

AppVerra.

FREE GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

The App Launch Checklist

Everything you need to ship on the **Apple App Store** and **Google Play** — from developer accounts to post-launch monitoring. Print it, work through it, ship with nothing forgotten.

Apps That Ship. Founders Who Answer.

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Before you begin

A rejected submission can cost you a week — sometimes two. Most rejections come from the same handful of misses: a broken privacy-policy link, no demo login for the reviewer, metadata that doesn't match what the app actually does. This checklist walks the full path for **both stores** so those misses don't happen to you.

How to use this: tick each box as you complete it. Items marked **Apple** or **Google** apply to that store only; everything under “Shared groundwork” applies to both. Specs current as of 2026 — always confirm against the official developer docs before you submit.

STEP 1 Shared groundwork (both stores)

Get these in place once — they feed both submissions.

- Enrol in the developer programs.** Apple Developer Program **\$99/yr**; Google Play Console **\$25 one-time**. Enrolment/verification can take a few days — start early.

- Publish a privacy policy URL.** Required by *both* stores and the single most common cause of a blocked listing. Host it on a stable URL before you start.

- Lock your identifiers.** Final app name, iOS Bundle ID, and Android package name. The package/bundle ID is *permanent* — you cannot change it after publishing.

- Prepare a demo/test account.** If your app has a login, reviewers need working credentials. Missing this is a top rejection reason on both stores.

- Set up app signing & back up your keys.** iOS: distribution certificate + provisioning profile (or Xcode automatic signing). Android: enrol in Play App Signing and safeguard your upload key — losing it is painful to recover.

- Run a real beta.** TestFlight (iOS) and Play testing tracks — internal → closed → open (Android). Catch crashes before reviewers do.

- Finalise store creative.** App icon, screenshots, and copy (details per store below). Keep a single source of truth so both listings stay consistent.

- Confirm compliance basics.** Age rating info, encryption/export declaration (iOS), and an in-app account-deletion path if you offer account creation (Apple requires it).

STEP 2 Apple App Store listing

Set up in App Store Connect. Character limits are hard caps.

- Metadata within limits.** App name ≤ 30 , subtitle ≤ 30 , keywords field ≤ 100 , promotional text ≤ 170 , description ≤ 4000 characters. Support URL required.

- App icon.** **1024×1024 px**, no transparency, no rounded corners (Apple masks it).

- Screenshots.** Supply the largest size per family — 6.9" iPhone **1320×2868** (required) and, if your app runs on iPad, 13" iPad **2064×2752**. 1–10 each. PNG/JPEG, RGB, flattened (no alpha). Apple scales them to smaller devices.

- App Privacy “nutrition labels”.** Declare exactly what data you collect and whether it's used to track. Must match real behaviour. Add App Tracking Transparency prompt if you track across apps.

- Age rating questionnaire.** Answer honestly — mismatches trigger rejection.

- Pricing & availability.** Price tier (or free), in-app purchases, and territories. Remember Apple's IAP requirement for digital goods.

- Review notes + demo login.** Add reviewer notes and demo credentials in App Review Information. Sign in with Apple is required if you offer third-party social login.

Apple's most common rejection reasons

- Crashes, bugs, or broken links found during review.
- Placeholder content, incomplete info, or metadata that oversells the app.
- Login required but no working demo account provided.
- Privacy: missing policy, or App Privacy labels that don't match behaviour.
- Using private/non-public APIs, or not using IAP for digital goods.

STEP 3 Google Play listing

Set up in Google Play Console. The Data safety form and target API level catch the most people.

- Store listing copy.** Title **≤30**, short description **≤80**, full description **≤4000** characters. Choose an accurate category.

- Graphic assets.** App icon **512×512** (32-bit PNG, alpha), feature graphic **1024×500**, and **2–8** phone screenshots (tablet shots recommended for reach).

- Content rating (IARC).** Complete the questionnaire to receive official ratings.

- Data safety form.** Declare data collection, sharing, and security practices — must match what the app actually does. Inaccurate declarations get apps removed.

- Target audience & content.** Set target age; if you target children, the Families policy adds requirements. Complete Ads, News, and any feature declarations.

- Target API level.** New apps & updates must target **Android 16 (API 36)+** from 31 Aug 2026 (Wear OS/TV: API 35+). Google requires targeting within one year of the latest Android release.

- Upload a signed App Bundle.** Publish an **.aab** (not an APK) and enrol in Play App Signing. Add app-access instructions/demo login for review.

- New personal account? Plan the closed test.** Newer personal developer accounts must run a closed test with **20+ testers for 14 days** before applying for production access — budget that time.

STEP 4 Submit & release

Ship deliberately — a staged rollout limits the blast radius of a bad build.

- iOS — upload the build.** Push via Xcode or Transporter, select it in App Store Connect, then submit for review.
- iOS — choose release type.** Manual, automatic, or *phased release* (gradual over 7 days). Phased is the safer default.
- Android — create a production release.** Promote a tested build to the production track and review the release summary.
- Android — staged rollout.** Start at a small percentage, monitor vitals, then increase. You can halt or resume anytime.
- Set pricing, countries & date.** Confirm availability, in-app products, and any coordinated launch date/marketing.

STEP 5 After you're live

Launch day is the start line, not the finish.

- Watch stability.** Xcode Organizer (iOS) and Play Console vitals (Android crash & ANR rates). Exceeding Play's bad-behaviour thresholds can suppress your listing.
- Respond to reviews.** Reply quickly, fix what recurs, and watch your rating trend.
- Track the numbers.** Installs, retention, and conversion rate on each store page.
- Iterate with ASO.** Test screenshots and copy — Play store-listing experiments and Apple Product Page Optimization let you A/B test.
- Keep it current.** Plan an update cadence and bump your target API level each year to stay compliant.

Five gotchas that stall launches

- No live privacy-policy URL — set it up *first*, both stores demand it.
- No demo login for reviewers — the #1 avoidable rejection.
- Android: forgetting the 20-testers / 14-day rule on new personal accounts.
- Data safety / App Privacy labels that don't match the app's real behaviour.
- Lost signing keys — back up your Android upload key and iOS certificates.

Rather have **someone ship it** for you?

AppVerra is a founder-led studio — three co-founders write the code, no account managers, no outsourcing. We've shipped 150+ apps for 700+ customers, with Flutter MVPs live in about six weeks. If you'd rather hand the launch (and this whole checklist) to a team that has done it hundreds of times, let's talk.

Book a call → appverra.co/contact-us

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