

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TEMPLATE MESSAGES



Databarracks

Overview

This guide has effective emergency message templates. These ease the pressure of writing, proof-reading and checking during a disaster. It includes key information for each audience, needing only minor adjustments for the specific incident.

This guide focuses on messages for:

- Internal audiences
 - o Crisis Management Team / Incident Response Team
 - o Staff
- External audiences

Messages to the Crisis Management Team should be simple and functional. Assemble the team at an agreed meeting point and/or conference-line to deal with the incident.

Messages to staff need to inform the team what has happened, what is required of them and when further updates will be provided.

Our recommendation for messages to external parties is to use one message that can be sent via email, posted on the website and social media. As the incident unfolds, you may want to create different messages suited to each audience. In the first instances however, it is better to provide a fast response suitable for all parties.

General advice

- Clear and regular updates show an organisation in control of its circumstances and breeds confidence
- Keep messages relevant, accurate and concise
- Be open and transparent but don't share every inner working of the organisation
- Don't exaggerate, speculate or lay blame
- Don't ignore or avoid making comment – if you don't provide information, people assume the worst

IT incident

IT incidents are common. They require special planning because they may affect your primary communication methods. This example shows how to respond to a ransomware attack quickly and effectively.

Crisis Management Team

Message 1

We are currently dealing with a [ransomware incident] and need to assemble the CMT. We will meet at [XX:XX] in [the board room] or dial into the meeting on [01234 567 890].



Staff

Message 1

We are currently dealing with a [ransomware incident] affecting [x systems and business units]. Our initial assessment indicates that [the infection is limited to a small number of internal systems and customer data is not affected].

We have invoked and are carrying out our [Cyber] Incident Response Plan.

All systems have been disconnected as a precaution to prevent the spread of the [ransomware infection].

Do not travel into the office until further instructed.

We have a reduced IT team performing technical support so please bear with us. Please avoid contacting IT support to allow the team to focus on the recovery.

We will provide further updates on the incident and service availability at [XX:XX].

Thank you in advance for your patience.

Message 2

Thank you for your patience. We have investigated the incident and have further updates.

The root cause of the [ransomware infection] has been found. Operations are now [safe and stable].

We are carrying out a recovery. During this time the following departments/business units will be affected:

- [Production]
- [IT]
- [Accounts]

All other departments are operating as usual.

All other departments should now return to the office and can work remotely.

[Production], [IT] & [Accounts] teams will be contacted individually with specific instructions.

We will provide further updates on the incident and service availability at [XX:XX].

External

Message 1

We are currently dealing with a [ransomware incident] affecting [x systems and business units]. Our initial assessment indicates that [the infection is limited to a small number of internal systems and customer data is not affected].

We have invoked and are carrying out our [Cyber] Incident Response Plan.

All systems have been disconnected as a precaution to prevent the spread of the [ransomware infection].

We will provide further updates on the incident and service availability at [XX:XX].

Thank you in advance for your patience.

Message 2

Thank you for your patience. We have investigated the incident and have further updates:

The root cause of the [ransomware infection] has been found. Operations are now [safe and stable].

We are carrying a recovery and during this time the following departments/business units will be affected:

- [Production]
- [IT]
- [Accounts]

We will provide further updates on the incident and service availability at [XX:XX].

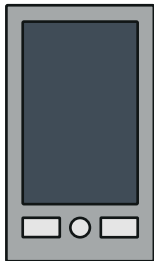
No access to office

Office unavailability is a key Business Continuity scenario. Causes can be flooding, fire or even threats like terrorism. This response example should cover all possible situations, with only minor adjustments needed from you.

Crisis Management Team

Message 1

There is a fire at the [Headquarters] and we need to assemble the CMT. We will meet at [XX:XX] at [disaster recovery site 1] or dial into the meeting on [01234 567 890].



Staff

Message 1

There is a fire at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

The fire was identified at [XX:XX], the fire brigade have responded and are now on-site.

