

Moving email from Microsoft 365 to Google Workspace.

Most of a migration is a copy running quietly in the background, then waiting for DNS. **The copy is the safe part:** Google's tool reads your Microsoft mail and copies it, it never changes it. What needs care is what does not come across cleanly, and knowing that the switch, not the copy, is the step that counts. This is the order, and where to stop and get help.

ESSENTIAL

Skip it and mail bounces or is lost

GET HELP

Advanced or has no undo, stop if unsure

The label on the right is when, or how long.

Before you start: Google is changing its migration tools through 2026, and Microsoft is retiring an older connection method, so the exact screen and menu names may differ from this guide. The order of events and the traps below still hold. Check the current screens in both admin consoles as you go.

01 Before you touch anything

- ☐

ESSENTIAL

Add your domain to Google Workspace and verify it. A short TXT record proves you own the domain. Do this early in the week, not on switch day: Google says it can take up to 72 hours to be recognised, though it is usually much faster.

UP TO 72H
- ☐

ESSENTIAL

Create each person's Workspace account, with a licence and Gmail and Calendar on. The migration only fills accounts that already exist. It will not create them, nor deliver to a user without a licence.

DO FIRST
- ☐

Inventory the Microsoft side properly. List the user mailboxes, the shared mailboxes, the distribution lists and groups, every alias, the room and resource calendars, and anything archived. This list decides the whole plan, and Google's tool will not discover it for you.

DO FIRST
- ☐

GET HELP

Flag anything under legal or retention hold first. Held mail is kept in a protected area outside the normal mailbox, and it does not travel with an ordinary migration. Getting it out intact is a compliance job, not a migration one.

CHECK FIRST
- ☐

Decide whether old archived mail is in scope. The simpler copy leaves archive mailboxes behind; a fuller method can bring them, at the cost of more setup. If people have years of archived mail that matters, plan for it now.

DECIDE
- ☐

Lower your MX record's TTL a day or two before. The TTL is how long the internet caches your mail settings. Lowering it in advance means the later switch takes effect in minutes, not a day. Put it back afterwards.

A DAY OR TWO AHEAD

02 Copy the mail across

Nothing breaks in this part. Microsoft stays live and receiving the whole time, because this step only ever copies.

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- ☐ **ESSENTIAL**

Use Google's own migration service, from the Workspace admin console. It connects to Microsoft and copies mail, calendar and contacts into Workspace. It copies; it never deletes or changes the Microsoft side, so you can run it, check it, and run it again.

RUNS FOR DAYS

 - ☐

Run the full copy while Microsoft is still live. Because it is only a copy, it can run in the background for days without interrupting anyone's mail. Start it well before the day you plan to switch.

BACKGROUND

 - ☐

Expect a big mailbox to take time, not to fail. Microsoft paces how fast its mail can be pulled, so a large mailbox shows up as days of steady copying rather than an error. Slow is normal here.

PATIENCE

What comes across, and what to check. Mail, calendar and most contacts move, and your Outlook folders become labels in Gmail. But a handful of things are left behind by design, not by fault, and section 04 lists them so none is a surprise on switch day.

03 Switch it over

Set authentication up ahead, then flip the MX once the copy has caught up.

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|--------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|
| ☐ | ESSENTIAL | Get authentication ready, and start DKIM early. SPF, DKIM and DMARC do not carry over from Microsoft, and without them your outgoing mail can land in spam. Set up DKIM a day or two before switch day, because it can take up to two days to begin working. Replace the single SPF record as you switch, then add DMARC once SPF and DKIM are live. Our separate one-page guide gives the order. | BEFORE SWITCH |
| ☐ | ESSENTIAL | Change the MX record to Google, and remove the old one. Delete Microsoft's MX record rather than just lowering its priority. From now on, new mail is meant to arrive at Google. | SWITCH DAY |
| ☐ | | Run a final "delta" pass to catch the gap. One more copy sweeps up anything that arrived on the Microsoft side while the DNS change was still spreading, so nothing from that window is lost. | AFTER SWITCH |
| ☐ | GET HELP | Moving people in stages? Use split delivery. It lets some mailboxes go live on Google while the rest stay on Microsoft, each still receiving mail at its real address. It is fiddly to set up: worth a hand if you have never done it. | IF PHASED |

The copy is safe; the switch is the commitment. Until the MX record changes, Microsoft is still your live mail and Google is holding a copy. The moment it changes, new mail goes to Google only, so line up the authentication records and a delta pass for the same session, not a week later.

04 What does not come across cleanly

These are the parts a good migration plans for in advance. None is a fault in the tool; they are real differences between how Microsoft and Google are built.

- ☐ **Shared mailboxes have no direct match in Google.** The same job is done with a group plus delegation, or a shared "collaborative" inbox. Decide how each shared mailbox becomes one: it is a small rebuild, not a lift-and-shift.
- ☐ **GET HELP Anything under legal or retention hold.** Held mail sits outside the normal mailbox and will not migrate with it. Export it the proper way first, or hand this part to a specialist, before anyone touches the source.
- ☐ **Distribution lists do not become Google Groups on their own.** Google publishes no one-click conversion. Rebuild each list's membership in Google from the inventory you took in step 01.
- ☐ **Room and resource calendars are a different kind of thing in Google.** Set them up fresh as Google Calendar resources, then point bookings at them. They are not user mailboxes the way they were in Microsoft.
- ☐ **Meeting links come across as text, not converted.** A Teams link in an invitation stays a Teams link. It does not turn into a Google Meet, and the meeting does not move itself.
- ☐ **The very largest messages, and archives.** Archive mailboxes only come with the fuller method, and the biggest single messages are skipped. Check whether anything that matters falls in either bucket.

05 Test it before you trust it

Do these the same day you switch, not a week later.

Send and receive both ways	From outside into each new inbox, and out from each one to an external address.
Calendar, including a recurring series	Make an event, accept an invite, and open a repeating meeting to check it looks right.
Shared mailboxes and groups	The new group or delegated inbox receives, and members can send as the shared address.
Every alias delivers	Send to each old alias and confirm it lands in the right inbox.
Outlook users are sorted	They move to Gmail or install Google's Outlook sync tool. Do not assume Outlook just works.
Authentication passes	SPF, DKIM and DMARC pass on a received message. You cannot test DKIM by emailing yourself.

06 What you can undo, and what you cannot

The copy, and testing in Workspace	Reversible. Microsoft is only read from, never changed.
The MX change	Reversible. You can point it back while the Microsoft mailboxes still exist.
Deleting mailboxes, dropping licences, letting the subscription lapse	The steps with no undo. Do them last, after a verification window, never on switch day.

Keep Microsoft live until you are sure. The copy cannot harm the Microsoft side, so the only way to lose anything is to tear down the old subscription before you have checked the new one. Keep it running, licensed and untouched through the switch and the checks afterwards.

Rather hand this over? We move small-business email between Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace, both directions, as a paid service: the copy, the switch, rebuilding shared mailboxes and groups the way each system wants them, and the authentication afterwards. The guide is free either way, and we will tell you honestly if you are better off staying put. info@xsquare.com.sg · xsquare.com.sg/google-workspace