The Default Address (Catch-All) in cPanel: What Happens to Mail for Addresses That Do Not Exist?

cPanel Guides · https://www.hyyat.com/en/knowledgebase/cpanel-default-address-catch-all/

In short In cPanel open **Default Address** and pick the domain. The default is to **reject** mail sent to addresses that do not exist on your domain, with an error to the sender. You can instead **forward** it to an address you choose (catch-all), but that brings in a lot of spam, so we recommend keeping the rejection.

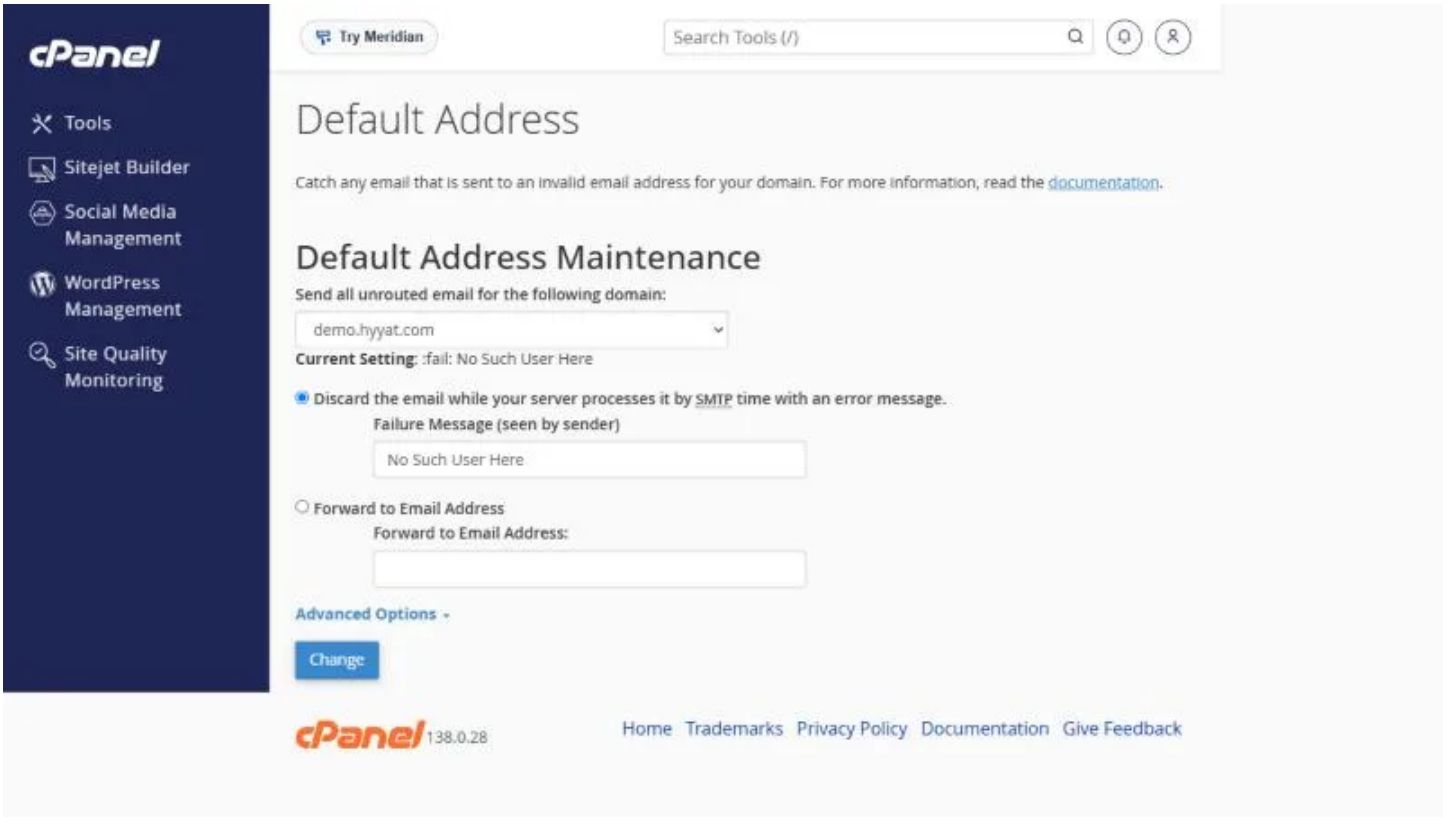
Embedded media: https://www.hyyat.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/hyyat-email-def-en.mp4?_=1

A customer asked: "What happens to a message a customer sends to a mistyped address on our domain, such as inf@ instead of info@?"

If someone emails an address that does not exist on your domain, such as sale@ instead of sales@, what happens? The **Default Address** tool decides.

The options

1. **Open Default Address** in the Email section of cPanel.
2. **Pick the domain** from the list. The Current Setting appears below it.
3. **Choose the action:** reject with an error, or forward to an address.
4. **Click Change.**



Option	What happens	Our advice
Discard with an error (fail)	The message is rejected and the sender learns the address does not exist	Yes
Forward to Email Address (catch-all)	You receive all mail for any address on your domain	Only when needed

The setting shown is **fail: No Such User Here**, meaning mail is rejected with that message.

Why we do not recommend catch-all

- Spammers try random names on your domain, and you get them all.
- Your mailbox fills up quickly.
- A sender who mistyped the address never learns of the mistake.

Need an extra address? Instead of catch-all, create a forwarder for each address you really need, such as sale@ to sales@.

When catch-all helps

When moving an old domain and you want to catch mail for old addresses you do not all know, for a short time. Then create forwarders for the important ones and switch back to rejecting.

The Default Address and forwarders together

- Addresses that exist (mailboxes or forwarders) are not affected by the Default Address.
- The Default Address applies only to addresses that do not exist.
- If you have several domains, set the Default Address for each one.
- Check the setting after moving a site from another host; an old catch-all may come with it.

From our support desk

- **A company turned on catch-all** to catch mistyped addresses, and within a month received thousands of spam messages to random addresses. Switching back to reject ended it.
- **A customer renamed an old mailbox** and used a forwarder from the old address instead of catch-all, keeping things clean.
- **A store used different addresses per supplier**, such as supplier1@, and needed catch-all briefly during setup, then turned it off.

For an old address whose mail should keep arriving, a forwarder is cleaner than catching every address.

Frequently asked questions

What is catch-all email?
A setting that forwards all mail sent to any non-existent address on your domain to one mailbox.

Should I turn on catch-all?
Usually not, because it brings in a lot of spam. Use forwarders for the addresses you need.

Where do I change the Default Address?
In Default Address in the Email section of cPanel.

Does rejecting hurt my domain reputation?

No, clearly rejecting non-existent addresses is normal behaviour.

Can I write my own rejection message?

Yes, type it in the Failure Message field before clicking Change.

Related guides

- The Email Section in cPanel: A Guide to Every Tool and When to Use It
- Email Forwarding (Forwarders) in cPanel: Send Mail From One Address to Another
- Spam Filters in cPanel: SpamAssassin and the Spam Box Folder

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