QUICK START GUIDE

Mailchimp Integration

with BulkSMS.com

Connect Mailchimp to the BulkSMS Integration Gateway with your API key, create message templates and send bulk SMS to your audiences and segments.



Welcome to BulkSMS.com

Trusted, scalable SMS messaging for your business

IN THIS GUIDE

01 Get your Mailchimp API key

02 Connect the Integration Gateway

03 Create templates and send bulk SMS

mailchimp

BULKSMS.COM INTEGRATION GATEWAY FOR MAILCHIMP

VERSION 4.1 · UPDATED 2026/10/22

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01 Foreword

The Mailchimp integration sends bulk SMS to the members of a Mailchimp audience or segment, personalised with their merge fields. Before you start, make sure you have the following ready.

BulkSMS account
To log in to the BulkSMS Integration Gateway

Mailchimp API key
Profile → Extras → API keys in Mailchimp

Phone numbers
Your members' numbers in a Phone merge field in each audience you send to

The Mailchimp integration is for bulk messaging from the Integration Gateway. It doesn't add SMS activity, replies or delivery updates to your Mailchimp contacts, and it isn't used from Mailchimp automations.

02 Mailchimp API Key

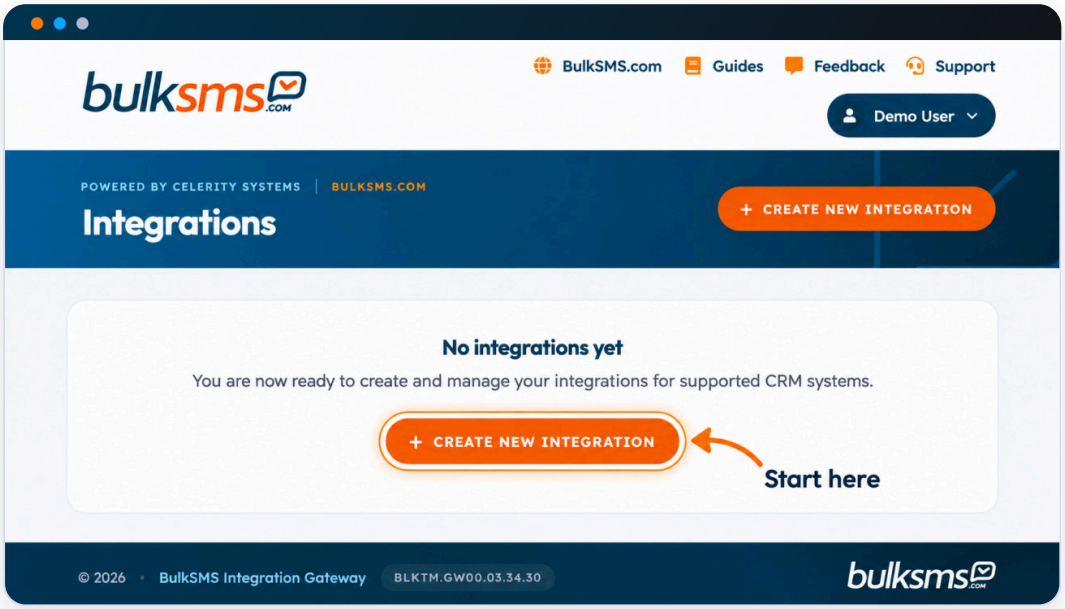
The integration connects to Mailchimp with an API key. You can use an existing key or create a new one for the Integration Gateway.

1. Log in to Mailchimp at https://login.mailchimp.com/.
2. Click your profile, then choose **Extras → API keys**.
3. Copy your API key, or create a new key and copy it.

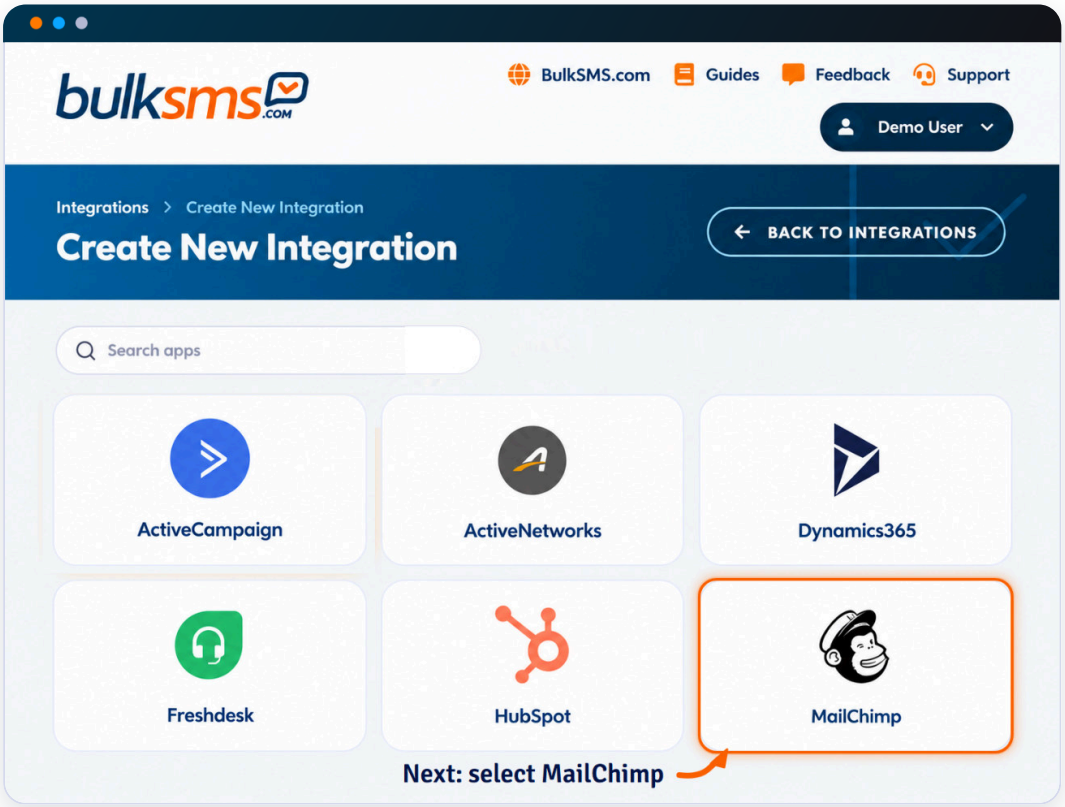
! Copy the whole key, including the part after the dash at the end (for example `-us17`). The integration uses that part to find your Mailchimp account's server, so a key without it won't connect.

