



Outlook Allowlisting

By Axios Solutions • Sep 20, 2023

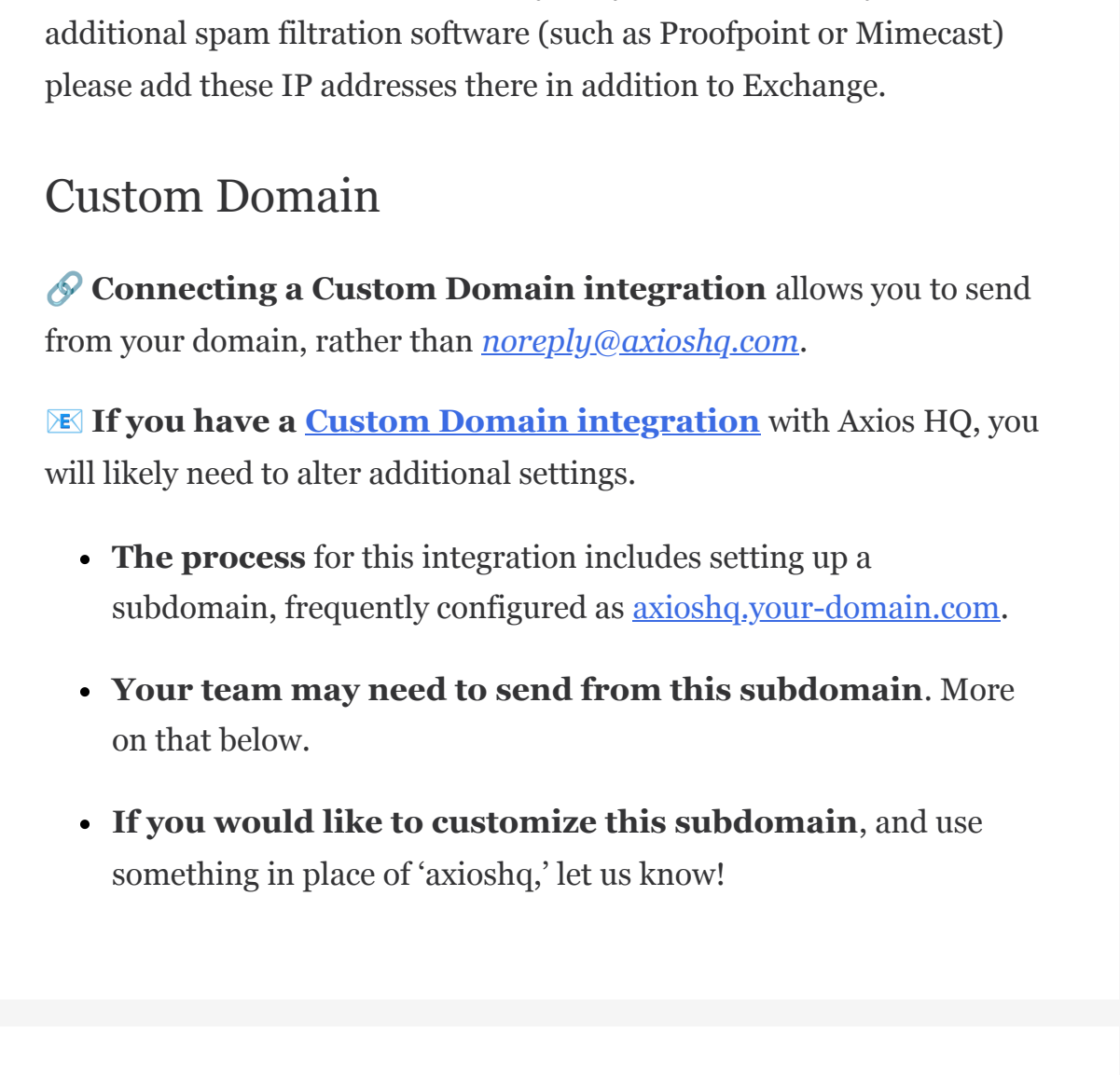
Smart Brevity® count: 5 mins...1339 words

Image blockers, banners, and spam filters are essential for email clients to protect their users from seeing or downloading sensitive content, particularly when it's sent from someone you don't know.

