

File Drop Batch user guide

For the production coordinator running the show. The [README](#) covers installing the app and the one-time admin setup; this is how to run a batch, and the things that go wrong.

What this app actually does to your server

Worth being clear about before you press the button, because three of these are irreversible or visible to people outside your organisation:

- It **creates public upload links** that anyone with the URL can write to.
- It **sends real email to real presenters**, immediately, with no preview and no undo.
- Optionally it **creates real Nextcloud accounts** with generated passwords, downloadable as a CSV. That's restricted to admins and subadmins.
- Optionally it **mirrors your folder tree to another server** with `ncClone sync`, which **deletes files at the destination that aren't in the source** (Site-server sync).

There is no dry-run mode. **Test with two rows and your own email address before you run a 90-session batch.**

This is an AI-assisted codebase, directed and reviewed by a human author — review it before relying on it in production, the same as any code.

The session CSV

Five columns, matched case-insensitively. Order doesn't matter and extra columns are ignored.

```
Date, Theatre, Start Time, presenter name, presenter email
```

Any missing column **aborts the whole file** with a message naming what's absent — nothing is created, so a rejected CSV is safe to fix and re-upload.

The same CSV drives [resolve-configurator](#), which builds the DaVinci Resolve project for the same event. Keep one file, feed it to both.

Dates are read day-first

Accepted date formats, tried **in this order**:

2026-08-01 01/08/2026 08/01/2026 01-08-2026 1 Aug 2026 1 August 2026

Because `d/m/Y` is tried before `m/d/Y`, `03/04/2026` is read as **3 April, not 4 March**. There is no setting to change this. If your schedule came from a US source, every date where the day is 12 or lower will silently land on the wrong day — and the folder will still be *named* from the original string, so it will look right in the file tree while being wrong in validation.

Use `2026-08-01` format and the ambiguity disappears.

Times accept `14:00`, `14:00:00`, `2:00pm`, `2:00 pm`, `2:00 PM`, `2.00pm`.

Anything the format list rejects falls through to a very permissive general parser, which will accept things a spreadsheet never meant. A value that parses is never questioned.

Folder names

```
<base folder>/<Theatre>/<Date>/<Start Time> - <Presenter Name>
```

Characters that can't go in a folder name (`/ \ : * ? " < > |`) are **replaced with** `-`, not removed — so `10:00` becomes `10-00`, and two sessions at `10:00` and `1000` stay distinct. Names are trimmed to 200 characters. An entirely unusable name becomes `untitled`.

The date folder is named from **exactly what you typed**. `2026-08-01` and `1 Aug 2026` are the same day to the validator and **two different folders** on disk. Be consistent within a show.

Setting the expiry

One expiry date applies to the whole batch, and it is required.

⚠ Nextcloud link shares expire at day granularity, and expiry is at 00:00. The time of day is ignored entirely, so a link set to expire on the 5th stops working at the *very start* of the 5th — it does not last through that day. **Set the expiry to the day after you want uploads to stop.**

This also means today is always rejected as "in the past". The earliest valid expiry is tomorrow.

The app

File Drop Batch

Build a show from a CSV (columns `Date`, `Theatre`, `Start Time`, `presenter name`, `presenter email`) or by entering sessions directly below. A folder and an upload-only file drop link will be created for each session, and the link will be emailed to the presenter. Optionally, shared root folders and a Nextcloud account per theatre can also be created below.

How do you want to build this show?

- ☒ Upload CSV ☐ Enter manually ☐ Link Google Sheet

CSV file

No file chosen

Link expiry date

Links expire at the start of this date. Nextcloud only supports whole-day expiry for share links, so the earliest option is tomorrow.

Base folder

Root folders for this batch

Created once at the top of the base folder and shared with every theatre account below.

- ☒ Holding slides
- ☒ fonts
- ☒ schedules
- ☒ all show

Custom folders (comma-separated)

Theatre accounts

- ☒ Create a Nextcloud account for each distinct theatre in the CSV

Each account gets a generated password and access to its own theatre folder plus the root folders above (not other theatres). Passwords are shown once and saved to a downloadable CSV - store it securely.

