

CHECKLIST · PHP2SHELL · UPDATED OCT 28, 2026

End-of-life PHP & PHP2Shell: the WordPress owner's checklist

The official PHP2Shell fix (Oct 21, 2026) only covers PHP 8.2 to 8.5. If your site runs PHP 7.4, 8.0 or 8.1, work through this list in order. Tick each box as you go.

OFFICIAL FIX
PHP 8.2 – 8.5

7.4 / 8.0 / 8.1
End of life

UPGRADE TO
PHP 8.3 or 8.4

8.2 SUPPORT ENDS
Dec 31, 2026

A Know where you stand

- ☐ **Your PHP version:** _____ WordPress: Tools → Site Health → Info → Server.
- ☐ **On 7.4, 8.0 or 8.1? Ask your host** whether your PHP build includes the Oct 21 fixes. Some hosts patch without changing the version number.
- ☐ **Confirm this setting is off** (php.ini or PHP-FPM pool; on shared hosting, ask your host):
`session.upload_progress.enabled = 0` It covers the related CVE-2026-115560, which has no fix yet.
- ☐ **List your theme and plugins** with the date each was last updated. Anything untouched for years is your main upgrade risk.

B Choose your path

☐ Host or distro backport

Old PHP rebuilt with the fix by your host or Linux vendor. Uneven coverage; a stopgap only.

☐ Paid extended support

Commercial patching for old PHP (e.g. Ubuntu Pro, Freexian ELTS, TuxCare). A yearly cost to stay on old code.

☐ Upgrade to PHP 8.3 / 8.4

The only path that gets every future fix from PHP itself. Needs testing; see section C.

Skip PHP 8.2 as a target: its security support ends Dec 31, 2026. WordPress 7.1 runs on PHP 7.4 to 8.5 and recommends 8.3 or newer.

C Upgrade without breaking the site

- ☐ **01 Full backup, restore tested**
Files + database, stored off the server.
- ☐ **02 Create a staging copy**
All changes go there first.
- ☐ **03 Update core, theme, plugins**
On staging, before touching PHP.
- ☐ **04 Replace abandoned plugins**
No updates in years = plan a swap.
- ☐ **05 Switch staging to 8.3 / 8.4**
Debug log on, display off.
- ☐ **06 Test what makes you money**
Forms, checkout, logins, search, email.
- ☐ **07 Switch production, quiet hour**
Fresh backup + rollback step ready.
- ☐ **08 Watch it for 48 hours**
Error log, orders and form deliveries.

Free exposure check: wordprex.com/php2shell · hello@wordprex.com

Sources: PHP supported versions (php.net) · PHP project advisories, Oct 21 and Oct 23, 2026 · WordPress 7.1 server compatibility (make.wordpress.org) · Stack Harbor, fix options for end-of-life PHP (Oct 25, 2026). Vendor status changes fast: confirm with your host. WordPrex is an independent service provider, not affiliated with the WordPress Foundation or Automattic Inc. WordPress® is a registered trademark of the WordPress Foundation.

D Check whether anyone got in first

Exploitation attempts were reported from **Oct 17, 2026**, four days before the fix. If the site ran unpatched PHP after that date, review:

- ☐ **Administrator accounts.** Users → Administrators: anyone you don't recognize?
- ☐ **PHP files in uploads.** Any .php file inside wp-content/uploads is a red flag.
- ☐ **Recently changed files** you didn't touch, especially in the site root and theme folders.
- ☐ **Scheduled tasks.** Unknown cron jobs in the hosting panel or unfamiliar WordPress scheduled events.
- ☐ **Error logs.** Bursts of "Allowed memory size" errors, or PHP workers crashing and restarting for no clear reason.

A clean result doesn't prove the site is clean. It does make a quiet compromise much less likely.

E If you find something

- ☐ **Take the site offline without wiping it.** Show a maintenance page or stop the web server. Don't just disable PHP: the server may then show your code as plain text.
- ☐ **Keep the logs** (web server, PHP, hosting panel) before anything rotates them.
- ☐ **Change every secret the site uses:** database password, WordPress salts and keys, admin passwords, API keys.
- ☐ **Restore from a backup made before Oct 17** if you can't be sure the site is clean, then patch or upgrade PHP before going live.
- ☐ **Check your notification duties** if personal data (customers, orders, accounts) may have been exposed.

F Make the next advisory a non-event

- ☐ **Monthly updates** for WordPress, theme and plugins, on staging first when they're big.
- ☐ **Automatic off-site backups**, with a restore tested at least once a quarter.
- ☐ **A calendar reminder for PHP end-of-life dates.** php.net/supported-versions shows them. Plan upgrades months ahead.
- ☐ **Someone who watches security advisories** for your stack, so you hear about the next one before your customers do.

Want a second pair of eyes, or rather hand it off?

Start with a free exposure check: which PHP your site runs and what an upgrade would take, then a fixed quote before any work. We do it with a backup first, on staging, with a written report. You keep every login and file.

wordprex.com/php2shell
hello@wordprex.com