

Missing /etc/nginx folder

Not entirely sure how this might have happened, but I once SSHed into one of my servers to find out that the entire `/etc/nginx` folder has disappeared. I tried looking elsewhere or using `locate`, but the configuration folder was nowhere to be found. Just like that the `/var/log/nginx` folder has disappeared as well. It might have happened during an upgrade, but after some thorough searching, I still couldn't figure out when or why it happened.

Strangely, all services (websites) using Nginx were running fine and the entire service was active and running as well, still happily pointing to the non-existent config file:

```
$ systemctl status nginx
● nginx.service - nginx - high performance web server
   Loaded: loaded (/lib/systemd/system/nginx.service; disabled; vendor preset: enabled)
   Drop-In: /etc/systemd/system/nginx.service.d
            └─override.conf
   Active: active (running) since Wed 2021-09-15 21:40:43 CEST; 3 days ago
     Docs: https://nginx.org/en/docs/
  Main PID: 98 (nginx)
    CPU: 20.643s
   CGroup: /system.slice/nginx.service
           └─ 98 nginx: master process /usr/sbin/nginx -c /etc/nginx/nginx.conf
              └─101 nginx: worker process

Sep 15 21:40:43 hostname systemd[1]: Starting nginx - high performance web server...
Sep 15 21:40:43 hostname systemd[1]: Started nginx - high performance web server.
```

```
$ cd /etc/nginx
-bash: cd: /etc/nginx: No such file or directory
```

However, if the server or Nginx randomly restarted, it wouldn't be able to start again and all hell would break loose.

Fortunately, I have backed up my config file, which is really the only thing that matters, the rest can be rebuilt.

Stop Nginx

```
$ sudo systemctl stop nginx
```

Try to restart it, and just like I expected:

```
$ sudo systemctl restart nginx
```

```
Job for nginx.service failed because the control process exited with error code.
```

```
See "systemctl status nginx.service" and "journalctl -xe" for details.
```

```
$ sudo systemctl status nginx
```

```
● nginx.service - nginx - high performance web server
```

```
Loaded: loaded (/lib/systemd/system/nginx.service; disabled; vendor preset: enabled)
```

```
Drop-In: /etc/systemd/system/nginx.service.d
```

```
└─override.conf
```

```
Active: failed (Result: exit-code) since Sun 2021-09-19 16:25:01 CEST; 5s ago
```

```
Docs: https://nginx.org/en/docs/
```

```
Process: 22419 ExecStart=/usr/sbin/nginx -c /etc/nginx/nginx.conf (code=exited, status=1/FAILURE)
```

```
CPU: 11ms
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname systemd[1]: Starting nginx - high performance web server...
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname nginx[22419]: nginx: [alert] could not open error log file: open()
```

```
"/var/log/nginx/error.log" fa>
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname nginx[22419]: 2021/09/19 16:25:01 [emerg] 22419#22419: open()
```

```
"/etc/nginx/nginx.conf" failed (2:>
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname systemd[1]: nginx.service: Control process exited, code=exited, status=1/FAILURE
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname systemd[1]: nginx.service: Failed with result 'exit-code'.
```

```
Sep 19 16:25:01 hostname systemd[1]: Failed to start nginx - high performance web server.
```

Uninstall and reinstall Nginx

```
$ sudo apt purge nginx*
```

```
$ sudo apt install nginx
```

Fix configuration

Navigate to `/etc/nginx/conf.d` and rename the config file like before.

```
$ cd /etc/nginx/conf.d
```

```
$ sudo mv default.conf proxy.conf
```

I'm copying the config through SSH session, so just `$ sudo vi proxy.conf` and `Shift+Ins` and `Esc` and `ZZ` to save and quit.

Test config, final fixes

Test the configuration:

```
$ sudo nginx -t
```

```
nginx: [emerg] BIO_new_file("/etc/nginx/dhparam.pem") failed (SSL: error:02001002:system library:fopen:No such file or directory:fopen('/etc/nginx/dhparam.pem','r') error:2006D080:BIO routines:BIO_new_file:no such file)
nginx: configuration file /etc/nginx/nginx.conf test failed
```

Together with the config folder, my `dhparam.pem` file was also deleted, so we have to generate it again.

Generate secure `dhparam.pem`. This will take a loooooong time, especially on VPSes with a single core like in my case.

```
$ openssl dhparam -out dhparam.pem 4096
```

Test config again, it should be fine now:

```
$ sudo nginx -t
```

```
nginx: the configuration file /etc/nginx/nginx.conf syntax is ok
nginx: configuration file /etc/nginx/nginx.conf test is successful
```

Restart the service and check status to see if everything is working.

```
$ sudo systemctl restart nginx
```

Moral of the story – always backup at least your config files

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