MIGRATION PLAYBOOK · EMAIL AND DOMAINS

How to migrate from Exchange Server to Google Workspace

Google has two tools for on-premises Exchange: GWMME, a Windows app that copies email, calendars and contacts, and Google Workspace Migrate for larger estates. Pick one, pilot, copy in advance, switch MX, then run a final pass.

Updated 4 Nov 2026 4 phases 6 detailed steps 6 official sources

START HERE

How do you migrate from Exchange Server to Google Workspace?

SHORT ANSWER

This moves company email, calendars and contacts from your own Exchange server to Gmail and Google Calendar. A Google tool running on a Windows computer or server reads each mailbox and copies it into Google Workspace while people keep working.

- **Recommended route:** GWMME from a Windows computer, in batches, with a final pass after the MX change
- **Order:** Set up Google Workspace first, run diagnostics and a pilot, copy history, switch MX, then run a final pass.
- **4 phases:** Prepare, Pilot, Bulk copy and Cut over.
- **You're done when:** Every mailbox is in Gmail, with reports showing no unexplained failures.

Then you point your domain's mail to Google, run a final copy, and switch users to Gmail.

RECOMMENDED ROUTE

GWMME from a Windows computer, in batches, with a final pass after the MX change

It supports Exchange 2000 to 2019, moves email, calendar and contacts, and runs without extra servers.

▼ **Other options and when to use them**

- **Google Workspace Migrate**
  : Thousands of mailboxes, or you also need tasks, filters, signatures and public folders migrated, on Exchange 2010 or later.
- **Third-party migration tool**
  : You want scheduling, reporting and support across many mailboxes from one console.

TOOLS FOR THIS PLAN

Not sure which route?
Answer 4 quick questions

Are you ready?
22-question readiness check

Plan your dates
Dated countdown you can add to your calendar

Compare options
Google Workspace vs Microsoft 365

Check your DNS
MX, SPF, DKIM and DMARC lookup

New to the jargon?
Plain-English migration glossary

ORDER TO MIGRATE IN, AND WHY

Set up Google Workspace first, run diagnostics and a pilot, copy history, switch MX, then run a final pass.

1. **Google users, groups and verified domain**
   The tools copy into existing accounts.
2. **Migration computer with Outlook and Exchange admin rights**
   GWMME runs on Windows and reads Exchange as an admin with Receive As.
3. **Pilot of a few mailboxes**
   Shows what moves and how long it takes.
4. **Full copy in batches**
   Moves history while Exchange still receives mail.
5. **MX change, then final pass**
   Copies mail that arrived during the switch.
6. **Recreate rules and signatures**
   GWMME does not migrate them.

SETTINGS CHECKLIST: DECIDE THESE BEFORE YOU COPY

Built-in and third-party tools treat these differently. Tick each one off once you have decided.

Download this checklist (Excel)

- [ ] **Which Google tool**

  GWMME or Google Workspace Migrate.

  ▼ How each tool handles it

Built-in method	GWMME: Exchange 2000 to 2019, runs on Windows with 32-bit Outlook. Google Workspace Migrate: Exchange 2010 to 2019, needs EWS and TLS 1.2, aimed at enterprise customers on supported editions.

  Tip: For a few hundred mailboxes or fewer, GWMME is usually enough.

  Google Workspace Migrate Help: Exchange requirements

- [ ] **What GWMME leaves behind**

  What users must recreate.

  ▼ How each tool handles it

Built-in method	GWMME: does not migrate server or client rules, signatures, category assignments, notes, tasks or conferencing links. Messages with attachments over 25 MB and folders with paths over 225 characters do not migrate.

  Tip: Ask users to note their rules and signatures before cutover.

  Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?

- [ ] **Shared mailboxes and public folders**

  Where shared content goes.

  ▼ How each tool handles it

Built-in method	GWMME: shared mailboxes migrate as regular mailboxes, and you can turn on Gmail delegation after. Public folder content can go to Google Groups.

  Tip: Decide which shared mailboxes become Google Groups instead.

  Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?

- [ ] **Migration computer**

Where GWMME runs.

▼ **How each tool handles it**

Built-in method	GWMME: Windows Server 2008 to 2022, or Windows 7 to 11, with 32-bit Outlook 2003 to 2021. 64-bit Outlook is not supported.

Tip: Use a dedicated server near Exchange to keep copy speeds up.

Google Workspace Admin Help: GWMME system requirements

THE PLAN, PHASE BY PHASE

1 Prepare Week 1

- Verify the domain and create users and groups in Google.
- Build the migration computer with 32-bit Outlook and GWMME.
- Grant the Exchange admin account Receive As.

Watch out: 64-bit Outlook is not supported by GWMME.

WAYS AROUND IT

- Install 32-bit Outlook on the migration computer.

