Set up and join a DayZ server without changing its existing world

Start with a small DayZ configuration change and a successful player connection before adding mods or changing the mission. This guide covers a PC dedicated service. A client for a different platform or release branch should not be assumed compatible. The paths shown by the game panel depend on the installed server template.

1. Record the service and preserve its state

1. Open the correct game service and note its assigned address, game port and any separate query allocation.
2. Record the current server build, selected mission and startup settings.
3. If the service already contains player progress, take and verify a backup before editing. Keep the current configuration and the mission's persistent data together.

A server that appears new to you may already contain somebody's characters or bases. Do not replace its mission folder with a downloaded starter folder, rename its persistence directory, or use an installation action as a setup shortcut.

2. Locate the configuration actually used

DayZ selects its configuration through the startup `-config` argument. A file called `serverDZ.cfg` is common, but editing that filename will do nothing if startup points elsewhere. Check the configured path rather than creating a second file with a familiar name.

For an initial identity change, adjust the existing `hostname` entry. The joining password and administrator password serve different purposes; use different secrets and keep the administrator value private. Preserve the rest of the file and its syntax. Do not copy an entire internet example over a working configuration just to change the name.

3. Keep game and query endpoints distinct

The startup `-port` value controls the server listening port; `steamQueryPort` is a separate configuration setting for browser queries. Use the values assigned to your service rather than assuming a default or claiming a neighbouring port. If startup and allocations disagree, ask support to reconcile them before changing networking.

The DayZ client needs the game's connection endpoint. A query result, RCON login or working browser console is not a substitute for a player joining. You do not need to change your home router's port forwarding to connect to a hosted server.

4. Start and validate a normal player session

Apply changes during an agreed maintenance window using the service's supported stop/start procedure. Bohemia recommends graceful shutdown to protect character and storage saves; avoid a forced kill. Read the fresh startup output for the expected mission, then join using the assigned address and game port.

Confirm the advertised name, joining password and intended world with an ordinary player account. On an existing world, check known progress rather than assuming an empty-looking spawn is correct. If the mission differs, stop before further play changes that state.

When to ask for help

Send the service ID, build, assigned endpoints, startup configuration path and exact failure time. Redact passwords. A first connection failure does not justify deleting persistence or reinstalling; preserve the current state while support checks the failing stage.

Related CloudExa guides

- Back up game files before changes
- Follow the player connection checks

Official references

- Bohemia: DayZ server configuration
- Bohemia: graceful server shutdown

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