Automatic Backups in WHM (Backup Configuration): Daily, Weekly and an Off-Server Copy

WHM/cPanel · https://www.hyyat.com/en/knowledgebase/configure-backups-whm/

Recommended setup In **Backup, then Backup Configuration** turn on **Enable Backups**, choose **Compressed**, pick the daily backup days and how many to keep, enable **Back up User Accounts** and **Back up System Files**, then add a remote destination on the **Additional Destinations** tab and click **Save Configuration**.

Embedded media: https://www.hyyat.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/hyyat-whm-bkconf-en.mp4?_=1

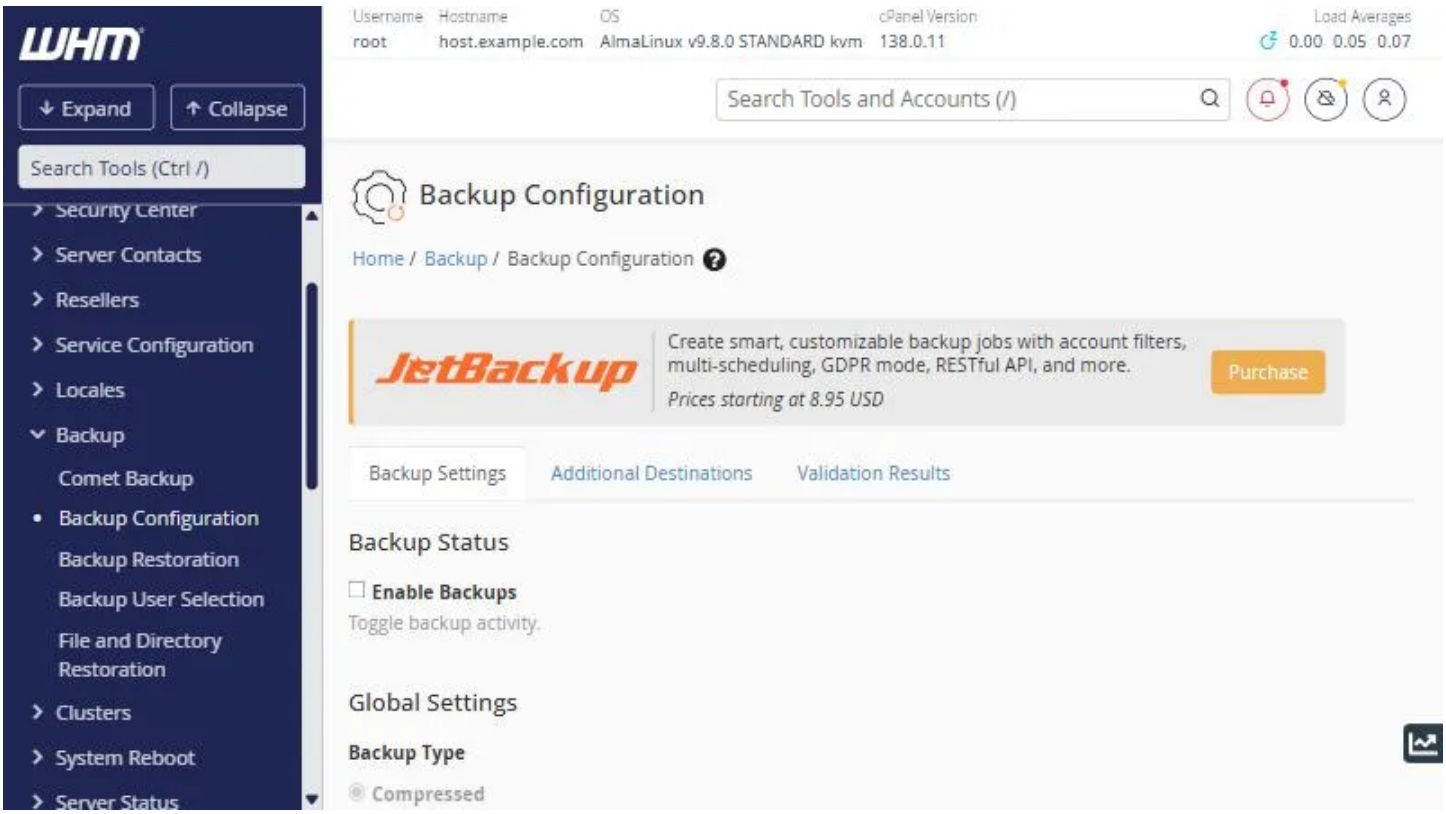
A backup on the same disk the server runs from protects you against a broken site or a deleted file, but not against a failed disk or a fully compromised server. A good setup therefore has two parts: regular automatic backups on the server, and a copy sent somewhere else. This guide covers both in one tool.

