503 **503.my.id**
THE 503 ERROR DIAGNOSTIC CENTER

# WordPress 503 Emergency Checklist

**WordPress 503s are usually a stuck maintenance file or one bad plugin.** Work down this page in order — tick each box as you go. Companion to: 503.my.id/fix-503-error-wordpress/

## First Move

- [ ] Wait 2 minutes — an update may be finishing.

## The 30-Second Checks

- [ ] Is the whole site down, or only the front end? Try `/wp-admin/`. WordPress answers maintenance mode there too.
- [ ] Did an update run in the last fifteen minutes? Check your email and the dashboard's update history when it returns.
- [ ] Is it only you? Run the URL through our 503 Checker (503.my.id/tools/503-checker/).

## Cause 1: Stuck in Maintenance Mode (`.maintenance`)

- [ ] Open your hosting file manager (or FTP) at the site root.
- [ ] Show hidden files, then find `.maintenance`.
- [ ] Rename it to `.maintenance.off` — reversible, unlike deleting.
- [ ] Reload the site. A healthy site returns 200 immediately.
- [ ] Re-run the interrupted update from the dashboard, and let it finish.

> One precision most guides skip: the timestamp inside expires. WordPress stops honouring the file ten minutes after that timestamp. Still down after ten minutes? Something else is also wrong. Move to Cause 2 instead of waiting longer.

## Cause 2: A Plugin or Theme Is Overloading PHP

- [ ] In the file manager, open `wp-content`.
- [ ] Rename `plugins` to `plugins.off`. Every plugin is now inactive.
- [ ] Reload. If the site returns, the cause is inside that folder.
- [ ] Rename it back, then rename single plugin folders, one at a time.
- [ ] The rename that brings the 503 back names your culprit.
- [ ] Do the same with `themes` if plugins come back clean. Activate a default theme (Twenty Twenty-Five) and retest.

> **Never bisect on a live checkout.** WooCommerce stores deserve a staging copy.

## Cause 3: PHP Memory and Worker Limits on Shared Hosting

- [ ] Check the panel graph at the failing minutes: your panel's Resource Usage graph shows the ceiling being hit.
- [ ] On your own server, the same wall is `pm.max_children` — see the PHP-FPM 503 guide (503.my.id/fix-503-php-fpm-pool-full/).

## Prevent the Next WordPress 503

- [ ] Update one thing at a time, with time to watch it finish.
- [ ] Keep a staging copy for anything that touches checkout or login.
- [ ] Back up before updates, and keep file-manager access tested.