

SELF-HOSTING > INSTALL & DEPLOY GUIDES >

Windows Standard Deployment

View in the help center:

<https://bitwarden.com/help/install-on-premise-windows/>

Windows Standard Deployment

This article will walk you through the procedure to install and deploy Bitwarden to your own Windows server. Bitwarden can also be installed and deployed on [Linux](#) and [macOS](#) machines. Please review Bitwarden [software release support](#) documentation.

System specifications

	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	x64, 1.4GHz	x64, 2GHz Dual Core
Memory	6GB RAM	8+ GB RAM
Storage	76GB	90GB
Docker Version	Engine 26+ and Compose ^a	Engine 26+ and Compose ^a

^a – Docker Compose can be installed via Docker Desktop, which includes Engine and Compose.

Nested virtualization

Running Bitwarden on Windows Server **requires use of nested virtualization**. Please check your Hypervisor's documentation to find out if nested virtualization is supported and how to enable it.

Tip

If you are running Windows Server as an Azure VM, we recommend a **Standard D2s v3 Virtual Machine running Windows Server 2022**, which meets all [system requirements](#) including support for nested virtualization. You will also need to select **Security Type: Standard** rather than the default **Trusted launch virtual machines**.

TL;DR

The following is a summary of the [installation procedure](#) in this article. Links in this section will jump to detailed **Installation procedure** sections:

1. **Configure your domain**. Set DNS records for a domain name pointing to your machine, and open ports 80 and 443 on the machine.
2. **Install and setup Docker Desktop** on your machine.
3. **Create a Bitwarden user & directory** from which to complete the installation.
4. Retrieve an installation id and key from <https://bitwarden.com/host> for use in installation.

For more information, see [What are my installation id and installation key used for?](#)

5. **Install Bitwarden** on your machine.

6. **Configure your environment** by adjusting settings in `\bwdata\env\global.override.env`.

Tip

At a minimum, configure the `globalSettings__mail__smtp...` variables to setup an email server for inviting and verifying users.

7. **Start your instance.**

8. Test your installation by opening your configured domain in a web browser.

9. Once deployed, we recommend regularly **backing up your server** and **checking for system updates**.

Installation procedure

Note

Using the PowerShell ISE to run PowerShell commands will cause the Bitwarden installation to fail. Completing a successful install will require PowerShell.

Configure your domain

By default, Bitwarden will be served through ports 80 (`http`) and 443 (`https`) on the host machine. Open these ports so that Bitwarden can be accessed from within and/or outside of the network. You may opt to choose different ports during installation.

Tip

If you are using Windows Firewall, Docker Desktop for Windows will not automatically add an exception for itself in Windows Firewall. Add exceptions for TCP ports 80 and 443 (or chosen alternative ports) to prevent related errors.


We recommend configuring a domain name with DNS records that point to your host machine (for example, `bitwarden.example.com`), especially if you are serving Bitwarden over the internet.

Setup Docker Desktop

Bitwarden will be deployed and run on your machine using an array of **Docker containers**. Bitwarden can be run with any Docker edition or plan. Evaluate which edition is best for your installation.

Deployment of containers is orchestrated using **Docker Compose**. Docker Compose can be installed via Docker Desktop, which includes Engine and Compose.

[Install Docker Desktop for Engine and Compose.](#)

During this setup, you must **uncheck** the **Use WSL2 instead of Hyper-V (recommended)** option. After installing, open Docker Desktop and select  **Settings** and then **Resources**. Bitwarden requires at least 4GB of RAM allocated to Docker Desktop. This setting will dedicate the RAM from Windows exclusively to Docker. As a result, setting this value too high may cause instability within Windows.

Create Bitwarden local user & directory

Open PowerShell and create a Bitwarden local user by running the following commands:

Bash

```
PS C:\> $Password = Read-Host -AsSecureString
```

After running the above command, enter the desired password in the text input dialog. After specifying a password, run the following:

Bash

```
New-LocalUser "Bitwarden" -Password $Password -Description "Bitwarden Local Admin"
```

As the newly created user, create a Bitwarden folder under **C:**:

Bash

```
PS C:\> mkdir Bitwarden
```

In Docker Desktop, navigate to **Settings** → **Resources** → **File Sharing** and add the created directory (**C:\Bitwarden**) to the Resources list. Select **Apply & Restart** to apply your changes.

