Migrating a POP Mailbox in Outlook

Overview

This article describes how to migrate a user from an email provider configured with **POP** in Microsoft Outlook to a **new email provider**, **using the same email address**, while ensuring that **no existing emails are lost**.

POP accounts store downloaded email messages **locally** in Outlook data files (`.pst`). As a result, special care must be taken when changing providers to preserve historical email.

Scope and Assumptions

- The user is using **Microsoft Outlook**
- The existing email account is configured as **POP**
- Emails have been downloaded and stored locally in an Outlook data file (`.pst`)
- The user is switching to a new email provider and uses the same email address
- The goal is to retain access to all existing and future emails
- A new Outlook profile will be created

Key Principle

Emails retrieved via POP are stored in a local Outlook data file (`.pst`).
As long as this data file is preserved, no emails will be lost—even if the original account is removed.

Step 1: Back Up Existing Outlook Data

> Before making any changes, create a full backup of the existing Outlook data file.

Method 1: Manual File Backup (Recommended)

1. Open Outlook
2. Go to **File → Account Settings → Account Settings**
3. Select the **Data Files** tab
4. Note the file path of the active `.pst` file
5. Close Outlook
6. Copy the `.pst` file to a secure location (external drive or cloud storage)

Method 2: Export via Outlook

1. Open Outlook
2. Go to **File → Open & Export → Import/Export**
3. Select **Export to a file**
4. Choose **Outlook Data File (.pst)**
5. Export all folders to a new `.pst` file

Retain the backup for recovery purposes.

> Do not proceed until the backup is confirmed.

Step 2: Create a New Outlook Profile

> Do not remove the existing POP account at this stage.

> A new **profile** is required because the same email address cannot be added twice within a single Outlook profile.

1. Close Outlook
2. Open **Control Panel → Mail**
3. Select **Show Profiles**
4. Click **Add**
5. Enter a descriptive name for the new profile
6. Add the email account for the new provider
7. Complete account configuration and allow Outlook to open

Step 3: Attach the Existing PST File

After the new profile is created, reattach the historical email data.

1. Open Outlook using the new profile
2. Go to **File → Open → Outlook Data File**
3. Browse to the backed-up `.pst` file
4. Select the file and open it

The PST will appear as an additional mailbox in the folder list.

Step 4: Configure Default Settings

1. Go to **File → Account Settings**
2. Set the new provider's account as the **default account**
3. Optionally rename the attached PST (e.g., "Archive – Legacy Email")

This ensures new email is delivered correctly while historical email remains accessible.

Step 5: Validate Email Access

Confirm the following before removing the old profile:

- New email is sending and receiving correctly
- Historical emails are visible in the attached PST
- Email search works as expected
- Folder structure is intact

Step 6: Remove the Old Outlook Profile (Optional)

Once validation is complete, the old profile can be removed.

1. Close Outlook
2. Open **Control Panel → Mail**
3. Select **Show Profiles**
4. Select the old profile
5. Click **Remove**

Removing the profile does not delete the PST file unless it is manually deleted from disk.

Best Practices and Warnings

- Always back up PST files before profile changes
- Do not delete PST files unless a verified backup exists
- Retain backups for at least 30 days after migration
- Avoid relying on POP servers to retain historical email

Validation Checklist

- PST file backed up and verified
- New Outlook profile created successfully
- New provider account functioning correctly
- Historical email accessible via attached PST
- Old profile removed only after confirmation

Conclusion

Migrating from a POP-based email provider to a new provider in Outlook can be completed without data loss by preserving the Outlook data file and carefully sequencing account changes. The recommended approach is to retain the existing PST as an archive while transitioning new mail to the new provider.

Revision #1
Created 23 January 2026 15:25:15 by Admin
Updated 23 January 2026 15:38:53 by Admin