

Docker: Dovecot

Dovecot (<https://doc.dovecot.org>) is a small, powerfull, fast and very stable IMAP- Server for storing Mails, which can be used by any Mailclient like Thunderbird, Evolution...

Prerequisites

You will need all stuff to have [FreeIPA](#) up, having understood dockers and running those services, so that LDAPs will work.

Docker composer

Dovecot does not use any Database, as Mails will be stored in MailDir- Format, which is using Directories and Files for each Mail, so mounting the mail- Directory is enough.

In your docker_compose- Directory, create the docker - compose . yml with the following content:

```
services:
# Small but performant and secure Imap- Server: https://hub.docker.com/r/dovecot/dovecot
  dovecot:
    image: dovecot/dovecot:latest
#For testing:
#   image: dovecot/dovecot:latest-dev
    restart: always
    read_only: true
    stop_grace_period: 1m
    volumes:
      - dovecot_config:/etc/dovecot
      - dovecot_maildata:/srv/vmail
    tmpfs:
      - /tmp
      - /run/dovecot
```

```
- /srv/mail
environment:
  # Those passwords shuld not be used/only for testing
  # They will allow any username with that password to connect
  USER_PASSWORD: 'VERYSTRONGFIRSTPWD'
  DOVEADM_PASSWORD: 'VERYSTRONGSECONDPWD'
ports:
  - "993:31993"
#Listeners from Homepage
#   POP3 on 31110, TLS 31995 (needs config file to enable, disabled by default)
#   IMAP on 31143, TLS 31993
#   Submission on 31587
#   LMTPS on 31024
#   ManageSieve on 34190
#   HTTP API on 8080
#   Metrics on 9090
networks:
  - default

volumes:
  dovecot_config:
  dovecot_maildata:

networks:
# Still needs to be defined while without it won't enable ipv6
default:
  driver: bridge
  enable_ipv6: true
```

Basically, `docker compose up -d` will already start your Server.

LDAP Password-Checks

In your Volume `dovecot_config` you will now find the directory `conf.d` - put some file in here like `domainname.conf` to have it loaded in your dovecot- config. It will overwrite all basic settings.

```
ssl = required
auth_allow_cleartext = no

#external connection: check SSL validity. Won't validate let's encrypt LDAP- Certs without importing CA
ssl_client_require_valid_cert = no

ssl_server {
    cert_file = /etc/dovecot/ssl/domain.tld.crt
    key_file = /etc/dovecot/ssl/domain.tld.key
}

#LDAP Auth
# Password lookup: will also do full user/pass bind to check, so this should be enough
# https://doc.dovecot.org/2.4.1/core/config/auth/databases/ldap.html#authentication-binds

#For debugging and also provides useful informations about logins
log_debug = category=auth

passdb ldap {
# will speed up check of user when using multiple queries to ldap-server like userdb- checking too
# will slow down if only one check is done per login
# use_worker = yes
    driver = ldap
    ldap_uris = ldaps://dockerproject-ipa-1:636
    bind = yes
    bind_userdn = uid=%{user},cn=users,cn=accounts,dc=domain,dc=tld
    filter = (&(objectClass=posixAccount)(uid=%{user}))
    ldap_base = dc=domain,dc=tld
}
```

Change Domain, tld and your docker-hostname to match your needs.

SSL Setup

Also, you need your ACME- Certificates of Caddy copied to that Volume. I do it with the file `cert_renew.sh`

```
#!/bin/bash
#Renew ACME Certs of Dovecot from Caddy
cat /home/docker/docker_volumes/dockerproject_caddy_data/_data/caddy/certificates/acme-v02.api.letsencrypt.org-
directory/domain.tld/domain.tld.key> /home/docker/docker_volumes/pcserver2023_dovecot_config/_data/ssl/domain.tld.key
cat /home/docker/docker_volumes/dockerproject_caddy_data/_data/caddy/certificates/acme-v02.api.letsencrypt.org-
directory/domain.tld/domain.tld.crt> /home/docker/docker_volumes/pcserver2023_dovecot_config/_data/ssl/domain.tld.crt
```

which i call every Day with dockers crontab.

Make sure that the files are accessible for dovecot (and if possible to noone else, not in container nor on your host).

Possible problems

Currently (02.08.2025) there are a few problems with Thunderbird and Dovecot.

Error: Disconnected: Too many invalid IMAP commands.

Have a look at the page beneath to configure Thunderbird with the settings:

- mail.server.default.allow_utf8_accept = false
- mail.imap.use_literal_plus = false

<https://yellowshoes.de/2025/07/31/thunderbird-dovecot-2-4-disconnected-too-many-invalid-imap-commands/>

From:
<http://dokuwiki.obel1x.de/> - **obel1x.de**

Permanent link:
<http://dokuwiki.obel1x.de/content:serverbasics:docker-dovecot>

Last update: **2025/08/22 12:38**