Note

The Bitwarden user must be added to the docker-users group. See Docker's [documentation](#) to learn how.

We recommend logging in as the newly created user before completing all subsequent procedures in this document.

Install Bitwarden

Bitwarden provides a PowerShell Cmdlet file (**.ps1**) for easy installation on Windows machines. Complete the following steps to install Bitwarden using the Cmdlet:

Tip

If you have [created a Bitwarden user & directory](#), complete the following as the **Bitwarden** user.

1. Navigate to the [created](#) directory:

Bash

```
cd C:\Bitwarden
```

2. Run the following command to download the Bitwarden installation script (**bitwarden.ps1**):

Bash

```
Invoke-RestMethod -OutFile bitwarden.ps1 -Uri "https://func.bitwarden.com/api/dl/?app=self-host&platform=windows"
```

3. Run the installer script using the following command:

Bash

```
.\bitwarden.ps1 -install
```

4. Complete the prompts in the installer:

- **Enter the domain name for your Bitwarden instance:**

Typically, this value should be the configured DNS record.

- **Do you want to use Let's Encrypt to generate a free SSL certificate? (y/n):**

Specify **y** to generate a trusted SSL certificate using Let's Encrypt. You will be prompted to enter an email address for expiration reminders from Let's Encrypt. For more information, see [Certificate Options](#).

Alternatively, specify **n** and use the **do you have a SSL certificate to use?** option.

- **Enter your installation id:**

Retrieve an installation id using a valid email at <https://bitwarden.com/host>. For more information, see [What are my installation id and installation key used for?](#)

- **Enter your installation key:**

Retrieve an installation key using a valid email at <https://bitwarden.com/host>. For more information, see [What are my installation id and installation key used for?](#)

- **Enter your region (US/EU):**

Enter US or EU depending on the [cloud server](#) you will use to [license paid features](#), only applicable if you're connecting a self-hosted account or organization to a paid subscription.

- **Do you have a SSL certificate to use? (y/n)**

If you already have your own SSL certificate, specify **y** and place the necessary files in the **C:\Bitwarden\bwddata\ssl\<your_domain>** directory. You will be asked whether it is a trusted SSL certificate (**y/n**). For more information, see [Certificate Options](#).

Alternatively, specify **n** and use the **self-signed SSL certificate?** option, which is only recommended for testing purposes.

- **Do you want to generate a self-signed SSL certificate? (y/n):**

Specify **y** to have Bitwarden generate a self-signed certificate for you. This option is only recommended for testing. For more information, see [Certificate Options](#).

If you specify **n**, your instance will not use an SSL certificate and you will be required to front your installation with an HTTPS proxy, or else Bitwarden applications will not function properly.

Post-install configuration

Configuring your environment can involve making changes to two files; an [environment variables file](#) and an [installation file](#):

Environment variables (required)

Some features of Bitwarden are not configured by the `bitwarden.ps1` Cmdlet. Configure these settings by editing the environment file, located at `\bwdata\env\global.override.env`. **At a minimum, you should replace the values for:**

Bash

```
...
globalSettings__mail__smtp__host=<placeholder>
globalSettings__mail__smtp__port=<placeholder>
globalSettings__mail__smtp__ssl=<placeholder>
globalSettings__mail__smtp__username=<placeholder>
globalSettings__mail__smtp__password=<placeholder>
...
adminSettings__admins=
...
```

Replace `globalSettings__mail__smtp...=` placeholders to connect to the SMTP mail server that will be used to send verification emails to new users and invitations to organizations. Adding an email address to `adminSettings__admins=` will provision access to the System Administrator Portal.

After editing `global.override.env`, run the following command to apply your changes:

Bash

```
.\bitwarden.ps1 -restart
```

Installation file

The Bitwarden installation script uses settings in `.\bwdata\config.yml` to generate the necessary assets for installation. Some installation scenarios (such as installations behind a proxy with alternate ports) may require adjustments to `config.yml` that were not provided during standard installation.