Results

Total: 5 - Success: 3 - Partial: 1 - Error: 1

[Download results CSV](#)

Row	Theatre	Date	Time	Presenter	Email	Status	Link	Message
2	Globe	2026-09-12	17:00	A. Smith	a.smith@example.com	success	https://cloud.example.org/s/Ax3nQpZ9Ke	
3	Globe	2026-09-12	19:30	B. Chen	b.chen@example.com	success	https://cloud.example.org/s/Wr7mFcVb2s	
4	Rose	2026-09-13	09:00	C. White	c.white@example.com	success	https://cloud.example.org/s/Tn4kLdRp8h	
5	Rose	2026-09-13	10:00	D. Okafor	not-an-email	partial	https://cloud.example.org/s/Jy6qEo3Msx	Invalid email address - link not emailed, deliver manually.
6	Swan	2026-09-14	teatime	E. Larsson	e.larsson@example.com	error		Unrecognized time format: "teatime"

Theatre accounts

Total: 3 - Created: 3 - Existing: 0 - Error: 0

Passwords are shown once and cannot be retrieved again - save the CSV securely.

[Download theatre accounts CSV](#)

Theatre	Username	Password	Status	Message
Globe	globe	Xk4\$pQr8Nzw#2Ldm	created	
Rose	rose	Bv7@wFhT3sE!9jRc	created	
Swan	swan	Q1234~M4567~W4567	created	

swan

swan

GL2%nmD16dWq:81X

created

Sessions

Every session created via CSV or added manually. Editing moves the folder to match the new details (the link keeps working); Close revokes the upload link immediately; Delete only stops tracking a session here - the folder, its files, and its link (if still open) are left alone.

Add session

Theatre	Date	Time	Presenter	Email	Status	Link	Actions
Globe	2026-09-12	17:00	A. Smith	a.smith@example.com	open	https://cloud.example.org/s/Ax3nQpZ9Ke	Edit Close now Delete
Rose	2026-09-13	09:00	C. White	c.white@example.com	closed		Edit Delete

One page, top to bottom: choose a source (CSV, manual entry or a linked Google Sheet), set the expiry and base folder, pick the shared root folders, then **Create show**. Everything below the button is the outcome.

Reading the results

Every row comes back as `success` , `partial` or `error` , and `partial` is the one that needs you:

Status	What happened	Your action
success	Folder created, link created, email sent	none
partial	Folder and link created, email NOT sent	Send the link by hand. It's live and works.
error	No usable link	Fix the row, re-run

`partial` happens either because the email address didn't look valid, or because the mail server refused it. The `message` column tells you which. Either way the presenter has nothing until you act — a batch that reports "10 success, 2 partial" has **two people who don't know they have an upload link**.

An `error` row may still have left a folder behind, if folder creation worked and the link didn't. The message says so.

Download both CSVs before you close the page. The results CSV (your input plus a `File Drop Link` column) and, if you created accounts, the users CSV. They're not stored anywhere retrievable — the Sessions list keeps the sessions, not the CSVs, and **the generated passwords are never shown again**.

Re-running a batch creates duplicates

Session folders are not reused. Running the same CSV twice gives you `10:00 - Jane Smith` and `10:00 - Jane Smith (2)` , each with its own link, and emails Jane twice. Fix errors by re-running

only the failed rows, not the whole file.

(Root folders and theatre accounts *are* reused, so those are safe to re-run.)

Theatre accounts

Optional, admin/subadmin only. Creates one Nextcloud account per distinct theatre name, scoped to **its own theatre folder plus the shared root folders — deliberately not other theatres**. That isolation is the point of the feature.

Two things to watch:

- **The username comes from the theatre name**, lowercased with anything outside `a-z0-9._-` turned into `-`. So **"Studio One" and "studio-one" and "STUDIO/ONE" all become `studio-one` and share a single account**. If two genuinely different theatres sanitize to the same username, the second silently reuses the first's account — and gets access to the first's folder. Name theatres distinctly.
- **An account that already existed comes back with a blank password**, because the app can't read an existing password. A blank password column means "already there", not "no password".

Passwords are 16 characters, generated with a CSPRNG, guaranteed to contain upper, lower, digit and symbol, using an ambiguity-avoiding alphabet (no `I / l / 0 / 1`).

