Build and activate a tested Factorio mod collection

Prepare a mod collection away from your live factory, then activate the exact set you tested. This workflow is for installing a collection deliberately; use the related mismatch guide if an otherwise working multiplayer server simply rejects a player.

Record the starting point

Write down the server's complete Factorio version, selected release branch and current save. Check whether the group uses Space Age features and whether every player has the required expansion. A collection described as compatible with “Factorio 2” still needs checking against the actual major version and its dependencies.

Before changing anything, take a complete backup and verify that the archive can be opened. Preserve the factory save, configuration and existing mod directory together. Keep the untouched copy outside the active server directory so a mistaken upload cannot overwrite your recovery files.

Prepare a collection locally

1. Use a separate local game profile or test installation matching the intended server version. In Factorio's Mods menu, select the collection and let the game resolve required dependencies. Read each project's compatibility and release notes before adding optional extras.
2. Check required expansion features. The official mod metadata reference explains version compatibility and expansion feature requirements. Editing a mod's version declaration does not make incompatible code or unowned expansion content work.
3. Choose startup settings using the game's interface. Start a disposable test factory and exercise the features you expect players to use. Keep your existing production save out of this first test.
4. Keep the resulting mod files and the game's generated enabled-mod list together.

   Preserve `mod-list.json` and `mod-settings.dat` when present. The latter is a binary settings file, so do not edit it as JSON or rename it to a text format.

Stage the upload

Find the service's actual mod directory before transferring anything. Factorio's user-data location can vary, and a startup argument can select another mod directory. Ask support if the template makes this unclear; creating a second guessed folder can leave the running service unchanged.

Stop the test service normally and wait for it to finish. Upload the selected collection to that confirmed location. The official installation instructions say downloaded mod ZIPs can remain zipped. Keep their original filenames and avoid an extra outer archive folder. Do not replace the game executable, server credentials or unrelated saves.

Verify before activation

Start the test service and inspect the first startup errors. Join using the tested client, confirm the intended mods are active, then build or operate something that depends on them. Save, stop normally and load that test save again. A process staying online alone does not prove that the collection works.

For an existing factory, repeat the test with a separate copy of its save before scheduling the production change. If dependencies fail or factory content changes unexpectedly, keep production on its original collection. Retain the whole pre-change backup until the group has checked the activated server.

Related CloudExa guides

- Back up game files before making changes
- Resolve Factorio mod and startup-setting mismatches

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