

Proton Mail Setup for NeoMutt

Because Proton Mail uses end-to-end encryption, standard email clients cannot connect directly to Proton Mail servers using normal IMAP/SMTP.

To access Proton Mail via NeoMutt, you must run a **bridge service** locally that decrypts/encrypts messages on your machine and exposes local IMAP/SMTP endpoints for NeoMutt.

1. Prerequisites: Bridge Service Options

There are two primary ways to run the bridge on Linux:

Option A: Official Proton Mail Bridge (Recommended for paid accounts)

The official desktop/CLI bridge provided by Proton.

1. Download and install **Proton Mail Bridge** from the official site or package manager:

```
# Arch Linux (AUR)
yay -S protonmail-bridge

# Debian / Ubuntu (via official DEB package)
sudo dpkg -i protonmail-bridge_*.deb
```

2. Open Proton Mail Bridge and log in with your Proton credentials.
3. Note down the local IMAP/SMTP credentials generated by Bridge (typically):
 - **IMAP Host:** `127.0.0.1` (Port `1143`, STARTTLS)
 - **SMTP Host:** `127.0.0.1` (Port `1025`, STARTTLS)
 - **Username:** Your full Proton email address

- **Password:** Bridge-generated app password (not your main Proton password)
-

Option B: Hydroxide (Open-Source CLI Bridge)

A lightweight third-party open-source CLI bridge written in Go. Works great on headless servers.

1. Install Hydroxide:

```
# Arch Linux
sudo pacman -S hydroxide
```

2. Authenticate with Proton Mail:

```
hydroxide auth <your-username>
```

3. Start Hydroxide services:

```
hydroxide imap &
hydroxide smtp &
```

4. Generate bridge status/credentials:

```
hydroxide card
```

2. NeoMutt Configuration (`~/.config/neomutt/neomuttrc`)

Add the following profile block to your `~/.config/neomutt/neomuttrc` (or create a dedicated profile file like `~/.config/neomutt/profiles/proton`):

```
# =====
# Proton Mail Account Settings
# =====
set realname = "Your Name"
set from = "your.email@proton.me"
set use_from = yes
```

```
# Authentication details (Proton Bridge local credentials)
set imap_user = "your.email@proton.me"
set imap_pass = "your-bridge-generated-password"

# Local Bridge IMAP Settings
set folder = "imap://127.0.0.1:1143/"
set spoolfile = "+INBOX"
set postponed = "+Drafts"
set record = "+Sent"
set trash = "+Trash"

# Local Bridge SMTP Settings
set smtp_url = "smtp://your.email@proton.me@127.0.0.1:1025/"
set smtp_pass = "your-bridge-generated-password"

# Disable SSL verification for localhost STARTTLS (Bridge handles encryption)
set ssl_starttls = yes
set ssl_force_tls = no

# Mailboxes for NeoMutt Sidebar
named-mailboxes "Inbox"      "+INBOX"
named-mailboxes "Drafts"     "+Drafts"
named-mailboxes "Sent"       "+Sent"
named-mailboxes "Archive"    "+Archive"
named-mailboxes "Spam"       "+Spam"
named-mailboxes "Trash"      "+Trash"

# Cache Directories
set header_cache = "~/.cache/neomutt/proton/headers"
set message_cachedir = "~/.cache/neomutt/proton/bodies"
```

Ensure the local cache directories exist:

```
mkdir -p ~/.cache/neomutt/proton/headers ~/.cache/neomutt/proton/bodies
```

3. Securing Bridge Credentials with GPG

As with Gmail, encrypt your local Bridge password using GPG:

1. Store password in encrypted file:

```
echo "your-bridge-generated-password" | gpg -e -r "your.email@proton.me" -o  
~/.config/neomutt/proton_pass.gpg
```

2. In `~/.config/neomutt/neomuttrc`, dynamically set credentials:

```
set imap_pass = `gpg --batch --quiet --decrypt ~/.config/neomutt/proton_pass.gpg`  
set smtp_pass = `gpg --batch --quiet --decrypt ~/.config/neomutt/proton_pass.gpg`
```

4. Running as a Background Service (Systemd)

To make sure the Bridge runs automatically in the background so NeoMutt can connect anytime:

Create `~/.config/systemd/user/proton-bridge.service`:

```
[Unit]  
Description=Proton Mail Bridge  
After=network.target  
  
[Service]  
ExecStart=/usr/bin/protonmail-bridge --non-interactive  
Restart=on-failure  
  
[Install]  
WantedBy=default.target
```

Enable and start the service:

```
systemctl --user daemon-reload  
systemctl --user enable --now proton-bridge
```

Revision #2

Created 2026-08-13 03:06:29 UTC by admin

Updated 2026-08-13 03:08:08 UTC by admin