Edit `config.yml` as necessary and apply your changes by running:

Bash

```
.\bitwarden.ps1 -rebuild
```

Start Bitwarden

Once you have completed all previous steps, start your Bitwarden instance by running the following command:

Bash

```
.\bitwarden.ps1 -start
```

Note

The first time you start Bitwarden it may take some time as it downloads images from Docker Hub.

Verify that all containers are running correctly:

Bash

```
docker ps
```

```
PS C:\Bitwarden> docker ps
```

CONTAINER ID	IMAGE	COMMAND	CREATED	STATUS	PORTS	NAMES
7ded54e04647	bitwarden/nginx:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	80/tcp, 0.0.0.0:80->8080/tcp, 0.0.0.0:443->8443/tcp	bitwarden-nginx
dd96a838fb94	bitwarden/admin:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-admin
8260151e801d	bitwarden/portal:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-portal
9e617bfe6f2e	bitwarden/sso:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-sso
881371a30963	bitwarden/identity:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-identity
25c66921ceb6	bitwarden/api:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-api
bd904779cdf3	bitwarden/icons:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-icons
f13f3ecc8d7b	bitwarden/mssql:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-mssql
eaf9ea842f79	bitwarden/events:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-events
860f5490b53f	bitwarden/web:2.23.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-web
2772884733c6	bitwarden/notifications:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-notifications
fa6d2d05a582	bitwarden/attachments:1.43.0	"/entrypoint.sh"	36 minutes ago	Up 36 minutes (healthy)	5000/tcp	bitwarden-attachments

List showing Healthy Containers

Congratulations! Bitwarden is now up and running at <https://your.domain.com>. Visit the web vault in your web browser to confirm that it's working.

You may now register a new account and log in. You will need to have configured **smtp** environment variables (see [Environment Variables](#)) in order to verify the email for your new account.

Tip

Once deployed, we recommend regularly [backing up your server](#) and [checking for system updates](#).

Next Steps:

- If you are planning to self-host a Bitwarden organization, see [self-host an organization](#) to get started.
- For additional information see [self hosting FAQs](#).

Start Docker on boot

Docker Desktop will only automatically start on boot if you have a logged-in RDP session. To start Docker Desktop on boot regardless of whether there is a user logged in:

Warning

Docker Desktop may take up to 15 minutes after boot to fully start and for containers to be accessible from the network.

1. Open Task Scheduler and select **Create Task...** from the Actions menu.
2. Configure the task with the following security options:
 - Set the task to use the **created Bitwarden** user account.
 - Set the task to **Run whether user is logged on or not**.
3. Select the **Triggers** tab and create the following trigger:
 - From the **Begin the task** dropdown, select **At startup**.
 - In the Advanced settings section, check the **Delay task for:** checkbox and select **1 minute** from the dropdown.
4. Select the **Actions** tab and create the following action:
 - In the Program/script input, specify **"C:\Program Files\Docker\Docker\frontend\Docker Desktop.exe"**.
5. Select **OK** to finish creating the scheduled task.

Script commands reference

The Bitwarden installation script (**bitwarden.ps1**) has the following commands available. All command must be prefixed with a switch (**-**), for example **.\bitwarden.ps1 -start**:

Command	Description
-install	Start the installer.
-start	Start all containers.
-restart	Restart all containers.
-stop	Stop all containers.
-update	Update all containers and the database.
-updatedb	Update/initialize the database.

Command	Description
-updaterun	Update the run.ps1 file.
-updateself	Update the installation script.
-updateconf	Update all containers without restarting the running instance.
-uninstall	<p>Before this command executes, you will be prompted to save database files. y will create a tarfile of your database including the most recent backup.</p> <p>Stops containers, deletes the bwd directory and all its contents, and removes ephemeral volumes. After executing, you will be asked whether you want to purge all Bitwarden images.</p>
-renewcert	Renew certificates.
-rebuild	Rebuild generated installation assets from config.yml .
-help	List all commands.