

Sendmail: "unqualified hostname unknown; sleeping for retry unqualified hostname

12 January 2022 by Luke Reynolds

If you have configured Sendmail on your [Linux system](#) and are still unable to send emails because of a **unqualified hostname** error, we have a few suggestions that you can use to try and remedy the issue.

In this tutorial you will learn:

- How to solve **unqualified hostname** error in Sendmail



Sendmail unqualified hostname error

Software Requirements and Linux Command Line Conventions

Category	Requirements, Conventions or Software Version Used
System	Any Linux system
Software	Sendmail
Other	Privileged access to your Linux system as root or via the sudo command.

Category	Requirements, Conventions or Software Version Used
Conventions	# – requires given linux commands to be executed with root privileges either directly as a root user or by use of sudo command \$ – requires given linux commands to be executed as a regular non-privileged user

Sendmail unqualified hostname error

The Sendmail error will look something like this:

```
debian sm-mta[8129]: My unqualified host name (debian) unknown; sleeping for r
```

Other symptoms include Sendmail being very slow or hanging completely.

This error output actually makes the problem quite clear. The **unqualified host name** text means exactly what it says. It means that Sendmail is **not able to resolve your fully qualified domain name**.

In our example, our system's hostname is **debian**. You can check yours with the **hostname** command.

```
$ hostname
debian
```

To begin troubleshooting, check the contents of your **/etc/hosts** file. In our case the host name is "debian" is not a FQDN. To resolve this problem change **/etc/hosts** :

From:

```
127.0.0.1    localhost
127.0.1.1    debian
```

To:

```
127.0.0.1      localhost.localdomain localhost debian
127.0.1.1      debian
```

Of course, substitute **debian** with the actual name of your FQDN.

After you have made these changes, you can restart the sendmail service and try sending your email again.

```
$ sudo systemctl restart sendmail
```

Even with this fix, your email is unlikely to be delivered if you do not have a properly configured fully qualified domain name. This is a prerequisite that must be setup before you can expect sendmail to work. Such a setup would be outside the scope of this tutorial. However, you can always follow our guide on [Configuring Gmail as a Sendmail email relay](#) in order to use gmail or your own Google Apps account to send email from the Linux command line.

Closing Thoughts

In this tutorial, we learned about some troubleshooting tips for the sendmail **unqualified host name** error on Linux. It basically boils down to a simple change inside the **/etc/hosts** file, but this assumes that you have already purchased and configured your fully qualified domain name correctly. If this is out of your depth, it is also possible to configure your gmail account as a sendmail relay, as linked above.