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Sending through SMTP Relay from Node.js and Python: Nodemailer and smtplib, with STARTTLS

Node.js, Python & Docker

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Sending through SMTP Relay from Node.js and Python: Nodemailer and smtplib, with STARTTLS

Node.js, Python & Docker Created on **November 13, 2026** 2 min read



The short answer: in Node.js you use **Nodemailer**; in Python, the built-in **smtplib** (or the Django e-mail settings). On port **587**, the connection starts unencrypted and switches to encrypted with **STARTTLS**; on **465**, it is encrypted from the start. The credential details go in environment variables, never written in the code.

Node.js with Nodemailer

```
const nodemailer = require("nodemailer");
const t = nodemailer.createTransport({
host: process.env.SMTP_HOST, port: 587, secure: false, requireTLS: true,
auth: { user: process.env.SMTP_USER, pass: process.env.SMTP_PASSWORD },
});
await t.sendMail({ from: "no-reply@yourcompany.com", to: "ana@example.com",
subject: "Order confirmed", text: "Thank you for your order." });
```

On port 587, `secure: false` and `requireTLS: true` : Nodemailer performs STARTTLS and refuses to carry on unencrypted. On port 465, change to `port: 465, secure: true` .

Python with smtplib

```
import os, smtplib
from email.message import EmailMessage
m = EmailMessage()
m["From"], m["To"] = "no-reply@yourcompany.com", "ana@example.com"
m["Subject"] = "Order confirmed"
m.set_content("Thank you for your order.")
with smtplib.SMTP(os.environ["SMTP_HOST"], 587) as s:
s.starttls()
s.login(os.environ["SMTP_USER"], os.environ["SMTP_PASSWORD"])
s.send_message(m)
```

For port 465 use `smtplib.SMTP_SSL(host, 465)` and drop the `starttls()` line.

Django

```
EMAIL_BACKEND = "django.core.mail.backends.smtp.EmailBackend"
EMAIL_HOST = os.environ["SMTP_HOST"]
EMAIL_PORT = 587
EMAIL_USE_TLS = True
EMAIL_HOST_USER = os.environ["SMTP_USER"]
EMAIL_HOST_PASSWORD = os.environ["SMTP_PASSWORD"]
DEFAULT_FROM_EMAIL = "no-reply@yourcompany.com"
```

For port 465, `EMAIL_PORT = 465` and `EMAIL_USE_SSL = True` instead of `EMAIL_USE_TLS`. **Never both on at the same time.**

Swapping port and encryption is the most common mistake here.
`Secure: true` on port 587, or `starttls()` on 465, gives a TLS error or a connection that never answers. The rule: **587 with STARTTLS, 465 with TLS.**

Where to keep the details

For Node.js and Python applications on our hosting, environment variables are set on the application page in cPanel (Setup Node.js App or Setup Python App). On a VPS, in a .env file outside the public folder or in the service that starts the application. One credential per application: see **one credential per program**.

Automation tools speak SMTP too.
In n8n, for example, the send e-mail node takes these same details: see **connecting n8n to e-mail**.

NEED A HAND?

Application still not sending? Open a ticket with the full error message, without the password.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **SMTP Relay in Laravel and other PHP frameworks: the .env settings and a first test e-mail** →
- **Testing an SMTP credential before going live: a test e-mail from the command line** →
- **SMTP Relay in any program: what Host, Port, Encryption, Username and From mean on each screen** →

Connecting n8n to e-mail: SMTP and IMAP →

A scheduled report by e-mail: a script, a cron job and an SMTP account →

SMTP Relay not sending: connection, TLS, login, sender and recipient problems, one by one →

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