Before you start

- Access to WHM as **root** at `https://your-server-hostname:2087` (or the server IP on port 2087). Avoid the old port 2086: it is not encrypted.
- Enough free space on the server for at least one compressed copy of every account.
- A remote destination if you want one: an SFTP server, an S3 bucket, or storage that supports SSH and rsync.

Open the tool

`WHM › Backup › Backup Configuration`



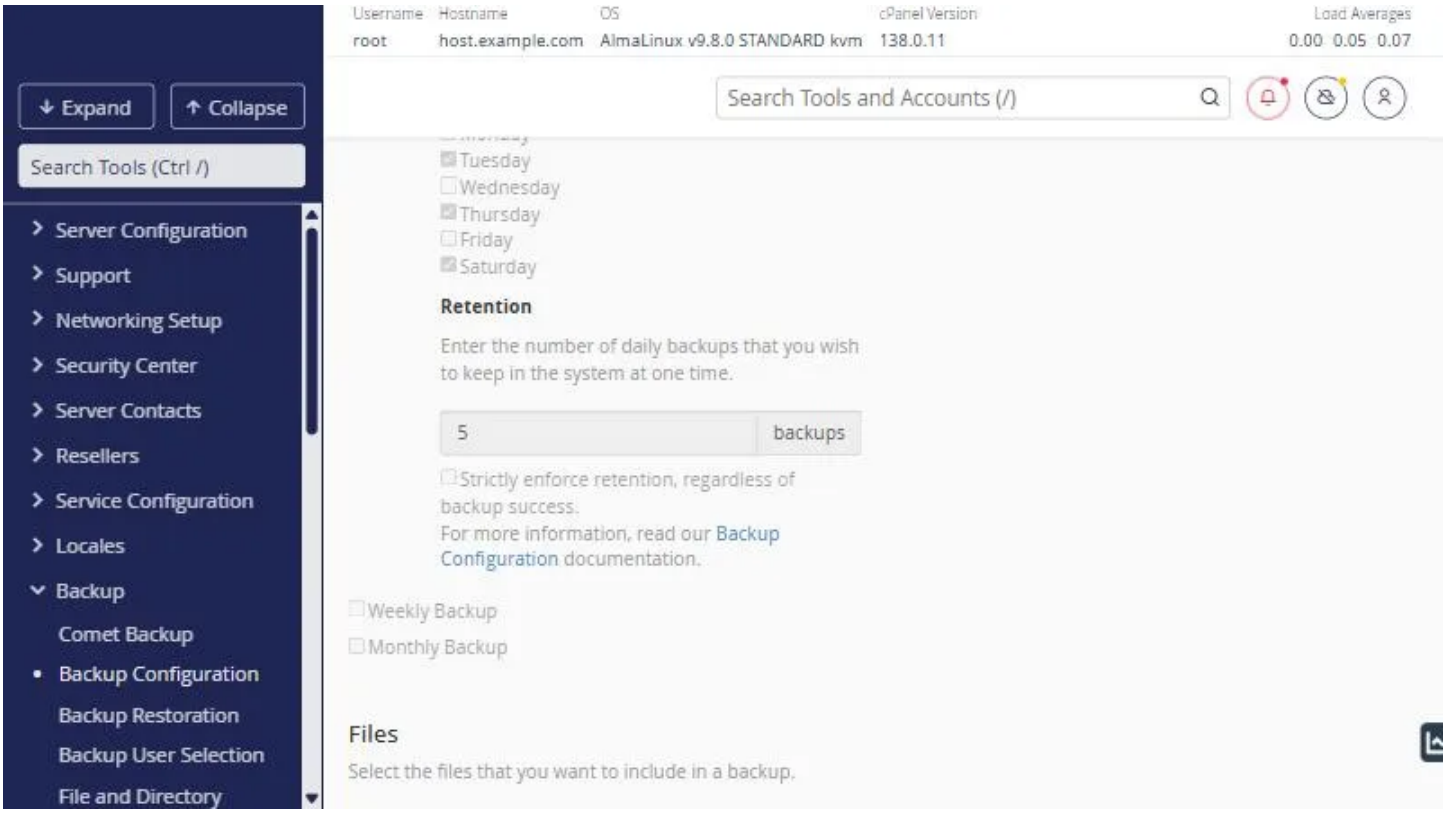
The page has three tabs: **Backup Settings**, **Additional Destinations** for remote targets, and **Validation Results** for destination checks. A JetBackup advert may appear at the top; that is a separate paid add-on and you do not need it to use the built-in backups.

