



Account Safety Setup Guide.

Everything that can get a brand-new social account restricted, platform by platform, and how to avoid it. Read it once before you make a single account. It takes 15 minutes and it protects the name you are building on.

The one thing to understand first: a new account has no history. Most founders do not lose accounts to hackers. They lose them in the first week, by setting them up in a way the platform reads as a bot or a spammer: a VPN at sign-up, five accounts in ten minutes, a burst of follows on day one, or a login from a new country. With no history, the platform gives the account no benefit of the doubt.

FOR EVERY PLATFORM

The 12 rules

These apply to Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest and X. The platform sections only add what is different.

01 VPN off, every time

A VPN sends your traffic through a shared internet address that thousands of people (and spammers) also use, often in another country. Turn off any VPN app, "Private Relay" on iPhone, and work or school VPNs before you sign up or log in to a brand account.

02 Your own phone, your own internet

Sign up from your own phone on your home Wi-Fi or mobile data. Not hotel, café, airport or coworking Wi-Fi, and not a borrowed laptop. Keep using the same phone and connection for the first few weeks.

03 One account at a time

Make one account, finish it, and wait at least a few hours (a day is better) before the next. Five sign-ups in ten minutes from one phone looks like a bot.

04 Real details, the same everywhere

Your real name on any personal profile and your real birthday. You must be 18 or older, and the birthday must match on every platform. A missing or odd birthday can trigger an age check that locks the account.

05 The brand Gmail is the login

Open every account with the free Gmail named after your brand. Every password lives in a password manager (1Password, Bitwarden, Apple Passwords). Never reuse a password.

06 2-step login on day one

Use an authenticator app (Google Authenticator, Authy, 1Password) or a passkey. Text-message codes are the weakest option because phone numbers can be stolen. Save the backup codes the moment the platform shows them.

07 Warm it up for 7 days

Use each new account like a normal person first: finish the profile, watch, like a few posts, follow 10 to 20 accounts your customer would follow, leave a few real comments. Then start posting. No platform publishes exact limits, so stay well under anything that feels like a lot.

08 No automation, bots or AI inside

No auto-follow, auto-like or auto-DM tools, no growth services, and never give an app or an AI agent your password. Do not let ChatGPT, Claude or any browser agent log in and build your profile, especially on Instagram and Facebook. Scheduling posts through official partners (Meta Business Suite, TikTok's own scheduler, Later, Buffer) is fine.

09 Never buy followers or views

Every platform bans it, including follow-for-follow groups and engagement pods. Fake followers also hurt your reach because they never engage.

10 Link to your own website

Point your bio link at your own domain. No link shorteners like bit.ly and no links that redirect through other sites. Spammers use them, so platforms block them.

11 Pick the handle once

Changing your handle again and again looks like an account that was bought or sold. X even shows the public how many times you changed it, and once you let go of an old handle, someone else can take it.

12 Flagged? Appeal, never start over

Use the platform's own appeal or "confirm it's you" steps and wait. Do not make a new account with the same name while you appeal. Platforms treat that as getting around a restriction, and it can get every account you own shut down.

HEADS UP

If you live outside the US or travel a lot

Do not use a VPN to make your accounts look like they are in the US. Platforms check far more than your internet address: your SIM card country, phone region, app store country, GPS and past logins. A VPN changes only one of those, so the mismatch itself is what gets flagged. X shows every account's country and a VPN marker in public, Instagram and Facebook label big accounts that are based outside the US, and TikTok's rules ban hiding where an account is run from. TikTok Shop sellers must live in the country of their shop.

What to do instead: log in honestly from where you are and stay consistent (same phone, same country for weeks at a time). Aim your content and your ads at US customers. Your ad targeting decides who sees you, not your login location. When you travel, expect a "confirm it's you" check the first time you log in from a new country. Pass it. Do not fight it with a VPN.

Platform by platform

PLATFORM 1

Instagram

Your main channel for most product brands. Creator account from day one.

What you need

- Your brand Gmail and your own phone
- Your logo file (square) and your bio from The Profile Kit Builder
- An authenticator app installed

Set it up in this order

1. Sign up in the Instagram app with the brand Gmail. Pick the handle once.
2. Add your real birthday (18+). Verify the email and the phone when asked.
3. Switch to a professional account right away (Settings, then Account type and tools). Choose **Creator**, not Business: Creator gets the full music library and still connects to your Facebook Page and ad account. You can switch to Business later in one tap.
4. Turn on 2-step login with the authenticator app and save the backup codes in your password manager.
5. Add the photo, name, bio and website link in one calm sitting, then leave it.
6. Warm it up for 7 days before your first post.
7. Add it to your Meta Account (Accounts Center) with your personal Facebook profile, which you need anyway for the Facebook Page and ads.

