

# Apollo's 2024 Email Deliverability Checklist

1/3



## Recommended overall approach:

Go for quality emails over quantity. You might think it's one message but your recipient is getting multiple outreach emails a day and can click "spam" on a low-effort email.

- Personalize emails by using your own research, Apollo's data and personalization features, and leveraging more segmentation in your lists.
- Write and send emails like a real person — relevant and not in bulk.
- Email deliverability is never a one-and-done, it's an ongoing process!

## Authentication & Domains

You may need your IT, engineering, or web team to complete these steps. Are you a founder or on a small team? We've got all the docs h for you here.

- Set up [SPF](#), [DKIM](#), and [DMARC](#) records for all your sending domains.
  - Not sure if this was set up already or correctly? Click "[Run diagnostics](#)" in the Engage tab of Apollo to make sure!
  - Make sure you're not sending cold emails from your company's primary domain. If you end up getting spam-blocked, the whole company won't be able to communicate with anyone. Choose a domain that relates to your primary business domain. (Example: heyapollo.io instead of apollo.io).
- Set up a [custom tracking subdomain](#) (for example, mail.apollo.io instead of apollo.io) to use for tracking opens and clicks.
- Set up [Google Postmaster Tools](#) and [Microsoft SNDS](#) to monitor domain reputation.

## Mailbox Setup

Link your mailbox to Apollo. The guided setup will walk you through steps to:

- Set up your email signature. Make it information-rich (full name, title, company address) to build trust.
- Set up [sending limits](#) for the linked mailbox. This helps your email volume look more like a real person. Our recommended sending limits (and default settings) are:
  - 50 emails sent per day (can be higher if your campaigns are getting a >5% reply rate and you have a high domain reputation)
  - 6 emails sent per hour
  - 600 seconds delay between emails
- Add an [opt-out/unsubscribe link](#). (This is different from the one-click unsubscribe header)
- Enable [open tracking](#). You can turn on click tracking in the General Mailbox Settings (below).
- If you haven't already done so, the setup process will also walk you through adding a custom tracking subdomain and configuring your domain authentication.

## General Mailbox Settings

- In your [General Settings page](#) under "Email Settings":
  - Turn on [one-click unsubscribe headers](#)
  - Turn on [click tracking](#) (this is the only way we can help you monitor your email engagement and prevent low engagement from turning into a high spam complaint rate)
- Set up [threshold settings](#) for Sequence Alerts, so you get notified when a sequence performs under minimum targets

## Use good targeting and clean data

- Only add [verified email addresses](#) to sequences.
- Other ways to optimize deliverability are to filter for leads who:
  - [Last updated in Apollo within 3 months](#)
  - [Opened emails](#) sent from Apollo in the past
  - Marked as [likely to engage](#) (available only on paid plans)
  - Have shown [buying intent](#)
- Limit how many recipients you target at the same company. One email to a server isn't as concerning to the spam filter as dozens of emails.
- Avoid adding contacts with conflicts to a sequence, like [contacts already in multiple sequences](#)
- Create [Sequence Rulesets](#) to automatically exclude leads based on [contact or account stage](#) and set a sequence-level maximum # of emails to send in 24 hours. (Sequence Rulesets are only available for [Professional and Custom plans](#).)

## Monitor your sender health

- Check in on your [Deliverability Score](#) and follow tips to improve your mailbox's score.
- Keep an eye on email performance [per sequence](#), and via [reports](#) and [dashboards](#). You'll now find % Spam Blocked and # Spam Blocked as available metrics.
- Monitor your domain reputation with [Google Postmaster Tools](#) and [Microsoft SNDS](#) to take advantage of all the data available to you.

## Advanced tactics

- Leverage subdomains and non-primary domains to limit the impact of deliverability disruptions and to "fence" off different types of emails (sales, marketing, transactional)
- Leverage multiple inboxes (ideally across multiple subdomains / domains) by [linking additional mailboxes to Apollo](#) and using [mailbox rotation](#) — as long as you're acting like a legitimate business sender
  - Be sure to set up SPF, DKIM, and DMARC records for these, too!
  - Before you add multiple domains make sure you're sending enough with the first domain. It's better to send emails using subdomains and accounts before using fresh domains.
- Set up [multiple A/B tests](#) for each email in a sequence — this allows you to experiment with subject lines or email content to optimize for high-engagement emails

## Email content

- Format your messages like a real person would when sending to a peer. Avoid excess design elements in your email, like:
  - Promotional images. You can use images but not in a way that feels spammy.
  - Don't go crazy with bold and italics
- Include few (if any) links
  - If you must include links, always use secured (https://) and not (http://)
  - Show the full link, instead of linking the URL to CTA text like "Click Here".
  - Don't use public link shorteners like bit.ly or link to files in Google Drive. That looks suspicious!
- Don't include attachments
- You included an opt-out link or set up one-click unsubscribe, right?

## Email warm-up

If you've just set up a new email domain, we recommend that you manually warm it up before using it for any email campaigns by following general best-practices below.

- Don't start sending until a domain/subdomain has been around for at least 30 days.
- When warming up a new email domain, gradually increase the volume of your email sends in the first couple of weeks of using your new domain.
  - Start with 25 emails/day on 1st & 2nd week, 50 emails/day on 3rd week, 100 emails/day on 4th week etc.
  - Increase volume only when you see positive engagement signals like opens and clicks, or else update and personalize your emails further.
- Ask your closest contacts to respond to your emails first. If possible, then forward them as well. (Mailbox providers track opens and clicks which helps to signal that you're sending relevant or "wanted emails.")

## Repair damaged deliverability

- Stop using the damaged domain and warm until health is restored (weeks to months)
- Rotate in a ready domain (should be properly aged and warmed)
  - If you don't have one, set up and warm additional subdomains / domains
- Use alternate methods of outreach during recovery, including calling and LinkedIn
- Reconfigure your setup to look like a legitimate business sender (by following the steps above) and continually monitor your domain reputation
- Scale up slowly (~25 additional sends per day), starting with your most receptive audiences (e.g., personal contacts, only engaged prospects —using engagement activity filters)

For professional help with your deliverability for outbound, contact Apollo partner [Senders](#).  
Have support questions? Reach out to [support@apollo.io](mailto:support@apollo.io).