Nginx Hardening

What This Covers

This page explains how Steel Security supports hardening in Nginx-based environments.

It provides guidance on applying server-level protections where automatic configuration is not available.

What Is Nginx Configuration

Nginx uses centralized server configuration files instead of per-directory configuration like `.htaccess`.

This means:

- rules are defined at the server level
- changes typically require server access
- configuration updates often require a reload or restart

Why Server-Level Hardening Matters

Server-level rules provide protection before requests reach WordPress.

This helps:

- block malicious traffic early
- reduce unnecessary processing
- enforce consistent security policies

How Steel Security Works with Nginx

Unlike Apache, Nginx does not support dynamic configuration through application-level changes.

As a result:

- Steel Security cannot directly modify Nginx configuration
- hardening must be applied manually or through your hosting environment
- Steel Security provides guidance for implementing equivalent protections

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What Steel Security Can Do

Steel Security can still:

- identify risks through scans
- recommend hardening actions
- provide guidance for server-level implementation

This ensures you can still improve security even without automatic rule application.

What to Expect

When using Nginx:

- some hardening controls may require manual steps
- changes will not apply automatically through the plugin
- server configuration must be updated separately

How to Apply Hardening

To apply hardening in Nginx:

1. Identify the recommended protection in Steel Security
2. Locate your Nginx server configuration
3. Apply the appropriate rules manually
4. reload or restart Nginx
5. test your site functionality

How to Verify

To verify Nginx hardening:

1. Test access to restricted files or endpoints
2. Confirm that access is denied where expected
3. inspect server responses (e.g., 403 Forbidden)

You may also review server logs for confirmation.

How to Revert (Rollback)

To revert changes:

1. Remove or adjust the configuration from your Nginx setup
2. reload or restart the server
3. re-test affected functionality

Common Issues

Changes Do Not Take Effect

- ensure the configuration was reloaded
- confirm the correct server block was updated
- check for conflicting rules

Site Functionality Breaks

- revert the most recent change
- review applied rules
- test incrementally

Limited Access to Server Configuration

- some hosting environments restrict Nginx access
- consult your hosting provider
- use available control panel tools if provided

Best Practices

- apply changes incrementally
- test after each update
- keep backups of configuration files
- document changes where possible

When This Applies

This page is relevant if your server uses Nginx.

If you are unsure:

- check with your hosting provider
- review server response headers
- inspect your hosting environment

Related

- Apache (.htaccess) Hardening
- IIS (web.config) Hardening
- Applying Hardening Safely
- Safe Rollback Practices

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