What gets it restricted

- Mass following, unfollowing or liking, or sending lots of DMs in the first weeks
- Any app that asks for your Instagram password (growth, follower-tracking or "who viewed my profile" apps)
- Logging in through a VPN, or from several countries in a short time
- Posting the same Reel over and over, or copying other people's content
- Trending chart music on a Business account. Business accounts only get Meta's cleared music library, and other songs can get the post muted or removed
- Making a new account with the same name while an old one is under review

Good to know

- Up to 5 accounts can sit in one app, and you switch between them without logging out.
- The bio is 150 characters and you get up to 5 links. The first link gets the taps, so make it your website.
- You can change your name only twice in 14 days, and a handle you give up can be claimed by someone else.
- In 2026 Meta leaned more on automated checks, and many creators reported new accounts suspended by mistake. Appeal inside the app. Accounts linked in the same Meta Account can be affected together, so never link the brand account to a personal account that has had problems.
- Passkeys work on Instagram since April 2026 and are the strongest login protection.

PLATFORM 2

Facebook

A Page for the brand, run from your real personal profile. This is where your ads live.

What you need

- Your own real, personal Facebook profile. A Page cannot exist without a real person behind it
- The brand Gmail for the business portfolio
- A trusted second person to add as a backup admin

Set it up in this order

1. Lock down your personal profile first: 2-step login on, backup codes saved, recovery email and phone added.
2. Create the Facebook Page from your personal profile. Add the brand name, logo, bio and website.
3. Create a business portfolio at business.facebook.com (it used to be called Business Manager) with your legal business name, website and brand email.
4. Add the Page to the business portfolio, then add the Instagram account (it must be a Business or Creator account).
5. Create one ad account inside the portfolio with a payment card in the business's name. Connect Instagram to it now, even if ads are months away.
6. Add the pixel to your website and verify your domain in the portfolio.
7. Add a second admin you trust, so one locked profile never locks the whole business.

What gets it restricted

- A fake or second personal profile made just to run the brand. Meta shuts these down, and a Page whose only admin is a fake profile becomes impossible to manage
- Adding several payment cards quickly, failed payments, or a card that was used on a banned account
- Logging into the ad account from a VPN or from new countries, and sudden big jumps in daily ad budget
- Connecting the ad account to unofficial tools, scrapers or AI agents that are not approved Meta partners
- Health claims in ads (for example “clinically proven” or “anti-inflammatory”). This is the number one reason ads get rejected

Good to know

- People who visit your Page cannot see who the admins are, only how many there are and which countries they are in.
- Facebook usernames ignore dots, so a name can look free and still be taken (shopmauna opens a person called shop.mau.na).
- New ad accounts start with a daily spending limit that goes up over time if the account stays in good standing.
- Meta Verified for businesses costs extra each month and adds a badge and direct support. It is optional and does not boost reach.

PLATFORM 3

TikTok

One account per phone number. Sign up the brand with the brand Gmail.

What you need

- The brand Gmail. A phone number is optional (see the one-number rule below)
- Your 80-character bio
- An authenticator app

Set it up in this order

1. Sign up the brand account **with the brand Gmail, not a phone number**, so it does not clash with your personal TikTok.
2. Add your real birthday (18+) and verify the email.
3. Switch to a **Business account** on day one (Settings, then Account, then Switch to Business Account). This unlocks the website link at 0 followers.
4. Turn on 2-step verification with the authenticator app. Add the brand Gmail as the recovery email.
5. Add the photo, name, bio and website link in one sitting.
6. Warm it up for 7 days before posting.

What gets it restricted

- Following, liking and commenting in bursts during the first 24 to 72 hours
- Several accounts on one internet connection all posting the same videos
- Using your personal account to like, comment on and share every brand video. That can count as fake engagement
- A VPN, or a phone region, SIM card and login country that do not match. TikTok can lock region changes for a while once they are made
- Buying an "aged" account or a handle. Account trading is banned
- Popular songs on brand videos. Business accounts only get the Commercial Music Library

Good to know

- The bio is only 80 characters, and the username can only be changed about once every 30 days.
- Business accounts are not eligible for creator payouts (the Creator Rewards Program). That is fine for a brand.

THE ONE-NUMBER RULE

TikTok allows one personal or business account per phone number, and one account per email address. Here is how to handle it:

1. **Sign up the brand with the brand Gmail** instead of a phone number. This is the cleanest way.
2. **Use "Add account" in the same app** to switch between your personal and brand accounts on one phone. This is normal and allowed. Keep it to 2 or 3 accounts per phone.
3. **Want a phone number on the brand account?** Use a second real mobile number, like a second SIM or an eSIM plan.
4. **Skip internet phone numbers** like Google Voice. They are often rejected and can get stuck if the number is recycled. Never use paid "virtual SMS" numbers, because you lose account recovery when the number goes away.
5. **Later, with a team,** TikTok Organization Accounts let several people log in with their own phone or email while the company owns the account.

PLATFORM 4

YouTube

A Brand Account channel, so you can add managers without sharing a password.

What you need

- The brand Gmail
- Your own phone number for verification

Set it up in this order

1. Sign in to YouTube with the brand Gmail and create the channel as a **Brand Account** (a channel that can have more than one owner and manager). Pick your @handle.
2. Verify the channel with your phone number. This unlocks longer videos, custom thumbnails and live streaming.
3. Turn on 2-step verification on the Google account, ideally with a passkey. Add a recovery phone and email and save the backup codes.
4. Add the logo, banner, description and your website link.
5. Add anyone who helps you as a Manager. Never share the Gmail password.