When newsletters are sent through Axios HQ, they're coming from someone you trust — you! Outlook may not recognize this, so certain settings need to be configured in order to teach your email client that what you're sending is guaranteed to be safe.

Outlook has a number of ways to do this, and depending on your team's settings, you may need to use more than one technique listed below. If none of them seem like a perfect fit, reach out to your account manager or help@axioshq.com in order to connect with our Solutions team!

1. Allowlisting & Custom Domain



Allowlisting Our Addresses

The **first step** we recommend is to allowlist our IP addresses and safe sender our domains. Everything you send from Axios HQ is coming from *you*, so you can automatically trust the content!

These **specific addresses and domains** can be found [here](#).

Please add these wherever they may be relevant: if you have additional spam filtration software (such as Proofpoint or Mimecast) please add these IP addresses there in addition to Exchange.

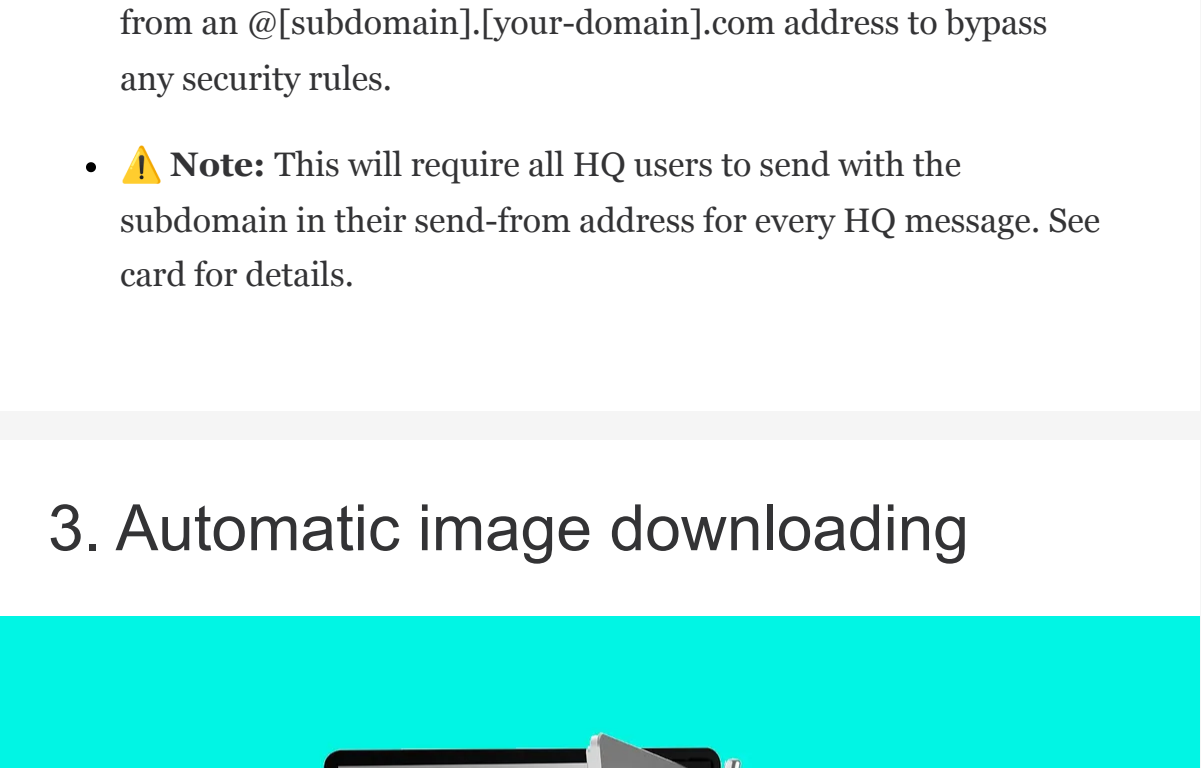
Custom Domain

🔗 **Connecting a Custom Domain integration** allows you to send from your domain, rather than noreply@axioshq.com.

