

PST Decommissioning FAQ

1) What is a PST file?

A PST file is an offline copy of messaging data (email, contacts, calendar information, etc.), which can be opened in your Outlook client; PSTs were introduced as a method of locally storing messaging data back when mailbox size limits were under 1 GB. They are based on an obsolete technology that is being phased out by Microsoft.

2) Why should I import my PST file(s) to my online mailbox?

PST files are prone to becoming corrupt; PSTs stored on network shares are even more likely to become corrupt. PST files on local drives are not backed up, and networked PST files may not back up correctly if the file is open in Outlook. PST files are not available in webmail or in Outlook for mobile devices.

PST files will soon become read only and they eventually will no longer be supported by the COT, and will not be able to be opened.

Importing your PST to your online mailbox solves these issues. In O365, your mailbox has a 100GB mailbox limit, and your archive mailbox has an unlimited size. Your online mailbox is stored safely in redundant Microsoft data centers (“the cloud”), and it can be easily accessed through the Outlook client, through webmail or through the Outlook app on a mobile device.

3) How will I access my PST file once it has been imported to my online mailbox?

Once imported, your PST data will be available in Outlook in the mail folder you created during the import process. Your online mailbox is accessible through Outlook, webmail, and the Outlook app on your mobile devices. Your online archive mailbox (if you chose to use that) is available through Outlook and webmail.

4) Can I import my PST file directly from its location on a network share?

We strongly recommend moving your PST to your local hard drive before you import it into your online mailbox, as importing from a network share could cause problems that could make your import fail.

5) What if I have an Outlook rule to move or deliver mail to a PST file?

Before you import your PST, disable any rules you have that move or copy email to your PST. In Outlook, select Rules, Manage Rules & Alerts and then deselect any rules that move or copy mail to a PST file.

6) How can I find any .PST Files that I may have?

In Outlook, click the “File” menu, choose the “Account Settings” dropdown menu, and then click “Account Settings”, then select the “Data Files” tab, where the location of your PST will be listed.

7) Which of my .PST files should I upload to my online mailbox?

PST files will soon become read only, and eventually they will not be supported by COT. Therefore, any PST file that contains information that you need to save should be uploaded to your email account; please refer to your Cabinet’s retention policy. Duplicate PST files, any older PSTs that you have determined that you no longer need access to and any .PST files that are to be deleted need not be uploaded to your mailbox.

8) What methods can I use to import my PST data to my online mailbox?

There are 2 methods used to import PST files - you can Drag and Drop folders and items from a PST to a folder you create in your online mailbox, or you can use the Outlook Import and Export Wizard to import your PST or folders from your PST to a folder you create in your online mailbox. The Drag and Drop method works best when importing a few folders, or a smaller PST file. The Import and Export Wizard works best when importing larger PST files.

- 9) Will the importation of my PSTs affect the performance of my Outlook client?

While importing a PST, your Outlook client will not be available so we suggest that you access your email through webmail.

- 10) How long should it take to import a PST?

Import times vary widely; it can take several minutes to import a very small PST file, or more than a day to import much larger PST files. These times will vary depending on the size of the PST and your site's network bandwidth.

- 11) What do I do if I have problems importing my PST?

If you have any problems importing your PST, please contact the service desk.

- 12) How can I fix the issue of my imported PST showing a link for my emails, instead of the email?

Check the cache setting in Outlook, and slide the Cache bar from "1 year" to "All", then restart Outlook. Once Outlook completes syncing with your online mailbox, the email should appear.

- 13) What do I do if I find that my .PST file is corrupted?

If you find out that your PST is corrupted, please contact the service desk; in some cases they can repair the PST, or they may be able to restore a PST from backup.