PHP version compatibility

Keep a theme's PHP code (operators, modules, classes) working on every PHP version Exponential supports - PHP 8.0 is the oldest, PHP 7.4 usable without support - with php -l per version, what typically breaks, and how...

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This page is for designers whose theme contains PHP: template operators, module views, classes. A theme of only templates and stylesheets is not affected by PHP versions directly.

The facts

- The 6.0.15 changelog states that **PHP 8.0 is the oldest supported version** (5 October 2026), and from 29 October 2026 PHP 7.4 is usable without support (Why Exponential supports PHP 7.4).
- The root `composer.json` allows PHP from 8.0 up (`^8.0 || ^8.1 || ... ^8.5` and later minor versions).
- The published themes state their own ranges, for example `sevenx_themes_media` `^8.0 || ^8.1 || ^8.2 || ^8.3 || ^8.4` and `cjw_themes_jumper` `>=8.0`.

Step by step: check a release

1. List the PHP files of the theme: `git ls-files '*.php'`.
2. Run the syntax check with every PHP version you claim, if they are installed:

   Shell

   ```
   for f in $(git ls-files '*.php'); do php8.0 -l "$f"; php8.5 -l "$f"; done
   ```

   (The binary names depend on your system.) Expected: `No syntax errors detected` for each file and version.
3. Run the theme's pages on the oldest and the newest PHP you claim and read the error log for deprecation notices.
4. Write the tested range into `composer.json` `require.php` and the compatibility matrix (A compatibility matrix).

What typically breaks

Change in newer PHP	In a theme
Deprecated dynamic properties (8.2)	An operator class that sets undeclared properties: declare them
Stricter types in built-in functions	Passing `null` where a string is expected: cast or check first
Removed functions	Old helpers copied from earlier code

Related pages

- Declaring compatibility
- Template operators in a theme
- Free documentation: this page is free to copy, translate and improve under the GNU FDL 1.3.

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