

Google Traffic Drop Recovery Checklist

Your step-by-step guide to diagnosing and fixing your traffic loss. Print this page for a colorful PDF!

Phase 1: Immediate Triage (The First 30 Minutes)

- ☐ Verify the drop in both Google Analytics and Google Search Console.
- ☐ Compare last 7-30 days against the previous period.
- ☐ Pinpoint the exact date the traffic started to fall.
- ☐ Segment data: Identify affected pages, queries, countries, and devices.
- ☐ Form an initial hypothesis based on the data (e.g., "This looks technical" or "This might be an algorithm update").

Phase 2: The Diagnostic Deep Dive (Finding the “Why”)

- ☐ **Technical SEO:** Check GSC Indexing report for errors.
- ☐ **Technical SEO:** Check GSC for Manual Actions (penalties).
- ☐ **Technical SEO:** Run a PageSpeed Insights test and check Core Web Vitals.
- ☐ **Technical SEO:** Review the Mobile Usability report in GSC.
- ☐ **Algorithm:** Check if your traffic drop date matches a known Google Core Update.
- ☐ **Backlinks:** Use Ahrefs/SEMrush to analyze lost high-quality backlinks.
- ☐ **Backlinks:** Analyze new backlinks for toxic or spammy links.
- ☐ **Content:** Identify pages with the biggest drop in clicks/impressions (Content Decay).
- ☐ **Content:** Perform a site: search to check for keyword cannibalization.
- ☐ **SERP:** Manually search your top keywords to check for shifting search intent or new SERP features.

Phase 3: The Recovery Action Plan (Fixing It)

- ☐ **If Technical:** Fix all identified GSC errors (noindex tags, redirects, etc.).
- ☐ **If Technical:** If penalized, document cleanup and submit a Reconsideration Request.
- ☐ **If Algorithm:** Conduct a ruthless content audit and improve/merge/remove weak pages.
- ☐ **If Algorithm:** Focus on improving E-E-A-T (add author bios, cite sources, etc.).
- ☐ **If Backlinks:** Start a link-building campaign to replace lost authority.
- ☐ **If Backlinks:** Disavow any identified toxic links.
- ☐ **If Content:** Fully refresh decaying content with new info, media, and formatting.
- ☐ **If Content:** Use 301 redirects to fix keyword cannibalization.

Phase 4: Prevention & Future-Proofing

- ☐ Diversify traffic sources (email list, social media, PPC).
- ☐ Set up alerts in GSC and Google Analytics for significant traffic changes.
- ☐ Make E-E-A-T and user value the core of your content strategy.
- ☐ Schedule comprehensive technical and content audits at least once a year.

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