankings. Ensure your robots.txt, XML sitemaps, and canonical tags are accurate and fix any existing technical issues.

- Use tools like Screaming Frog or Sitebulb for comprehensive crawling.
- Document top-performing pages, external links, and all embedded resources.
- Address any 'wonky' technical elements before proceeding.



Step 2: Set Up a Staging Environment

Create a private copy of your website on a staging server that mirrors your production environment. Ensure this staging site is blocked from search engines using no-index tags. Install and test your SSL certificate here.

- The staging environment should have identical content management system setup, plugins, and themes.
- Test all links, forms, and tracking codes thoroughly on the staging site.
- Verify that the SSL certificate is installed and functioning correctly.



Step 3: Configure Your SSL Certificate

Obtain and properly configure your SSL certificate. Ensure it covers all domain variations (www and non-www) and any necessary subdomains. Verify that no browser security warnings appear and that the certificate is not nearing expiration.

- Standard SSL certificates from your hosting provider are often sufficient.
- Use SSL Labs' free SSL test tool to identify configuration issues.



Step 4: Develop Your Redirect Strategy

Create a comprehensive redirect map that lists every old HTTP URL and its corresponding new HTTPS URL. Implement these using proper 301 redirects to ensure users and search engines are directed to the correct pages.

- Avoid redirect chains; ensure redirects go directly to the final destination.
- Consider server-level redirects (.htaccess) for better performance and reliability over plugin-based redirects.
- Fix any URL structure issues during this mapping process.



Step 5: Execute the Migration

Perform the migration during a low-traffic period. Ensure all redirects are in place and functioning. Update canonical tags to point to HTTPS versions, then update all internal links to use HTTPS URLs. Generate new XML sitemaps referencing HTTPS URLs and submit them immediately.

- Test a few URLs manually before making site-wide changes.
- Update tracking codes and external integrations (e.g., Google Analytics, Facebook Pixel) to use HTTPS URLs.
- Have a rollback plan ready in case of unforeseen issues.



Step 6: Post-Migration Monitoring

Closely monitor your website for the first 48 hours and continue monitoring for at least a month. Check server logs for 404 errors, track organic traffic for significant drops, and use crawling software to identify broken links or redirect issues.

- Monitor Core Web Vitals and site speed metrics.
- Actively look for and fix 'mixed content' issues where HTTP resources are loaded on HTTPS pages.
- Ensure all external links and social media profiles are updated to HTTPS.



Step 7: Address Common Mistakes and Compliance

Be vigilant about common pitfalls like mixed content, forgetting to update external tools, or celebrating prematurely. Ensure your migration complies with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR) and document the process for compliance purposes.

- Every single resource on an HTTPS page must load over HTTPS.
- Keep monitoring for at least a month as Google processes changes.
- For regulated industries, maintain detailed records of the migration and security measures.

Resources & Further Reading

Related guides for this process:

■ HTTPS Migration Action Sheet

<https://storage.googleapis.com/casey-s-seo-checklists-20260706-021eb2/casey-s-seo/Action%20Sheet/https-migration-checklist-without-lossing-seo-rankings-action-sheet.pdf>

■ HTTPS Migration Checklist

<https://storage.googleapis.com/casey-s-seo-checklists-20260706-671cb5/casey-s-seo/Checklist/https-migration-checklist.pdf>

■ Colorado Springs SEO Blog

<https://caseysseo.com/seo-blog>

■ Colorado Springs Competitor Benchmarking: How to Analyze Your Local SEO Competition – Casey's SEO

<https://caseysseo.com/colorado-springs-competitor-benchmarking/>

■ Colorado Springs Local SEO Company

<https://caseysseo.com/colorado-springs-local-seo/>

■ 2025 Local SEO ROI Measurement and Analytics – Casey's SEO

<https://caseysseo.com/2025-local-seo-roi-measurement-and-analytics/>

■ Setting Up Bing Webmaster Tools: Your Complete Guide for Multi-Platform SEO Success – Casey's SEO

<https://caseysseo.com/bing-webmaster-tools-setup-guide-for-multi-platform-seo-success/>

■ Find Your Local Results

<https://caseysseo.com/>

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Meticulous planning and execution are key to a successful HTTPS migration that preserves SEO rankings.