Part one: global settings

Setting	What it means	Our choice
Enable Backups	Turns automatic backups on	On
Compressed	Smaller backups that take longer to make	Right for most servers
Uncompressed	Faster, but larger	If CPU is tight and disk is plentiful
Incremental	Saves only what changed since the last backup	Fast, but not supported by every remote destination
Check the Available Disk Space	Skips the backup if free space drops below your threshold	Turn it on to stop backups filling the disk

Setting	What it means	Our choice
Maximum Destination Backup Timeout	How long an upload to a destination may take	Raise it for large accounts
Maximum Backup Restoration Timeout	How long a restore may take	Raise it for large accounts

Part two: schedule and retention



- **Daily Backup**: pick the days. Three or more days a week is a good start; every day is better if space allows.
- **Retention**: how many daily backups to keep. With 5 you always have the latest five and older ones are removed.
- **Strictly enforce retention**: removes old copies even if the new one failed. Leave it off so you are never left without a good copy.
- **Weekly Backup** and **Monthly Backup**: longer-lived extra copies, useful for catching an old problem such as a compromise nobody noticed for weeks.

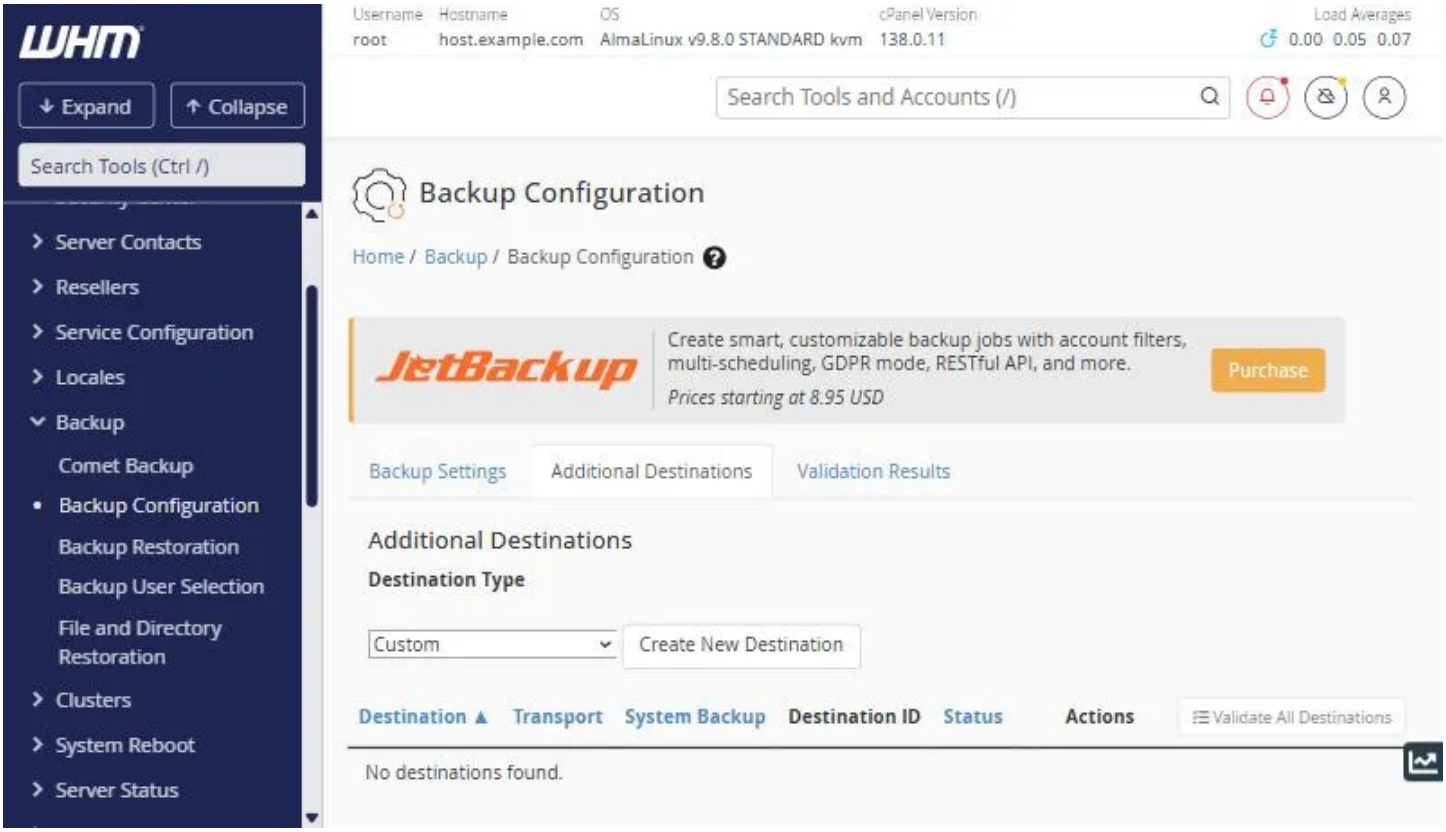
Part three: what gets backed up

Option	Our advice
Back up User Accounts	On. **Select Users** lets you exclude particular accounts
Back up Suspended Accounts	On if you may bring some back
Back up Access Logs and **Back up Bandwidth Data**	Optional; they add size
Back up System Files	On. It saves the server’s own configuration and helps rebuild a whole server
Databases: Per Account Only	Right for most cases: a .sql file per account via mysqldump
Entire Data Directory	Copies the whole database directory. Do not rely on it alone; it is not safe while the service runs

Part four: the backup directory

Default Backup Directory is usually `/backup`. Ideally it sits on a different disk from `/home`, which is where **Mount Backup Drive as Needed** helps. **Retain Backups in the Default Backup Directory** decides whether the local copy stays after upload: keep it on if space allows, because local restores are faster.

Part five: a copy off the server