🔗 **If you have a Custom Domain integration** with Axios HQ, you will likely need to alter additional settings.

- **The process** for this integration includes setting up a subdomain, frequently configured as axioshq.your-domain.com.
- **Your team may need to send from this subdomain.** More on that below.
- **If you would like to customize this subdomain**, and use something in place of 'axioshq,' let us know!

2. Where to allowlist



🔗 **If your team plans to send from your internal domain** with our [Custom Domain integration](#), your allowlisting rules likely need to be explicit.

🔗 Exchange Admin Center: Edit the Anti-Spoof Rule

Edit the Anti-Spoofing policy to allow HQ to "send from" your root domain.

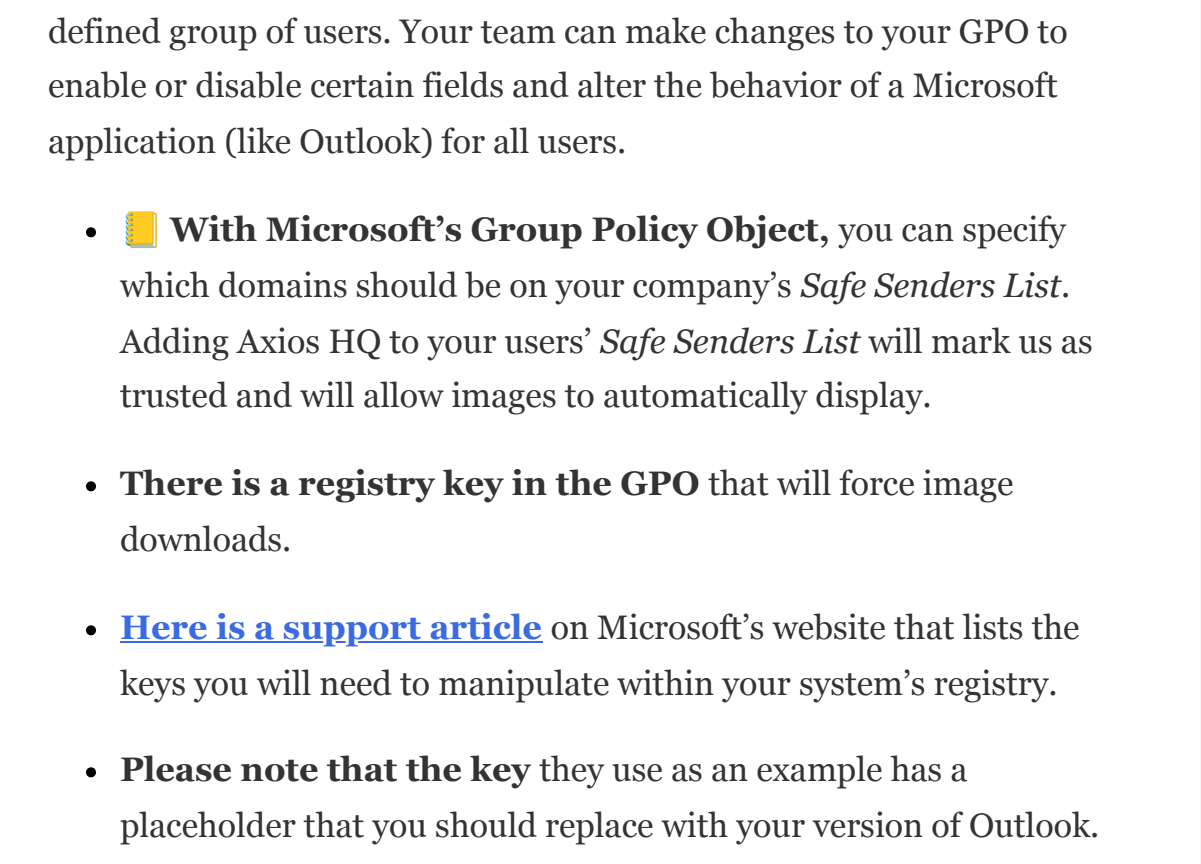
- **Locate your Anti-Spoof Rules.** For some versions of Outlook you may find this on the Left Sidebar: Rules → Anti Spoof Rules → Edit Condition
- **Edit any conditions on rules set** to block all traffic coming from your root domain with an external IP address. This will allow messages sent from Axios HQ's IP addresses to send messages on behalf of your team.
- **If you have a rule like this in place**, ("Apply rule if sender domain is [root domain]"), include an exception for Axios HQ's IP addresses ("DO the following EXCEPT if the message is: FROM this specific list of IP addresses.") Include [HQ's IP addresses](#) in this list.