03 Integration Setup

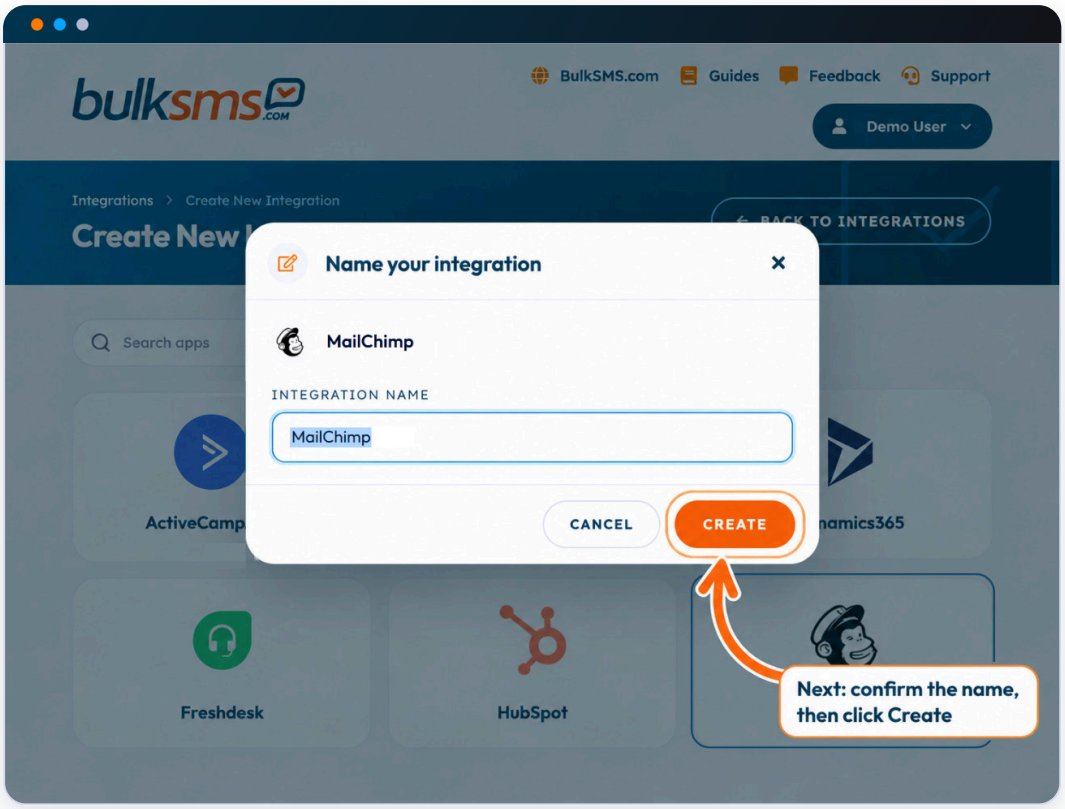
1 Sign up or log in to the BulkSMS Integration Gateway at bulksms.com/integration-gateway and click **Create New Integration**.



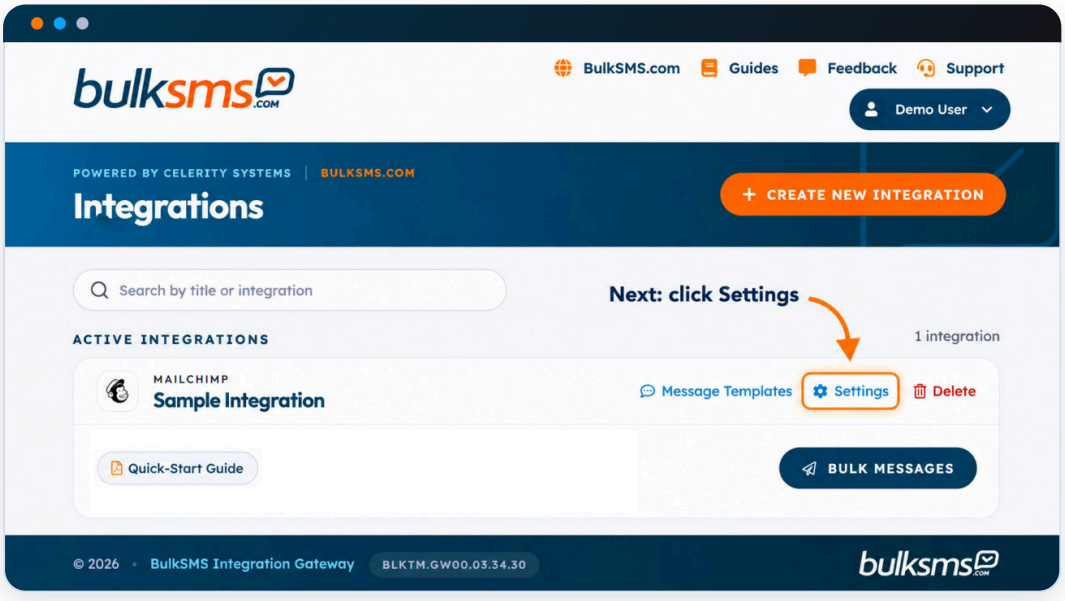
2 Select **MailChimp**. You can type in **Search apps** to find it quickly.