Show the detailed steps (2) →

2 Pilot Week 1 to 2

Run diagnostics and an estimate.

Migrate a few mailboxes and check mail, calendar and contacts.

Watch out: Messages with attachments over 25 MB do not migrate.

WAYS AROUND IT

- Ask users to save large attachments to Drive.

Show the detailed steps (2) →

3 Bulk copy Weeks 2 to 3

Migrate in batches from the control CSV.

Review the

reports and rerun failures.

> **Watch out:** Folders with paths over 225 characters do not migrate.
>
> **WAYS AROUND IT**
>
> - Shorten deep folder names before the copy.

Show the detailed steps (2) →

4 Cut over

Cutover weekend

Change MX records to Google.

Run a final pass without the option to overwrite.

Switch users to Gmail and recreate rules and signatures.

> **Watch out:** "Migrate all data" overwrites existing data.
>
> **WAYS AROUND IT**
>
> - Leave it unticked for the final pass.

Turn this phase into dated tasks with the cutover planner

Check your DNS records before and after the change

Show the detailed steps (2) →

You are finished when

- Every mailbox is in Gmail, with reports showing no unexplained failures.
- MX points to Google and mail flows.
- Users have recreated rules and signatures.
- Exchange is decommissioned after a fallback period.

CLICK BY CLICK

What does each step involve?

Open a part when you reach it in the plan. Each step says where to go, what to do and what you should see.

About this migration — What it covers, limits at a glance

On-premises Exchange does not use Google's Admin console data import, which covers Exchange Online. Instead Google offers Google Workspace Migration for Microsoft Exchange (GWMME), a Windows tool, and Google Workspace Migrate, a server-based tool for enterprise migrations. Both move email, calendars and contacts; they differ in scale and in what else they carry.
Still on Exchange 2016 or 2019? See Exchange end of support for your other options. Moving to Microsoft 365 instead? See Exchange to Exchange Online.

SMALL TO MEDIUM **GWMME, a Windows app (Exchange 2000 to 2019)**	LARGE **Google Workspace Migrate (Exchange 2010 to 2019, via EWS)**	GWMME MOVES **Email, calendar and contacts**
GWMME DOES NOT MOVE **Rules, signatures, tasks, notes**	PUBLIC FOLDERS **To Google Groups**	EXCHANGE PERMISSION FOR GWMME **Receive As (Exchange 2007 to 2019)**

1 What do you need before you migrate from Exchange Server to Google Workspace?

Need	Details	Where to get it
Google Workspace super administrator	Used to authorise GWMME.	Google Admin console
Exchange admin account	Receive As permission on Exchange 2007 to 2019.	Exchange admin centre or Exchange Management Shell
Windows migration computer	Supported Windows with 32-bit Outlook.	Your server team
Control CSV	Maps Exchange users to Google accounts.	The identity mapping template
DNS access	To change MX records.	Your DNS host

2 Set up GWMME

2 steps

1

Grant Receive As

Where: Exchange Management Shell

Give the migration admin account Receive As permission on the mailbox databases, as Google's requirements list for Exchange 2007 to 2019.

```
Get-MailboxDatabase | Add-ADPermission -User "migadmin" -ExtendedRights Receive-As
```

✓ **You should see:** The account can open any mailbox.

2

Install and authorise GWMME

Where: Migration computer

Install GWMME, complete its authorisation to get the service account JSON file, and create an Outlook profile for the admin account if you use Exchange 2016 or later.

✓ **You should see:** GWMME opens and accepts the JSON file.

3 Run diagnostics, a pilot and the bulk copy

2 steps

1

Configure the server

Where: Start > Google Workspace Migration > Google Workspace Migration for Microsoft Exchange

Set Server Type to Exchange, choose the Outlook admin profile (or host and admin user for older versions), then enter the Google domain, JSON path and super admin email.

✓ **You should see:** GWMME connects to both sides.

2

Run diagnostics, then migrate

Where: GWMME > data and options

Select email, calendar and contacts and the control CSV. Run **Diagnostics** and **Estimate** first, then **Migrate** for the pilot, then the batches.

✓ **You should see:** Mail, events and contacts appear in Google.

4 Switch mail and run the final pass

2 steps

1

Change MX

Where: Your DNS host

Point MX to Google. See change MX records and DNS and email cutover.

✓ **You should see:** New mail arrives in Gmail.

2

Final pass

Where: GWMME

Run the migration again for all users with **Migrate all data** left unticked, so only new items copy.

✓ **You should see:** Recent messages appear in Gmail.

WORTH KNOWING

What can go wrong, and how do you avoid it?

The detail behind the plan: options compared, and what experienced engineers check first. Tap any item.