On **Additional Destinations** choose a destination type, then **Create New Destination**. The types available are Additional Local Directory, Amazon S3, Backblaze B2, FTP, Google Drive, Rsync, S3 Compatible, SFTP, WebDAV and Custom.

1. **Choose SFTP or Rsync** if you have storage that supports SSH; both are safer than plain FTP.
2. **Enter the connection details** host, port, user and folder; an SSH key is better than a password.
3. **Save, then test** with **Validate**, and check the outcome on Validation Results.

If you can, do not give the remote destination credentials full delete rights. If someone compromises the server and can delete the remote copies too, they will not protect you.
Finally click **Save Configuration** at the bottom of the settings tab. The first backup runs at the next nightly slot, or start one now over SSH with `/usr/local/cpanel/bin/backup --force`.

Check afterwards

- After the first night there are dated folders inside the backup directory.
- The remote destination validates cleanly and the files arrived.

- You have tried restoring a test account at least once with the restore tools. A backup you have never restored is not one you can rely on.

WHM backup questions

Can customers see these backups in cPanel?
Yes, if the backup feature is enabled in their package; they can restore their own files from the server's backups.

Do backups slow the server down?
They add disk and CPU load while running, which is why they run at night with low priority. If you notice slowness, check their timing against server time.

Built-in backups or JetBackup?
The built-in system is free and enough for most servers if configured well. JetBackup adds more flexible scheduling and restores for a fee.

Are my provider's server backups enough?
Full-server backups from your provider help in a disaster, but WHM backups let you restore one account or one file quickly. Having both is best.

Backups and restores

- How to Restore a Full cPanel Backup (cpmove) in WHM
- A Full Backup of Your Website from cPanel: Files, Databases and Email
- Access with SSH/rsync/BorgBackup
- Backups: Full Off-Site Backups of Your VPS
- cPanel and WHM on a VPS — The Complete 2026 Guide: What They Are, Licensing, and When to Choose Them

All WHM guides →

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