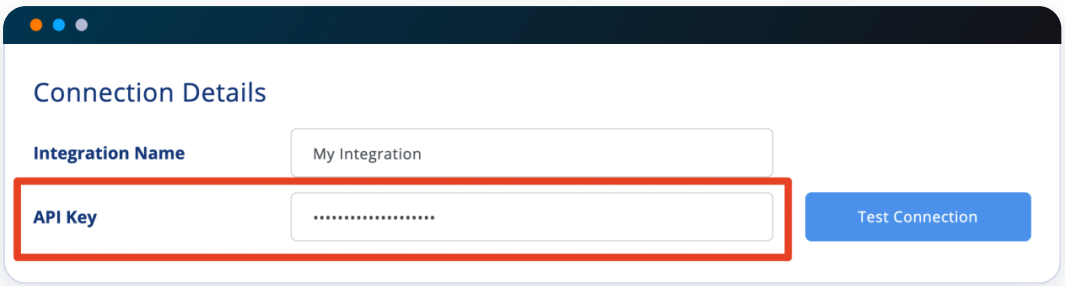
3 Give your integration a name, or keep the one suggested, and click **Create**. The name can use letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens and underscores, up to 40 characters.



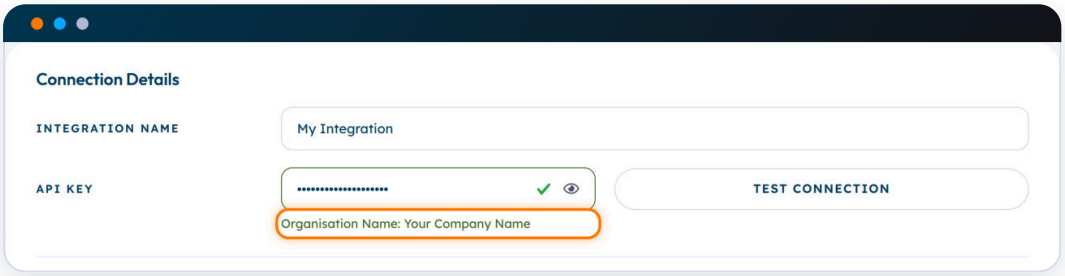
4 Your integration now appears on the Integrations page. Click **Settings**.



5 Under **Connection Details**, paste your Mailchimp key into **API Key** and click **Test Connection**.



6 When the connection works, the field turns green and your Mailchimp organisation name appears underneath.



7 Complete the rest of the page, then click **Save Settings**:

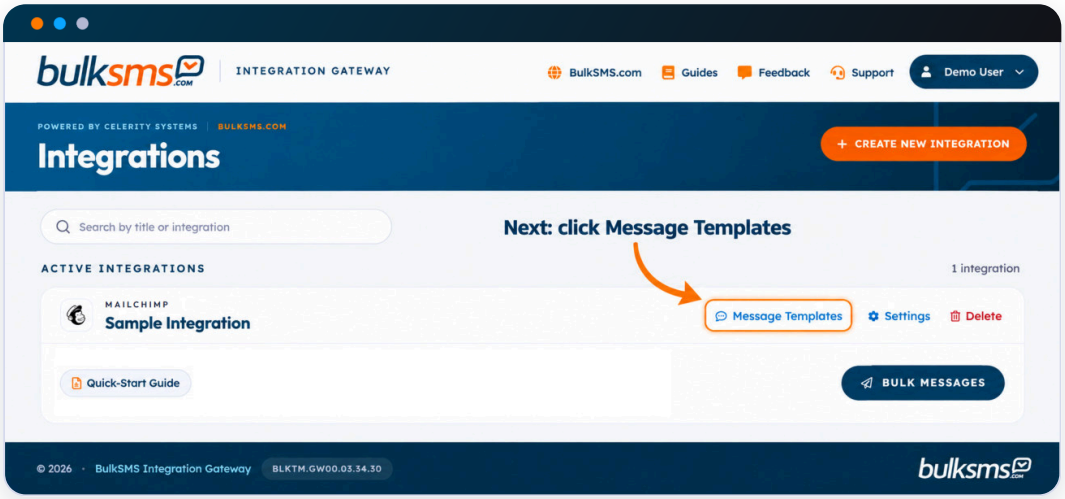
- **Default Country Code** – filled in for you when you prepare a bulk message, and added to numbers that don't include one (see Sending Tips).
- **Force Country Code** – changes when the country code is added. Leave it off unless you're sure (see Sending Tips).
- **Select Phone Field** – the merge field that holds your members' numbers: **Phone (default merge field)** (merge tag PHONE) or one of the Phone merge fields found in your audiences.
- **Notification Email** – where the Integration Gateway sends notifications about this integration.

! **Select Phone Field** applies to every audience you send to. If you choose a merge field that only exists in one audience, members of other audiences are skipped. Test the connection before you save: the settings are saved even if the API key doesn't work.