Compare all the ways to do this

3 options

GWMME

MEDIUM EFFORT

Best for: Small and medium organisations on any Exchange from 2000 to 2019

- + Email, calendar and contacts
- + No extra servers
- + Supports old Exchange versions
- – No rules, signatures or tasks
- – Needs 32-bit Outlook

Read more →

Google Workspace Migrate

HIGH EFFORT

Best for: Large estates on Exchange 2010 to 2019

- + Filters, signatures and tasks
- + Public folders to Groups
- + Scales across servers
- – Enterprise customers only
- – More setup

Read more →

Third-party tool

MEDIUM EFFORT

Best for: Central scheduling and support

- + One console for many mailboxes
- – Not a Google tool

OUR ADVICE

Use GWMME unless you have thousands of mailboxes or need tasks, filters and signatures moved, in which case check whether you qualify for Google Workspace Migrate.

Rules and signatures do not move with GWMME

USER IMPACT –

Server and client rules and signatures are not migrated; Gmail filters and signatures must be recreated.

WHAT TO DO

Send users a checklist before cutover.

Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?

Large attachments are skipped

USER IMPACT –

Messages with attachments larger than 25 MB do not migrate with GWMME.

WHAT TO DO

Check reports and ask users to save large files to Drive.

Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?

Google Workspace Migrate moves more, with more setup

SAVES TIME

It also carries filters, signatures, vacation responder, tasks and public folders, but needs Exchange 2010 or later, EWS and TLS 1.2.

WHAT TO DO

Choose it for larger estates that need those items.

Google Workspace Migrate Help: Supported and unsupported features for Exchange

Workspace Migrate is for enterprise customers

COST LEVER

Google targets Google Workspace Migrate at enterprise and corporate customers on certain editions.

WHAT TO DO

Check eligibility before planning around it.

Google Workspace Migrate Help: Is Google Workspace Migrate right for my organization?

Calendar sharing has limits

USER IMPACT

With GWMME, calendars other than the default migrate for the owner but not for others who had access.

WHAT TO DO

Reshare important calendars in Google after migration.

Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?

FINISH SAFELY

How do you check it worked, or roll back?

Full validation checklist

4 checks

Run these before you declare the migration complete. Record the results in the data validation report.

Check	How to check	What good looks like
Every mailbox migrated	Check GWMME reports against the control CSV.	No unexplained failures.
Item counts	Compare folder counts for a sample of users.	Counts match allowing for skipped items.
Calendars	Check recurring meetings and attendees for pilot users.	Events and attendees present.
Mail flow	Send external test mail.	It arrives in Gmail.

Rollback plan

If it goes wrong

ROLL BACK IF

- Mail does not arrive in Gmail after the MX change
- Calendars or mail are missing for many users

POINT OF NO RETURN

GWMME copies data and leaves Exchange in place. Until you decommission Exchange, rollback is pointing MX back.

1

Point MX back

Where: Your DNS host

Restore the Exchange MX records.

✓ **You should see:** Mail arrives in Exchange again.

2

Tell users

Where: Email or chat

Ask users to keep working in Outlook on Exchange.

✓ **You should see:** Nobody works in two places.

Agree the triggers and who decides before the go / no-go meeting. Use the rollback plan template.

Common problems and fixes

4 errors

`GWMME cannot open a mailbox`

Cause: The admin account lacks Receive As.

Fix: Grant Receive As on the database and wait for it to apply.

`GWMME will not start with Outlook`

Cause: 64-bit Outlook installed.

Fix: Use 32-bit Outlook on the migration computer.

`Some messages missing`

Cause: Attachments over 25 MB, or deep folder paths.

Fix: Check the report; save large attachments to Drive and shorten folder names.

`RBAC error in Google Workspace Migrate`

Cause: Role changes not yet applied.

Fix: Wait a few hours and retry, as Google advises.

Search the full error library →

FAQ

Frequently asked questions

Can the Admin console data import move on-premises Exchange?

No. It covers Exchange Online. Use GWMME or Google Workspace Migrate for Exchange Server.

Does GWMME move calendars and contacts?

Yes, along with email.

Do public folders migrate?

Their content can go to Google Groups.

Do Outlook rules migrate?

Not with GWMME. Google Workspace Migrate supports filters.

SOURCES

Official sources

6 official pages this guide is based on

Vendors change limits and features, so confirm details on the source before you rely on them. Last checked 4 Nov 2026.

- Google Workspace Admin Help: Migrate data from Exchange
- Google Workspace Admin Help: GWMME system requirements
- Google Workspace Admin Help: What's migrated with GWMME?
- Google Workspace Migrate Help: Exchange requirements
- Google Workspace Migrate Help: Supported and unsupported features for Exchange

- Google Workspace Migrate Help: Is Google Workspace Migrate right for my organiz...