Managing sessions afterwards

The Sessions list tracks every session that was created (`success` and `partial` rows — `error` rows leave no record).

- **Editing a session moves its folder** to match the new theatre/date/time/presenter.
 - **The link keeps working across that move**, because Nextcloud shares point at a file by id, not by path.
 - **Editing does not re-email the presenter**, deliberately — a typo correction shouldn't spam them. If someone needs a *new* link, create a new session.
 - **Closing a session ends its link early**, before the batch expiry.
-

Google Sheets sync

Nextcloud > File Drop Batch

File Drop Batch

Build a show from a CSV (columns Date, Theatre, Start Time, presenter name, presenter email) or by entering sessions directly below. A folder and an upload-only file drop link will be created for each session, and the link will be emailed to the presenter. Optionally, shared root folders and a Nextcloud account per theatre can also be created below.

How do you want to build this show?

☐ Upload CSV

☐ Enter manually

☒ Link Google Sheet

Rows are matched across syncs by Theatre + Date + Start time.
Removing a row from the sheet automatically closes that session's file drop link immediately, with no confirmation and no undo - the same as clicking "Close now" on it.

Name

Autumn tour schedule

Google Sheet URL

https://docs.google.com/

Base folder

File Drops

Link expiry date

15/09/2026

Root folders

☒ Holding slides

☒ fonts

☒ schedules

☒ all show

Custom folders (comma-separated)

Costumes, Props

☐ Create a Nextcloud account per theatre

☒ Keep this sheet synced automatically

Link sheet

Name	Base folder	Expiry	Auto-sync	Last sync	Actions
Autumn tour schedule	File Drops	2026-09-15	On	2026-09-01T09:12:00+00:00 - success Created 1, renamed 0, closed 1, unchanged 4.	Sync now Edit Unlink
Winter panto schedule	File Drops	2026-12-20	Off	Never synced	Sync now Edit Unlink

The last-sync column reports what each sync actually did — "Created 1, renamed 0, closed 1, unchanged 4" — which is where you find out that a row you deleted from the sheet has closed somebody's upload link. Link a sheet and it's re-read on a schedule, so late additions get folders and links without you running anything.

The sheet must satisfy **exactly the same column contract as a CSV** (The session CSV) — same five headers, same parsing, same day-first date rule.

⚠ Deleting a row from the sheet closes that session's link. That's the designed behaviour, and it's live: someone tidying up the spreadsheet can revoke a presenter's upload link without realising. Treat the linked sheet as production data.

Because the Sheets API omits trailing empty cells, a blank row arrives as an empty array and is skipped rather than erroring.

Site-server sync

File Drop Batch - site-server sync

Once a batch's file-drop links pass their expiry date, this can automatically mirror the whole base folder (via `rclone` over WebDAV) to a separate Nextcloud instance - e.g. a server taken to the event site with no reliable link back here. Requires `rclone` installed on this server and PHP allowed to run external processes.

Remote Nextcloud URL

Remote username

Remote app password

Create a dedicated app password on the remote instance (Settings > Security) rather than using that account's real login password. Stored encrypted; leave blank to keep the current one.

Remote base path (optional)

The base folder is created under this path on the remote instance (its own Files root if left blank).

rclone binary path

Local WebDAV base URL override (optional)

Set this if the scheduled background job can't reliably detect this instance's own URL.

☒ **Automatically sync once a batch's links have expired**

Runs on Nextcloud's own background job schedule (roughly every 15 minutes). The button below always works regardless of this setting.

Last sync: 2026-09-01T03:00:04+00:00 - **success**

File Drop Batch - Google Sheets

Connect a single Google account so anyone using this app can link a Google Sheet as an alternative to uploading a CSV. The connected account needs read access to any sheet someone links. Rows are matched across syncs by Theatre + Date + Start Time - a row removed from the sheet automatically closes its session's file drop link immediately, the same as clicking "Close now".

Client ID

Client Secret

Stored encrypted; leave blank to keep the current one.

Redirect URI

Add this exact URI as an authorized redirect URI on the OAuth Client in Google Cloud Console.