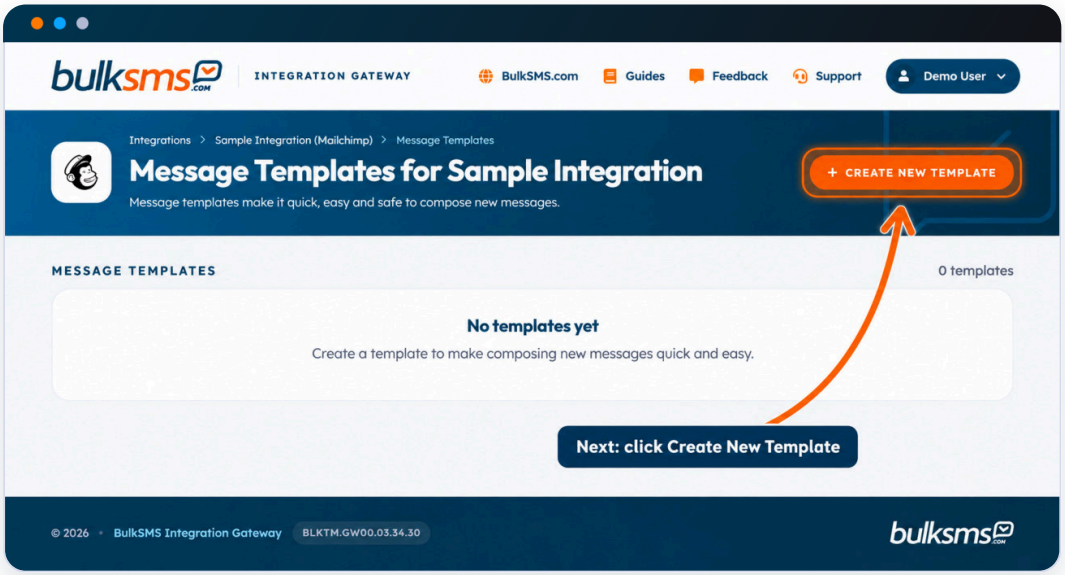
04 Message Templates

Templates let you save messages you send often, with tokens that personalise each message for the member.

1 On the Integrations page, click **Message Templates** for your integration.

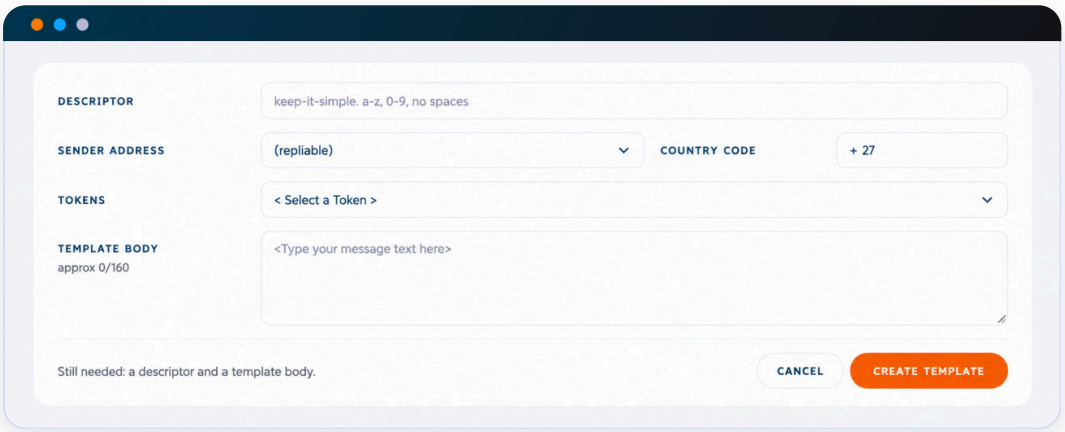


2 Click **Create New Template**.

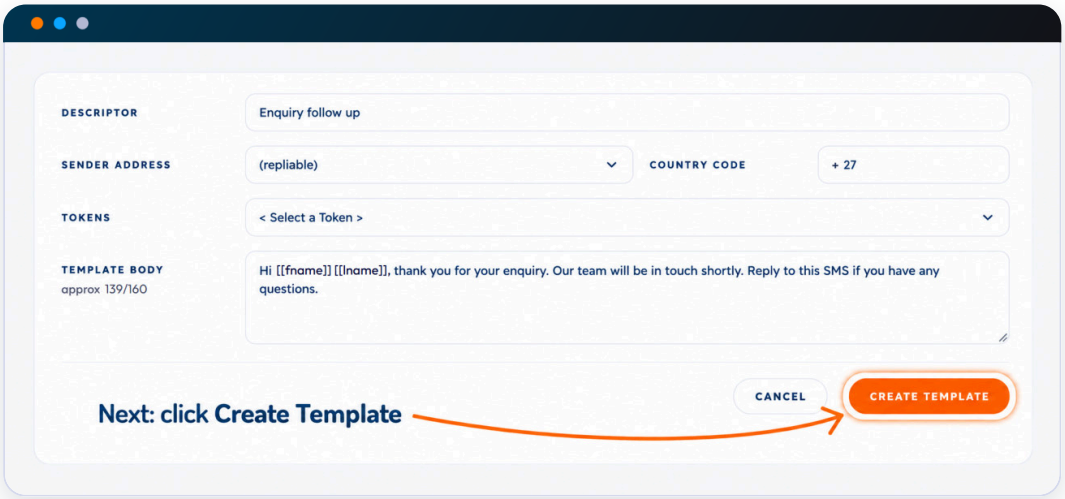


3 Fill in the template:

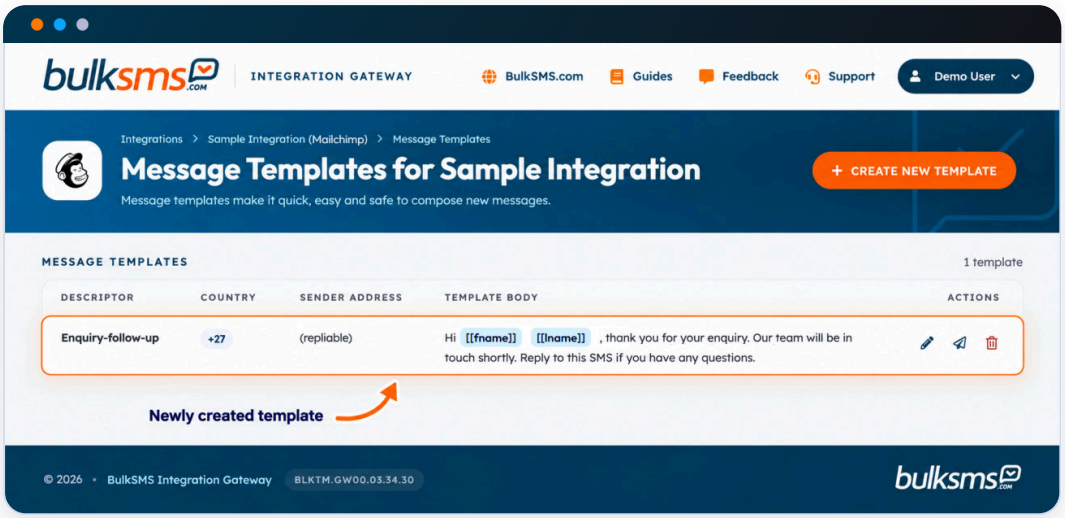
- **Descriptor** – a name for the template, using letters, numbers, spaces and hyphens (up to 30 characters). Spaces are saved as hyphens.
- **Sender Address** – keep **(repliable)** if you want members to be able to reply.
- **Country Code** – the default for this template. You can change it when you prepare a message.
- **Tokens** – pick a member field to insert it into the message. The list also shows the merge fields of each of your audiences. See Sending Tips.
- **Template Body** – your message. The counter shows the approximate length against 160 characters.



