

Ahrefs: What Does the Lock Mean Beside a URL?

Short answer: it means the page uses HTTPS. That's it. It's not a trust badge. It's not a VIP pass. It's just "the connection is encrypted." Lock ? legit.

The little lock icon in your Ahrefs backlink list (like next to a domain) is the HTTPS indicator. It's the same concept browsers used to show in the address bar. It doesn't mean "this link is gold" or "safe for work." It just means Ahrefs crawled that URL over a secure HTTPS connection.

A lock means HTTPS. That's all. Your fraud detector still needs coffee.

What the Lock *Does* Mean

- The URL was fetched over **HTTPS** (TLS/SSL). The data in transit is encrypted.
- It mirrors the same convention browsers use for HTTPS pages.

What the Lock *Doesn't* Mean

- It doesn't certify the site is trustworthy or safe.
- Phishing and junk sites *also* use HTTPS. Bad guys love free certificates.

Gen-X reality check: the lock is like the shrink-wrap on a CD. It's sealed, not sacred. You can still open it up and find Nickelback.

Why Ahrefs Shows It

Ahrefs reflects the web as it is. Since HTTPS is the standard, their UI flags it. Treat it as a *transport* signal, not a *quality* signal.

SEO Angle (because you're here for SEO)

- HTTPS is a lightweight ranking factor and a user-trust baseline. If you're still on HTTP, fix that yesterday.
- Use the icon as a reminder to confirm your canonical pages resolve on HTTPS and that HTTP ? HTTPS redirects are tight.

Browser Context

Chrome replaced the traditional lock with a neutral "tune" icon to stop people from treating it as a trust badge. Translation: encryption is table stakes, not a gold star.

How to Vet a Page Beyond the Lock

- Check the content, authorship, and outbound links.
- Scan for malware and spam signals. Sanity-check with multiple tools.
- Look at the backlink profile and anchor text patterns in Ahrefs, not just the cute icon.

Bottom Line

Lock = encrypted connection. Trust = earned. Don't confuse the two.

Sources

- [Ahrefs on HTTPS basics and the “lock” as an indicator of HTTPS in browsers.](#)
- [Chrome’s explanation for retiring the lock icon to avoid false “trust” assumptions.](#)
- [FBI and security orgs reminding people the lock doesn’t mean safe.](#)
- [UW–?Madison Information Technology](#)

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