Connected as **production-sync@example-events.iam.gserviceaccount.com**

Both of these are configured once, by an administrator, in **Administration settings > File Drop Batch** — not in the app page everyone else uses. Once a batch's links pass their expiry, a background job can mirror the whole base folder to a second Nextcloud instance — the "site server" you take to the venue.

▲ It is `rclone sync`, not a copy. The destination is made to *match* the source: anything at the destination that isn't in the source is deleted. If someone adds or edits files on the site server between syncs, the next sync removes their work. Treat the site server as a read-only mirror, and do the editing on the main server.

Other things to know:

- It fires on **expiry**, not on completion. Roughly every 15 minutes a job checks for batches whose expiry has passed. A failed sync is logged and **retried next run**, not marked done.
- Syncs are **per (user, base folder)**, not per batch — one whole-folder transfer covers every batch sharing that folder.
- The **"Sync now" button ignores the automatic toggle**, which makes it the right way to test the connection.
- Use an **app password** from the remote instance (Settings → Security → Create new app password), never a real account password. It's encrypted at rest.
- The source side stores no password at all: each sync mints a short-lived token and revokes it immediately afterwards, whether or not the sync worked.

If the source leg fails with a connection error but the destination is reachable, set the "local WebDAV base URL" explicitly. Behind Docker or a reverse proxy, auto-detection produces the *host-mapped* address (`localhost:8080`) rather than the address reachable from *inside* the container where rclone runs (`http://localhost`). This is by far the most common sync failure.

Needs `rclone` on the server and PHP allowed to spawn processes (`proc_open`) — normal on a box you control, often disabled on shared hosting.

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Cause
"The CSV is missing required column(s)"	Header names don't match (The session CSV). Nothing was created — safe to fix and retry.
"The expiry date must be at least tomorrow"	Nextcloud expires links at 00:00 on the chosen day (Setting the expiry).
Links stopped working a day early	Same cause — expiry is at the <i>start</i> of the date (Setting the expiry).
Sessions on the wrong day	US-format dates read day-first (The session CSV).
Two folders for one day	The date was typed two different ways; folders are named from the raw string (The session CSV).
Presenter says they never got a link	Check for a <code>partial</code> row — the link exists and wasn't emailed (Reading the results).
Duplicate folders and double emails	The batch was run twice; session folders are never reused (Reading the results).
Two theatres share one account	Their names sanitize to the same username (Theatre accounts).
Blank password in the users CSV	That account already existed (Theatre accounts).
Lost the generated passwords	They're not recoverable — reset from Nextcloud's user admin (Reading the results).
A presenter's link died unexpectedly	Someone deleted their row from the linked Google Sheet (Google Sheets sync).
Files vanished from the site server	<code>ncclone sync</code> deleted what wasn't in the source (Site-server sync).
Sync fails on the source leg only	The local WebDAV base URL needs setting explicitly (Site-server sync).
"Only admins or subadmins can create theatre user accounts"	Working as intended — that restriction is deliberate.
Nothing syncs automatically	Nextcloud's cron isn't running, or the toggle is off. Try "Sync now" to separate the two.

Before a big batch

1. Use `YYYY-MM-DD` dates in the sheet ([The session CSV](#)).

2. Set the expiry to **the day after** uploads should stop ([Setting the expiry](#)).
 3. Run **two rows to your own address first** — there's no dry run and no undo on the emails.
 4. Check theatre names don't collide once lowercased and hyphenated ([Theatre accounts](#)).
 5. Run the real batch, then **download both CSVs before leaving the page** ([Reading the results](#)).
 6. Work the `partial` rows — those presenters have nothing yet ([Reading the results](#)).
 7. If site-server sync is on, remember the site server is a mirror, not a workspace ([Site-server sync](#)).
-

See also

- [API.md](#) — routes, the CSV contract, config keys, tables, jobs
 - [DEVELOPING.md](#) — dev stack, tests, security rules
 - [README](#) — install, screenshots, admin setup
-

File Drop Batch · v1.4.2 · guide updated 2026-08-02 · stoatworks-labs.com/software/nc-filedropbatch/
Latest version of this guide: stoatworks-labs.com/software/nc-filedropbatch/guide/ · Source and issues:
<https://github.com/stoatworks-labs/nc-filedropbatch>