

BIRIM · START HERE

Approvals for Google Sheets (Free edition)

Make your copy

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15cEjJ4SisJnDiekFJswlZ92BL_qgOBli403YoYjAMVs/copy

Open the link while signed in to Google and click **Make a copy**. Then follow the setup steps below.

Approvals for Google Sheets: setup and guide

Send any row for approval to anyone with an email address. They approve or request changes from a link, without a Google account. Decisions count only for the exact version of the row they saw. Everything stays in your spreadsheet.

Editions

- **Free:** sheet row approvals, personal links, approval without a Google account, version reset, log.
- **Full (Personal and Business):** everything in Free, plus automatic reminders (Flow 5).

Need approvals for Google Form responses (leave, expenses, purchases)? That's our separate app, Form Approvals: <https://birimone.pages.dev/form-approvals/>

What you need

- A Google account (free Gmail or Google Workspace).
- Email limits come from Google: about 100 approval emails a day on free Gmail, 1,500 on Workspace.

Set up (once, about 5 minutes)

1. **Make your copy.** Open the template link and click **Make a copy**. The script comes with it.
2. **Open the script.** In your copy: **Extensions > Apps Script**.
3. **Deploy the approval page.** Click **Deploy > New deployment**, choose type **Web app**, set **Execute as: Me** and **Who has access: Anyone**, then **Deploy**.
4. **Allow access.** Google asks you to authorize. Because the script now lives in *your* copy and is not published by a company, Google shows "Google hasn't verified this app". Click **Advanced**, then **Go to ... (unsafe)**, then **Allow**. The script asks only to:

- read and change **this spreadsheet only**,
 - send email as you (for approval requests),
 - show the Approvals menu,
 - run once a day for reminders (full edition only).
5. **Copy the web app URL** shown after deploying.
 6. **Back in the sheet:** menu **Approvals > Set up this spreadsheet**. Open the **Settings** tab and paste the URL next to *Web app URL*. Add your email next to *Notify me at*.

Flow 1: send something for approval

1. On the **Approvals** tab, add a row: **Item** (a short title), **Link** (optional: a design, a document, a page), **Details** (optional text), **Approvers** (one or more emails), **Rule** (*All* must approve, or *Any* one is enough).
2. Select the row (or several rows) and choose **Approvals > Send selected rows for approval**.
3. Each approver gets a personal link. **Status** shows *Waiting*; **Decisions** shows each approver (... waiting, ✓ approved, ✗ changes).

Flow 2: what an approver sees

1. An email "Please review and approve: ..." with a link. No Google account, no sign-in.
2. A page with the item, its link and details.
3. They type their name and click **Approve this version**, or write a comment and click **Request changes**.
4. You get an email, the row's Status updates, and the **Log** tab records who, when, the comment and the version.

Flow 3: change after approval

1. If you edit the Item, Link or Details after people decided, their decisions stop counting. Status becomes *Waiting (row changed since decisions)* and the Log records it.
2. Approvers can open the same link again and decide on the new version, or you can send fresh links with **Send selected rows for approval** (this replaces earlier links and decisions).

Flow 4: cancel

Select rows and choose **Approvals > Cancel selected requests**. Their links stop working.

Flow 5 (full edition): automatic reminders

1. In **Settings**, set **Reminder after (days)** (default 2; 0 turns reminders off).
2. Choose **Approvals > Turn on daily reminders** (once). Every morning the script checks for approvers who have not decided.

3. An approver who has not decided after that many days gets a reminder, at most 3 times. Each reminder carries a fresh link and the previous link stops working.
4. If you edited the row after someone decided, they get "Updated, please review again" instead, so they see the new version.
5. Reminders stop when the request is approved, changes are requested, or it is cancelled. Turn them off with **Approvals > Turn off reminders**.

Problems and solutions

Problem	Why	Solution
"Paste your web app URL in Settings first"	The approval page is not deployed or the URL is missing	Do setup steps 3–6
"Google hasn't verified this app"	The script runs in your own copy; it is not a Marketplace app	Advanced > Go to ... > Allow. It can only use this spreadsheet
Approvers see "Sorry, unable to open the file" or must sign in	The web app is not shared with "Anyone", or your Workspace admin blocks public web apps	Redeploy with <i>Who has access: Anyone</i> ; on Workspace, ask your admin to allow it
"This link has expired"	Links last 7 days by default	Change <i>Link expiry</i> in Settings (1–30) and send again
"This link is not valid any more"	The row was sent again or cancelled	Use the newest email, or send again
Emails not arriving	Spam folder, or Google's daily email limit was reached	Ask approvers to check spam; wait until the next day
Status did not change after I edited the row	The change was in a column that is not part of the version (only Item, Link, Details count)	Put what the approver must see in those columns
I changed the code and approvers still see the old page	Web app deployments keep the version you deployed	Deploy > Manage deployments > edit > Version: New version
An approver says their link stopped working after a reminder	Each reminder sends a fresh link and retires the old one	Use the link from the newest email
Nobody was reminded	Reminders are not turned on, <i>Reminder after</i> is 0, or the daily email limit was used up	Turn on daily reminders and check Settings; reminders resume the next day
Is an approval a legal signature?	No	It is a sign-off record: who approved which version and when

Privacy

Everything is stored in your spreadsheet: approvers' emails, decisions, names, comments and dates. Nothing is sent to us or anyone else. Approval links are stored only as fingerprints (hashes), so even someone who can see the sheet cannot reuse them.