What gets it restricted

- Posting the same videos on several channels you own
- Misleading titles or descriptions, spam in comments, or pretending to be another brand
- Signing in on computers you do not trust. Stolen login sessions from malware are the main way channels get taken over

Good to know

- **One phone number can verify only 2 channels per year.** If you already verified channels with your number this year, you need a different number.
- Your handle can be changed twice in 14 days. YouTube can reclaim handles, and selling them is banned.
- The grey verification check needs a very large audience. Ignore it for now.

PLATFORM 5

Pinterest

A business account, made on a computer. Claim your website on day one.

What you need

- The brand Gmail (each business account needs its own email)
- A computer. New business accounts can only be made on desktop

Set it up in this order

1. On a computer, go to Pinterest and choose "Create a business account" with the brand Gmail.
2. Add your real birthday (18+). Birthday mistakes are a known reason Pinterest shuts accounts down.
3. Claim your website on day one (Settings, then Claimed accounts). Only one Pinterest account can claim a website, so this also stops anyone else.
4. Turn on 2-step login and add the logo, name and bio.

What gets it restricted

- Automation that Pinterest has not approved
- Pinning the same link over and over, or re-uploading the same image with the same link every day
- Short links or links that redirect through other pages. Link straight to your own site
- Sending lots of messages to people you do not know

Good to know

- Some brand-new accounts get flagged as spam before they post anything. If that happens, appeal and wait.
- You cannot link a personal Pinterest account to a business account anymore, so start with a business account.

PLATFORM 6

X

Hold the name. Handles are 15 characters max, letters, numbers and underscores.

What you need

- The brand Gmail
- A handle of 15 characters or fewer, with no dots

Set it up in this order

1. Sign up with the brand Gmail and take the handle.
2. Verify the email and phone, turn on 2-step login with an authenticator app, and save the backup code.
3. Add the logo, name, bio and website link.
4. Post a few times and follow a small number of relevant accounts. Then leave it until you are ready to use it.

What gets it restricted

- Following or unfollowing lots of accounts quickly
- Posting the same thing again and again, or posting links with no words
- Running several accounts that post the same content, or any automation that has not been approved

Good to know

- Every account has a public "About this account" panel showing the country it is based in, how many times the username changed, and a VPN marker.
- Inactive handles are not released, so claim yours now.
- Paid business verification is expensive. You do not need it to hold your name.

SIDE BY SIDE

The quick compare

Pick a handle that fits the tightest limit (X, 15 characters) and it works everywhere.

PLATFORM	ACCOUNT TYPE	HANDLE LENGTH	BIO LIMIT	WATCH OUT FOR
Instagram	Creator	30 characters	150	Growth apps, trending music on a Business account
Facebook	A Page, from your real profile	Page username	n/a	Fake profiles, VPN logins to the ad account
TikTok	Business	24 characters	80	One account per phone number
YouTube	Brand Account	30 characters	n/a	2 channels per phone number per year
Pinterest	Business (made on desktop)	30 characters	n/a	Redirect links, the same pin over and over
X	Standard	15 characters	n/a	Bulk following and unfollowing

RECOVERY-PROOF

Lock every account down

Do these once, on every account, the day you make it.

☐ 2-step login on, with an authenticator app or passkey

☐ Backup codes saved in your password manager, plus one printed copy somewhere safe

☐ Recovery email and recovery phone added and confirmed

☐ The brand Gmail itself has 2-step login and a recovery phone

☐ Every password in a password manager, never in a note, a text or The Profile Setup Kit

☐ A second trusted admin on the Facebook business portfolio and the YouTube Brand Account

IF IT HAPPENS

An account gets flagged or locked

- 01** **Stop.** Do not keep logging in and out, and do not make a new account with the same name.

- 02** **Use the platform's own steps:** "confirm it's you", the appeal button or its help center. On Instagram and Facebook you may be asked for a selfie video.

- 03** **Turn off any VPN** and use the same phone and connection you signed up with.

- 04** **Wait.** Appeals can take hours or weeks. Keep a note of the date and what you submitted.

- 05** **Never pay someone who says they can "unban" your account.** They cannot, and it is a common scam.

THE QUICK CHECKLIST

Before you post anything

STEP	DONE
Read this whole guide first	☐
VPN off, own phone, home internet	☐
Brand Gmail is the login	☐
One account at a time, spaced out	☐
Real birthday, 18+, the same everywhere	☐
Email and phone verified	☐
2-step login on, backup codes saved	☐
Creator account (Instagram), Business account (TikTok), Brand Account (YouTube)	☐
Profile finished in one sitting	☐
7-day warm-up before the first post	☐
Instagram connected to the Facebook Page and the ad account	☐
Logged it all in The Profile Setup Kit	☐

Platform rules change often. This guide was checked in September 2026. Each platform's own help center has the current rules.

Not legal or platform-policy advice. This guide explains how to set up accounts safely in plain words so you can make your own calls.