4 When the template is complete, click **Create Template**.



5 Your new template is listed under **Message Templates**. Use the icons on the right to **edit** it, **prepare a bulk message** from it, or **delete** it.

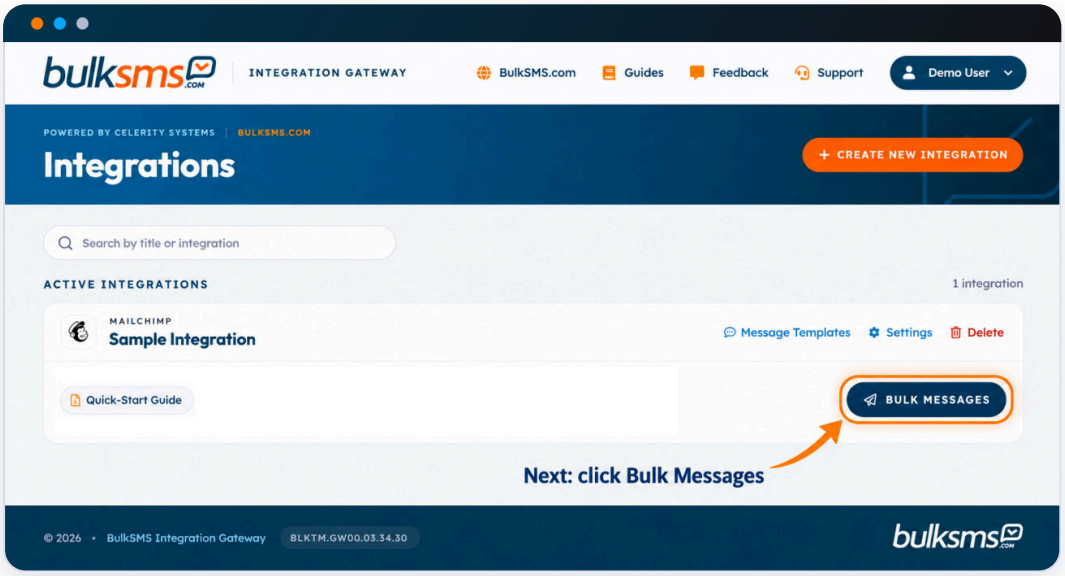


05 Bulk Messaging

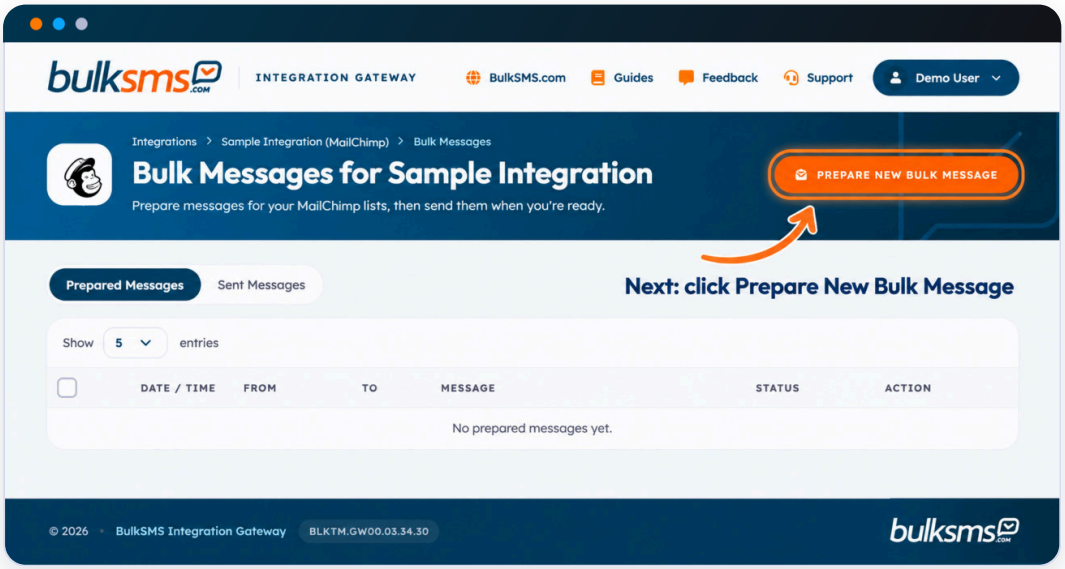
Send an SMS to the members of a Mailchimp audience, or of one segment in it. You prepare the message first, check a sample, then send it.

