How to Export Emails to PST to Save Space in Microsoft Outlook (No Admin Credentials)

Exporting emails to a PST file in Microsoft Outlook allows you to back up your emails and free up space in your mailbox without needing administrative credentials. This guide provides step-by-step instructions for standard users using the desktop version of classic Outlook (not the new Outlook, as it does not support PST exports). These steps apply to Outlook for Microsoft 365, Outlook 2024, 2021, 2019, and 2016 on Windows.

Prerequisites

- Use the **desktop version of classic Outlook**. The new Outlook and Outlook Web App (OWA) do not support PST exports.
- Ensure your email account is added to Outlook and accessible. Contact your IT department if you cannot access your account.
- Perform a **mailbox cleanup** to remove unnecessary emails (e.g., junk mail, duplicates) before exporting to reduce PST file size:
    1. In Outlook, go to File > Info > Tools > Mailbox Cleanup.
    2. Use options like "Empty Deleted Items Folder" or "Find items larger than" to delete unneeded emails.
- Save the PST file to a location where you have write permissions (e.g., your Documents folder or an external drive). Avoid restricted folders like Program Files.
- Avoid saving the PST file to OneDrive, as it may cause sync issues.

Steps to Export Emails to PST

1. **Open Outlook**:
    - Launch the desktop version of classic Outlook.
2. **Access the Import/Export Wizard**:
    - Click File in the top-left corner of the Outlook ribbon.
    - Select Open & Export > Import/Export.
3. **Choose Export Option**:
    - In the Import and Export Wizard, select Export to a file and click Next.
    - Choose Outlook Data File (.pst) and click Next.
4. **Select the Email Account or Folder**:
    - Select the email account or specific folder (e.g., Inbox) you want to export. Only one account can be exported at a time.

- Check the Include subfolders box to export all subfolders (e.g., Sent Items, Calendar, Contacts).
- Click Next.

5. **Choose the Save Location and File Name**:
   - Click Browse to select a folder where you have write permissions (e.g., Documents or an external drive).
   - Enter a file name (e.g., EmailBackup2025.pst).
   - If exporting to an existing PST file, under Options, choose whether to replace duplicates, allow duplicates, or skip duplicates.
   - Click OK, then Next.
6. **Set a Password (Optional)**:
   - If you want to protect the PST file, enter and verify a password. You'll need this password to open the file later.
   - If no password is needed, leave the fields blank and click OK.
7. **Complete the Export**:
   - Click Finish. Outlook will begin exporting the emails immediately unless a new PST file or password is used, in which case it may prompt for confirmation.
   - The export duration depends on the mailbox size.

Post-Export Steps to Save Space

- **Delete Exported Emails (Optional)**:
  - After verifying the PST file contains your emails, delete the exported emails from Outlook to free up space:
    1. Select the folder (e.g., Inbox), highlight emails, and press Delete.
    2. Empty the Deleted Items folder by right-clicking it and selecting Empty Folder.
- **Verify the PST File**:
  - To ensure the export worked, open the PST file in Outlook:
    1. Go to File > Open & Export > Open Outlook Data File.
    2. Browse to the PST file, select it, and click Open.
    3. Check that emails, attachments, and other items are intact.
- **Store the PST File Safely**:

- Save the PST file on an external drive or a local folder where you have permissions. Avoid network drives, as they can cause corruption.

Notes and Limitations

- **What's Included**: The PST file includes emails, attachments, calendar items, contacts, and tasks. It does not include metadata like folder properties or message rules.
- **Cached Exchange Mode**: If using Cached Exchange Mode, only cached items are exported. Ensure emails are synced (visible in Outlook) before exporting.
- **Large PST Files**: PST files have size limits (20 GB for Outlook 2007, 50 GB for Outlook 2010 and later). Large files may slow Outlook. Use the Archive feature to manage size.
- **New Outlook Limitation**: Exporting to PST is not supported in the new Outlook app (version 1.2023.526.100 and later). Switch to classic Outlook by disabling the "New Outlook" toggle in the app.
- **Outlook Web App (OWA)**: OWA does not support direct PST exports. Use classic Outlook to export.
- **Freeing Up Space**: Deleting emails after exporting reclaims storage, but the amount depends on email size (e.g., emails with attachments free up more space).
- **Restrictions**: Without admin credentials, you cannot adjust sync settings (e.g., "Mail to keep offline" slider) or access restricted accounts. Only export emails already synced to your Outlook client.

Tips for Ongoing Space Management

- Regularly clean up large or old emails, junk mail, and attachments using Mailbox Cleanup.
- For IMAP or Exchange accounts, move emails to a PST file to reduce server storage, as these accounts sync with the server.
- Contact your IT department if you encounter access issues or need to export emails from restricted accounts.

By exporting emails to a PST file and deleting them from Outlook, you can reduce your mailbox size while keeping a secure backup of your data. For further details, refer to Microsoft's official guide: Export or backup email, contacts, and calendar to an Outlook .pst file.