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by **Genetrix Technology**

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If you build personalized links in Salesforce Marketing Cloud using `CloudPagesURL()` combined with subscriber data and UTM parameters, you likely hit a very painful wall in early 2026. What used to produce a manageable 180–255 character URL is now generating 400–580 character encrypted strings — and external systems are choking on them.

At Genetrix, we fielded multiple urgent calls from SFMC clients in the days following the January 2026 update. SMS gateways were rejecting sends. CRM integrations were silently truncating links. Analytics pipelines were breaking. This guide gives you the exact native workaround we are using across our client environments — no third-party shorteners, no extra budget, and full personalization preserved end to end.

What Happened in January 2026

On January 21, 2026, Salesforce deployed a mandatory, non-backward-compatible security fix across all Marketing Cloud Engagement instances. The vulnerability — catalogued as CVE-2026-22582 through CVE-2026-22586 — exposed subscriber PII through argument injection flaws in the legacy link encryption system, which used hard-coded cryptographic keys.

Salesforce's fix was technically sound: migrate all link encryption to **AES-GCM (Advanced Encryption Standard, Galois/Counter Mode)**. AES-GCM provides authenticated encryption combining confidentiality and integrity verification. The cost was URL length. The old scheme produced URLs of roughly 180–255 characters. AES-GCM's overhead pushed that to 400–580 characters — more than double.

January 2026 incident summary: On January 23, 2026, Salesforce forcibly expired every Marketing Cloud link generated before January 21. Every tracking URL, CloudPage link, and unsubscribe URL already in the wild stopped working. The new AES-GCM encrypted URLs then triggered a secondary deliverability crisis when Microsoft mail servers began inserting line breaks at 999-character boundaries, breaking DKIM signatures. Four days of near-total failure on Outlook and Hotmail domains followed before Salesforce re-engineered the header formatting on January 25.

The Clean Native Workaround: CloudPage Redirect Proxy

The solution is elegant and entirely native to SFMC. Instead of sending or storing the full encrypted URL, you store it in a Data Extension and use a simple CloudPage as a lightweight redirector. The link that goes into your SMS send, your CRM field, or your file export is short and clean. The heavy encrypted string stays inside SFMC until the moment the subscriber clicks.

redirect-flow.txt

```
Your send (short URL)
-> CloudPage (redirect proxy)
-> Data Extension (full encrypted URL)
-> Subscriber lands on final destination
```

Step-by-Step Implementation

1 — Create the Storage Data Extension

Create a new DE named `URL_Storage`. You need three fields at minimum: `SubscriberKey` as Text, Primary Key; `Full_Encrypted_URL` as Text with a length of 4000; and optionally `CreatedDate` and `CampaignName` for tracking purposes. The 4000-character length gives you safe headroom above the current 580-character maximum.

2 — Populate the DE Before Your Send

In your send automation — whether a Query Activity, Script Activity, or a Journey action — generate the full `CloudPagesURL()` value for each subscriber and write it to the DE against their `SubscriberKey`. This step ensures the encrypted URL exists in the DE at the moment any subscriber clicks the short link you send them.

3 — Build the Redirect CloudPage

Create a new CloudPage in Web Studio or Classic. Paste the following AMPscript. This page receives the short link click, looks up the full encrypted URL from the DE, and silently redirects the subscriber.

CloudPage – Redirect Proxy (AMPscript)

```
%%[

VAR @subKey, @fullURL

/* Receive the SubscriberKey from the short link query string */
SET @subKey = RequestParameter("sk")

/* Look up the full encrypted URL from the storage DE */
SET @fullURL = Lookup("URL_Storage", "Full_Encrypted_URL", "SubscriberKey", @subKey)

IF NOT EMPTY(@fullURL) THEN

    /* 301 = permanent redirect */
    Redirect(@fullURL, 301)

ELSE

    /* Fallback for expired or missing tokens */
    Redirect("https://yourdomain.com/error", 302)

ENDIF

]%%
```

4 — Use the Short CloudPage Link in Your Send

The URL you drop into your SMS, DE export, or any external system now looks like this:

Short link – used in SMS / DE export / external system

```
https://cloudpage.yourdomain.com/redirect?sk=%%SubscriberKey%%

/* Resulting length: typically 70-120 characters regardless of
   how long the underlying encrypted URL grows */
```

Pros and Cons of This Approach

What Works Well

- Zero cost — entirely native to SFMC
- Full AES-GCM encryption and PII security preserved
- Short, consistent URLs external systems can handle
- Click tracking available on the CloudPage
- Works for SMS, API sends, and file exports
- Scales cleanly across multiple campaigns and BUs

Trade-offs to Know

- One extra redirect hop (negligible latency in most cases)
- Click data registers on CloudPage first, not final destination
- Requires a small upfront setup per campaign or BU

Quick 2026 Implementation Checklist

- Use `CloudPagesURL()` to generate the full encrypted URL internally only — never send it directly to external systems.
- Create `URL_Storage` DE with `Full_Encrypted_URL` field set to Text, length 4000.
- Populate the DE per subscriber before or at the start of your send automation.
- Deploy the redirect CloudPage and test it with a known `SubscriberKey` before your first live send.
- Send only the short CloudPage link externally — SMS, CRM fields, file exports, API payloads.
- Upsize any CRM Text (255) fields storing Marketing Cloud URLs to Text Area (Long) to handle the new AES-GCM lengths.
- Monitor CloudPage performance via SFMC Tracking to catch any redirect failures early.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this affect click tracking in SFMC?

You get full tracking on the CloudPage URL itself. For end-to-end visibility through to the final destination page, add a simple SSJS write to a logging DE immediately before the `Redirect()` function. This captures the click event with a timestamp and subscriber key without any impact on the redirect speed.

Can I use this for SMS sends via MobileConnect?

Yes — this is actually the most common use case we are implementing for clients right now. MobileConnect has strict URL length limits and the new AES-GCM URLs break SMS character budgets immediately. The short CloudPage link typically falls well within a single SMS segment.

Is there a better long-term solution if budget becomes available?

Yes. Branded short domains via a proper URL shortening service, or MobileConnect's built-in shortener for SMS-specific use cases, are both cleaner long-term options. For now, this proxy pattern is the lowest-friction, zero-cost gold standard — and it is what we are recommending across all client environments until those options are viable.

Does this compromise security or PII protection?

No. The full AES-GCM encrypted URL never leaves SFMC until the actual click occurs. The short link only carries the `SubscriberKey`, which has no PII value on its own.

My CRM Text fields are still truncating. What do I fix?

Change any Salesforce CRM field that stores a Marketing Cloud URL from Text (255) to Text Area (Long). Standard Text fields have a 255-character hard limit which is well below the new 400–580 character AES-GCM output. Also audit any `CreateSFOBJECT` calls or custom integrations that pass Marketing Cloud URLs

downstream — these need the same field type update.

SFMC Giving You Trouble After the January Update?

The AES-GCM change broke more than just URL lengths. Genetrix has been helping SFMC clients audit and fix integrations, deliverability issues, and CRM field mapping since the January 2026 incident. If you are still dealing with the fallout, let's talk.

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