Prepare the message

1 On the Integrations page, click **Bulk Messages** for your integration.

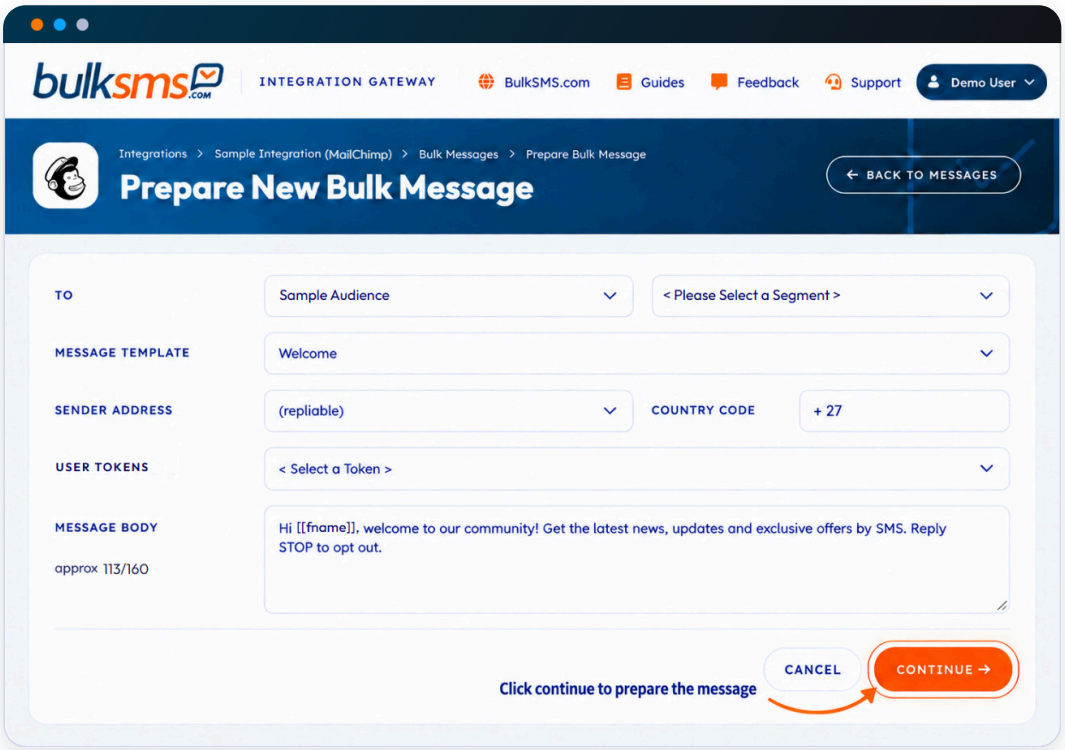


2 Click **Prepare New Bulk Message**.

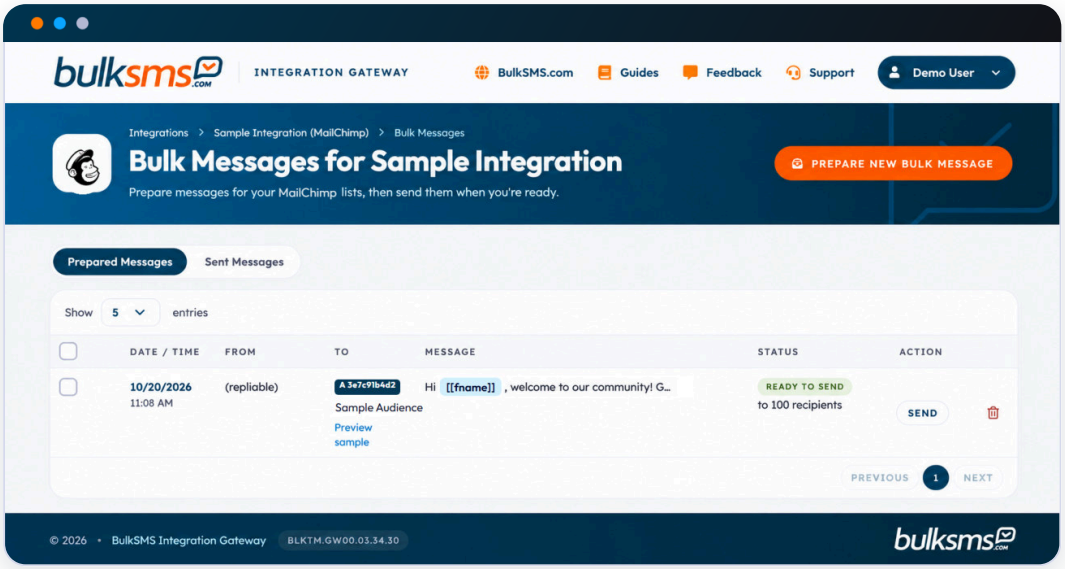


3 Fill in the form, then click **Continue**:

- **To** – choose the audience. To narrow it down, choose a segment in the second list; leave it on **< Please Select a Segment >** to send to the whole audience.
- **Message Template** – optional. Choosing one fills in the message, sender and country code, and you can still edit them.
- **Sender Address** and **Country Code** – as for templates.
- **User Tokens** and **Message Body** – write or adjust the message, adding tokens as needed. Once you choose an audience, the token list shows its merge fields.