🛡️ Microsoft Defender: Add the subdomain to the "Allowed Domains"

Add your chosen subdomain to the "Allowed Domains" list; ensure that your users are sending from an address that includes this subdomain.

- **Navigate to the "Manage Allowed Domains" section:** For some versions of Outlook you may find this by navigating to: Email and Collaboration Policy → Policies & Rules → Threat Policies → Anti-Spam Inbound Policy → Manage Allowed Domains
- Add the subdomain to this list. This should allow anyone sending from an @[subdomain].[your-domain].com address to bypass any security rules.
- **⚠️ Note:** This will require all HQ users to send with the subdomain in their send-from address for every HQ message. See card for details.

3. Automatic image downloading



Automatic Image Downloading

✅ **If you are able to allowlist and unblock images** based on IP addresses, as suggested above, you should be good to go.

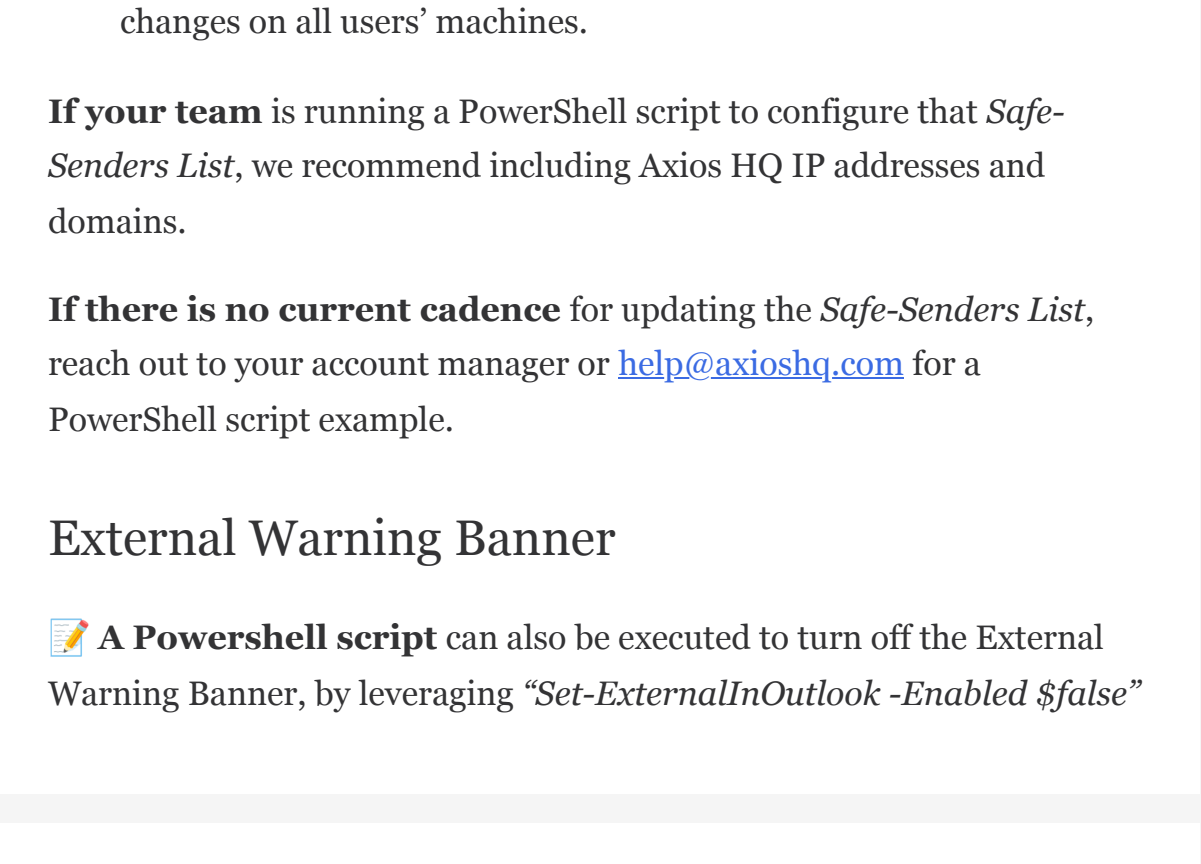
⚡ **If not**, you may need to allowlist based on domain:

- **The Safe-Senders List** will have you safe-sender axioshq.com and the subdomain you configured, axioshq.your-domain.com.
- **Custom Domain is configured so that your users** are able to send from any address that ends in @your-domain.com.

However, Microsoft does not allow you to set safe-sender rules on internal domains, so with this integration, any messages sent from @your-domain.com (that come from HQ) effectively bypass our suggested settings.

- **Ultimately**, if you need to unblock images and have a Custom Domain integration in place, you may need to include the subdomain in the send-from address in order to set an explicit rule to enforce automatic image downloading.

4. Changes to the GPO



Automatic Image Downloading

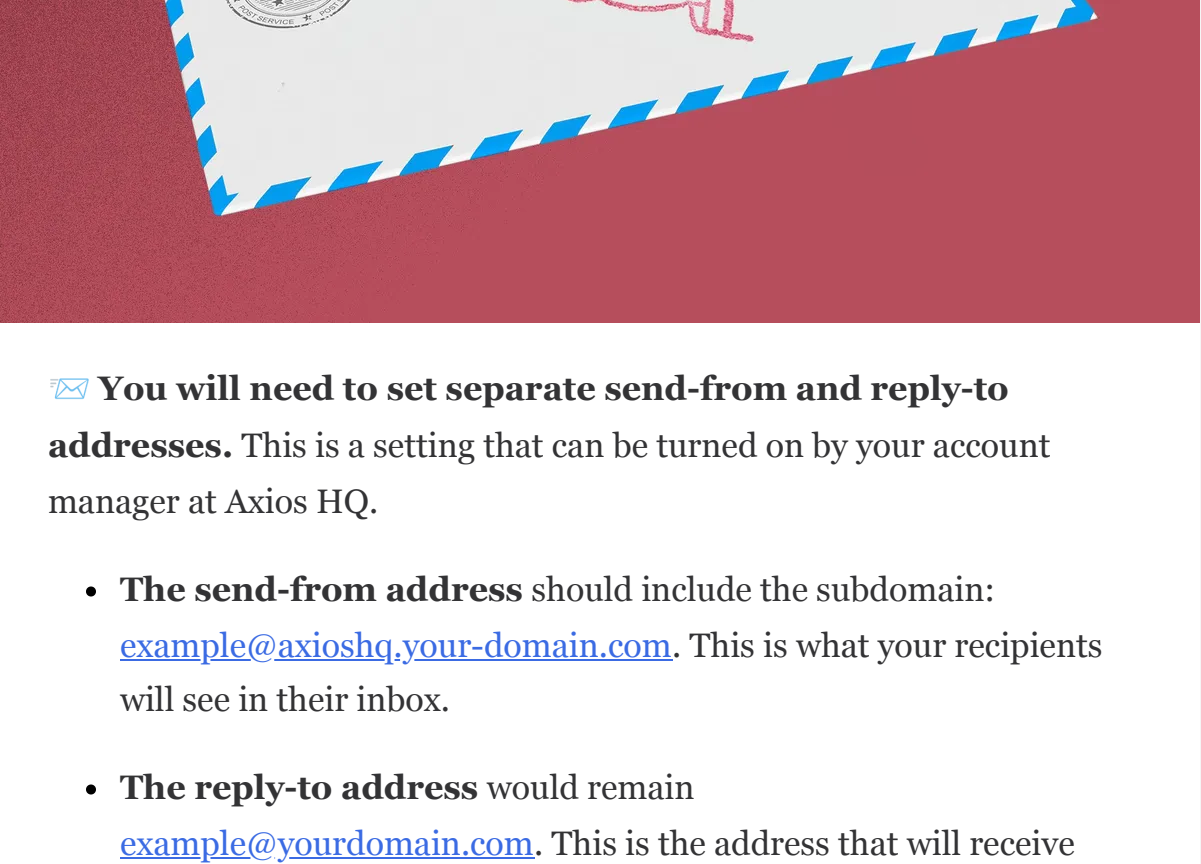
📌 **Microsoft's Group Policy Object (GPO)** is a virtual collection of policy settings that defines how your Microsoft system will behave for a defined group of users. Your team can make changes to your GPO to enable or disable certain fields and alter the behavior of a Microsoft application (like Outlook) for all users.

