Checklist

Shopify Theme Update Checklist

For owners whose theme has custom code. Tick each box on the draft, not the live theme.

Start here

List every customized file before you click Add to draft themes. Heavy code edits take 10 to 25 hours to redo, so know the list first.

1. Before you click update (5)

- [ ] Duplicate the live theme in Online Store
- [ ] **Pull a local copy with shopify theme pull**
  The code editor's Timeline history is finite, so keep your own copy.
- [ ] List every customized file, from Git or your developer
- [ ] **No list? Diff the live code against a clean copy of your version**
  For Dawn, the matching release on GitHub.
- [ ] Note any app code pasted into theme files

2. Review the updated copy (5)

- [ ] **Click Add to draft themes and read the card message**
  Editor settings, sections, blocks and templates copy over.
- [ ] Every edit the card says could not be included is re-applied
  Stop if no
- [ ] Re-apply edits against the new markup, one file at a time
- [ ] **Confirm each custom CSS selector still matches an element**
  A clean merge does not mean the rule still styles anything.
- [ ] Confirm custom scripts still find their buttons and events

3. Before and after you publish (6)

- [ ] Test product page, variant picker and add to cart on a phone
- [ ] Test cart drawer, discount field and checkout button
- [ ] Repeat the buy path test on desktop
- [ ] Every buy path test passes on the draft
  Stop if no
- [ ] Publish in a quiet hour
- [ ] Watch add-to-cart and checkout numbers for 48 hours

How long it takes

Editor changes only	**1 to 2 hours**
A handful of code edits	**3 to 8 hours**
Heavy edits, 20+ files	**10 to 25 hours**
Vintage theme	**A migration: 25 to 40 hours**

My scoping estimates for a typical DTC store, not a quote.

Your theme

Theme name and version: _____

Customized files: _____

Card message after update: _____

Ticked: _____ / 16 Any STOP item unticked: fix it before anything else.

Want the update done for a fixed price? kaspianfuad.com/services

Kaspian Fuad, Shopify developer and CRO consultant

Built a three-storefront Plus program with custom code kept out of Horizon's own files.

kaspianfuad.com/blog/update-shopify-theme-without-losing-customizations | v1.0 | 2026-11-25
Sources: Shopify Help Center, Updating themes, Nov 2026; Shopify/dawn releases on GitHub, Nov 2026