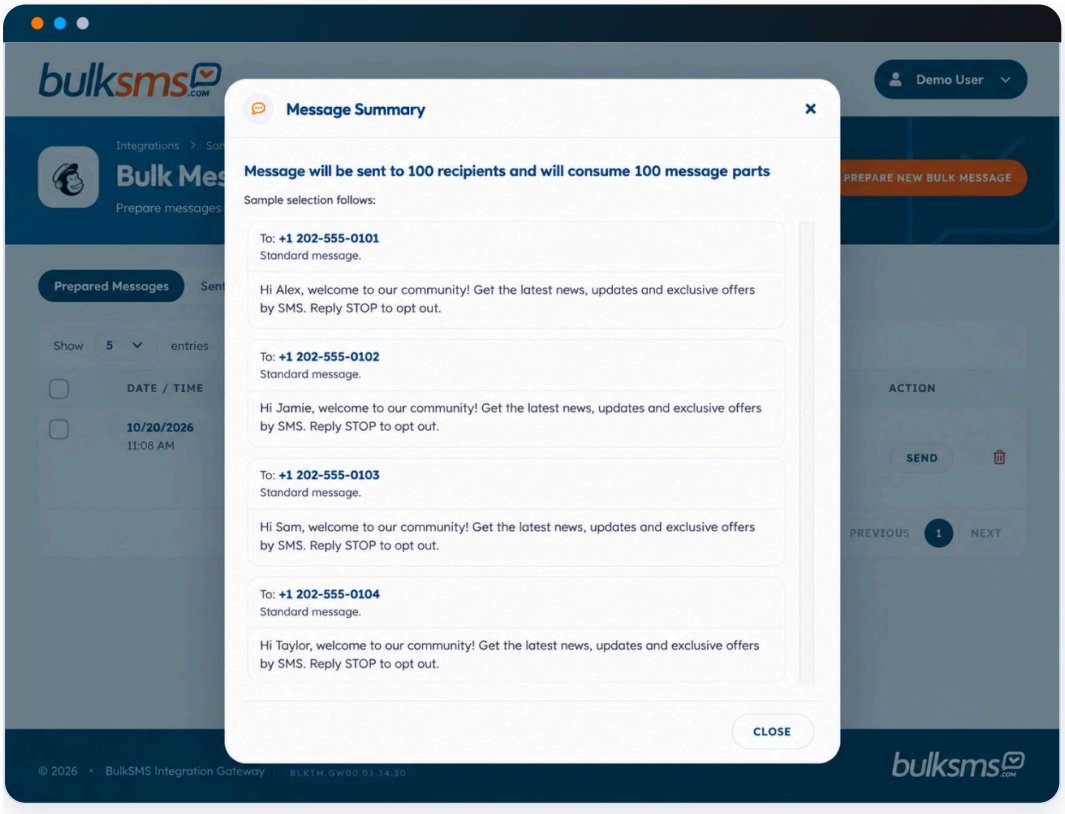


4 The integration collects the members and lists the message under **Prepared Messages**, with **A** (audience) or **S** (segment) and its ID in the To column. When it shows **Ready to Send** you can preview it, send it, or delete it with the bin icon.

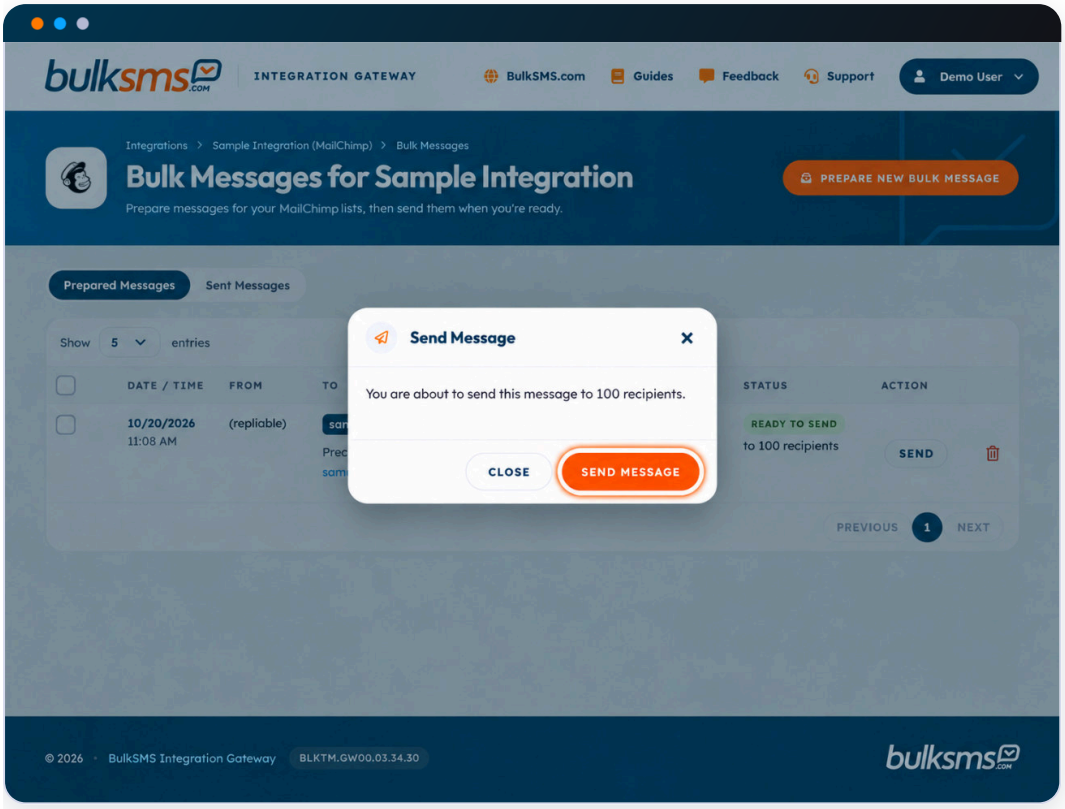


Preview and send

Click **Preview sample** to see how the message looks for a sample of up to 100 members, with each member's tokens filled in. The summary also shows how many recipients and message parts the send will use.

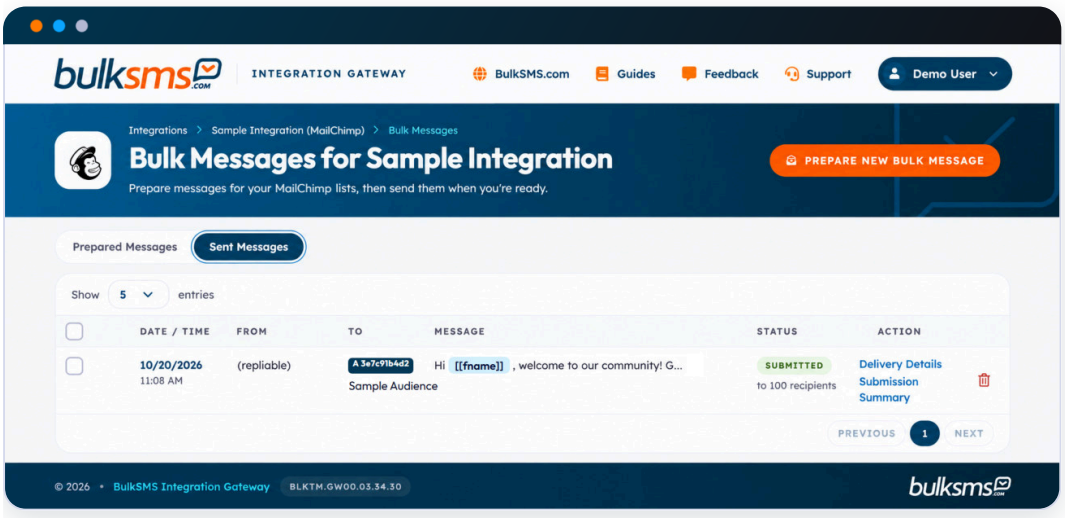


When you're happy, click **Send** and confirm with **Send Message**.