- **With Microsoft's Group Policy Object**, you can specify which domains should be on your company's *Safe Senders List*. Adding Axios HQ to your users' *Safe Senders List* will mark us as trusted and will allow images to automatically display.
- **There is a registry key in the GPO** that will force image downloads.
- **Here is a support article** on Microsoft's website that lists the keys you will need to manipulate within your system's registry.
- **Please note that the key** they use as an example has a placeholder that you should replace with your version of Outlook.

If you are able to allowlist based on IPs, you can find those IPs in [our Allowlisting document](#). If you can only allowlist based on domain, please allowlist the domains found in the document as well as any subdomains we have set up as part of our Custom Domain integration.

If you do not have a Custom Domain integration but would like to get started, please reach out to your account manager or send a message to help@axioshq.com.

5. Running a PowerShell Script



🔗 **A PowerShell script** can also be executed to make changes to all users' machines. This is a one-time change that can be run and pushed to all existing users, but likely won't affect any new employees moving forward unless it is run again. More on that below.

- **If you have a cadence** for running PowerShell scripts, including a piece to force image downloads for Axios HQ communications might be a simple addition!
- **A PowerShell script** allows a change to be pushed to all current Outlook applications. This process can take a few hours, and is often run overnight.
- **It is a one-time change.** Instead of altering your GPO's registry, you can regularly run a PowerShell script that will affect changes on all users' machines.

If your team is running a PowerShell script to configure that *Safe-Senders List*, we recommend including Axios HQ IP addresses and domains.

If there is no current cadence for updating the *Safe-Senders List*, reach out to your account manager or help@axioshq.com for a PowerShell script example.

External Warning Banner

🔗 **A Powershell script** can also be executed to turn off the External Warning Banner, by leveraging `"Set-ExternalInOutlook -Enabled $false"`

6. The Trust Center

Automatic Image Downloading

🌐 **The Trust Center** offers another option to unblock images, but it is more limiting: utilizing the Trust Center will allow you to make changes to Outlook's behavior in the browser, but likely will not affect anyone using the Outlook application.

External Warning Banner

🌐 **The Trust Center** is the most common place that we've seen the [EXTERNAL] notice be toggled off.

7. Additional notes on Outlook + your Custom Domain Integration

📧 **You will need to set separate send-from and reply-to addresses.** This is a setting that can be turned on by your account manager at Axios HQ.

- **The send-from address** should include the subdomain: example@axioshq.your-domain.com. This is what your recipients will see in their inbox.
- **The reply-to address** would remain example@yourdomain.com. This is the address that will receive all replies.

✅ **With this configuration**, all newsletters sending from Axios HQ should be sent from an address that includes the subdomain, as all messages sent from @axioshq.your-domain.com will be caught by the appropriate rule.

Axios HQ partners with hundreds of clients, Fortune 500 companies, and small nonprofits alike. We have a dedicated security specialist on staff and have completed a SOC2 Type 2 audit.

Feedback

Anonymously tell us what you thought of this newsletter. Your responses will help us create better content for you!

Was this edition useful?

This newsletter is powered by

Like this email style and format?

It's called Smart Brevity®. Hundreds of orgs use it — in a tool called **Axios HQ** — to drive productivity with clearer workplace communications.