Track your message

Sent messages move to the **Sent Messages** tab. Click **Delivery Details** to see what happened to each message, or **Submission Summary** for totals, including any members that were skipped.



06 Sending Tips

Who receives a bulk message

- **Every subscribed member** of the audience or segment that has a number receives the message. Unsubscribed and cleaned members are left out.
- Messages go to the merge field chosen in **Select Phone Field** on the Settings page. Members with nothing in that field are skipped.
- Duplicates aren't removed: two members sharing a number will both be messaged.
- One bulk message can include up to **10,000 members**. For a bigger audience, send to segments of up to 10,000 members each.

Phone numbers and country codes

Numbers are sent in international format. If a number in Mailchimp doesn't include a country code, the integration adds the country code from the message. **Force Country Code** on the Settings page changes when it is added. With a country code of 44:

NUMBER IN MAILCHIMP	FORCE COUNTRY CODE OFF	FORCE COUNTRY CODE ON
`07700900123`	`447700900123`	`447700900123`
`7700900123`	`7700900123` (not valid)	`447700900123`
`12025550143`	`12025550143`	`4412025550143` (wrong)
`+12025550143` or `0012025550143`	`12025550143`	`12025550143`

i The safest option is to store numbers in Mailchimp with a **+** and the country code (e.g. +44 7700 900123). Only turn on Force Country Code if all your members are in one country and their numbers are saved without a country code.

Message length

- One SMS holds up to **160 characters**, or **70** if the message contains Unicode characters such as emoji or some accented letters.
- Longer messages are sent in several parts, and each part uses credits. The Prepare screen shows an approximate character count and a **Long Message** warning with the number of parts.
- A message can't be sent if it reaches 10 parts or more—the **Continue** button stays disabled until you shorten it.

Tokens

Commonly used member tokens:

TOKEN	INSERTS	TOKEN	INSERTS
`[[fname]]`	First name	`[[email]]`	Email address
`[[lname]]`	Last name	`[[phone]]`	Phone
`[[birthday]]`	Birthday	`[[address]]`	First line of the address

Any merge field can also be used by its merge tag, e.g. `[[FNAME]]`; the token lists show each field as "Name (merge tag: TAG)". When preparing a bulk message, use merge fields from the audience you're sending to.

If a member has no value for a token, they are skipped (First Name and Last Name are simply left blank). Smart token options let you control this:

OPTION	EXAMPLE	EFFECT
`:default=`	`Hi [[fname:default=there]]`	Uses "there" when the member has no first name.
`:if(>n)`	`[[fname:default=friend:if(>10)]]`	Uses the default if the value is longer than 10 characters.
`:if(unicode)`	`[[lname:default=friend:if(unicode)]]`	Uses the default if the value contains Unicode characters, so the message stays at 160 characters per part.

Sender address

- **(repliable)** – members can reply.
- **A phone number** – members can reply to that number.
- **A name** (e.g. your brand) – members **can't reply**.

> **Opt-outs:** the Integration Gateway doesn't unsubscribe members who reply STOP, and bulk messages don't check Mailchimp subscription status. Keep members who opt out of SMS out of the audiences and segments you send to—for example, remove them or clear their phone field.

07 Troubleshooting

YOU SEE	WHAT TO DO
“Please enter a valid API key.”	Paste your Mailchimp API key before clicking **Test Connection**.
“Connection failed. Bad credentials.”	Copy the whole key again, including the part after the dash (e.g. `-us17`), and check it hasn’t been disabled in Mailchimp. If you’ve replaced the key with one from a different Mailchimp account, click **Save Settings**, reopen Settings and test again.
“Special characters are not allowed.” (Integration Name)	Use only letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens and underscores, up to 40 characters.
Only **Phone (default merge field)** in Select Phone Field	Your audiences have no other merge fields of type Phone. Add one in Mailchimp, or keep the default PHONE field.
“Please select an Audience and try again.”	Choose an audience under **To** before clicking Continue.
Prepared message shows **ISSUE** “Max processing limit exceeded.”	The audience or segment has more than 10,000 members. Delete the message and send to smaller segments.
Prepared message shows **ISSUE** “No recipients”	No member had a usable number. Check that the field chosen in Select Phone Field exists in this audience and that members have numbers in it.
Members skipped: “Phone field … not found in this audience.”	The phone field chosen on the Settings page doesn’t exist in the audience you sent to. Choose a field that this audience has, or add it in Mailchimp.
Members skipped: “MSISDN is invalid”	The member’s phone field is empty, or the number isn’t valid once the country code is applied (under 3 or over 15 digits, or still starting with 0). See Phone numbers and country codes.
Members skipped: “Missing data for … token.”	The member has no value for a token in your message. Add a default, e.g. `[[fname:default=there]]`.
“Message contains the following invalid token: …”	Check the token’s spelling and square brackets, or choose it from the User Tokens list. Merge fields must belong to the audience you chose.
Continue is greyed out	Enter a message, and check it is under 10 parts.

You can download the list of skipped members, with the reason for each, from the Prepared Messages table.

Questions

We're here to help you every step of the way.

Please email **support@bulksms.com** or visit **www.bulksms.com** for other contact options.

Please be sure to mention **your username** and that you are using the **Integration Gateway for a Mailchimp integration**.

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