Do not travel into the office until further instructed.

We will provide further updates on the incident as soon as we are able.

Message 2

There has been a fire at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

The fire was identified at [XX:XX] and the fire brigade was called. At [XX:XX] the fire was extinguished.

Staff safety is our first priority and the office was evacuated quickly. No one was seriously hurt but [X] members of the team were taken to hospital to be treated for minor injuries.

The building will now need to be repaired before it can be occupied again. We have invoked our Business Continuity plan. During this time, we will work from alternative premises at [50 Capital Square, City, Postcode]. Due to the reduced size of the office we will encourage remote working for those who are able.

Please report to [50 Capital Square, City, Postcode] tomorrow morning at [XX:XX] to be briefed.

External

Message 1

There is a fire at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

The fire was identified at [XX:XX], the fire brigade have responded and are now on-site.

We will provide further updates on the incident as soon as we are able.

Message 2

There has been a fire at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

The fire was identified at [XX:XX] and the fire brigade was called. At [XX:XX] the fire was extinguished.

Staff safety is our first priority and the office was evacuated quickly. No one was seriously hurt but [X] members of the team were taken to hospital to be treated for minor injuries.

The [fire] caused [some disruption] to operations. We are now operating at [100% capacity] and staff are working to reduce the backlog of work. We anticipate all delayed customer work will be fulfilled within [3 days]. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this period.

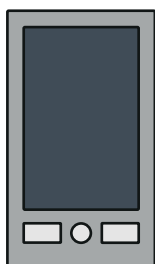
Utilities failure

Utility failure has similar impacts to IT incidents and office unavailability. It tends to require less explanation, so messages can be even more simple and concise.

Crisis Management Team

Message 1

There is a [power outage] at the office and we need to assemble the CMT. We will meet at [XX:XX] at [disaster recovery site 1] or dial into the meeting on [01234 567 890].



Staff

Message 1

[Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode] is [without electricity due to a power cut].

Do not travel into the office until further instructed.

Our IT is not hosted in this office and is unaffected - so those who work from home or at [site x] and [site y] can continue to work.

We have been informed that [power] should be restored later today. We will provide another update at [XX:XX] or as soon as [power] is restored and operations are stable.

Message 2

There has been a [power outage] at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

[Electricity] has been restored. Please travel to the office now.

External

Message 1

There has been a [power outage] at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

[Electricity] should be restored later today. We will provide another update at [XX:XX].

Message 2

There was a [power outage] at [Company X Headquarters, 1 Street, City, Postcode].

[Electricity] has now been restored and [Company X] is again operating normally.

The [power outage] caused [limited disruption] to operations. We are now operating at [100% capacity] and staff are working to reduce [a small backlog of work]. We anticipate all delayed customer work will be fulfilled within [by the end of the day].

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this period.

Information to include in further updates

- Investigation details – what has been discovered
- Recovery progress details
- Other 3rd parties involved in the recovery such as IT partners, insurance companies, the police
- When to expect further updates. Early updates will need to be frequent - perhaps every hour or two, but later updates may be daily or even less frequently

Short Messages for staff

Mass/emergency notification systems often rely on SMS messages (or other short format messages).

It is useful to have very short, simple notifications pre-prepared.

SMS-type messages are useful because they are likely to be noticed first and alert staff to check email or other channels for further details.

Incident type	Notification
No access to office	There has been a [fire] at the office. It is closed today, do not come into the office. Please await further instruction.
Transport problems	Due to a [major road accident], it is not possible to access the office. Please do not travel into the office until instructed.
IT incident - systems down	We are currently dealing with [downtime of IT systems]. Accessing systems remotely is [not possible]. We are working to resolve the issue and will update you when systems are working.
IT incident - cyber	We are dealing with a [cyber incident]. [IT systems have been taken down]. We are working to resolve the issue and will provide updates shortly. Do not travel into the office until instructed.
Utilities failure	There is a [power outage] at the office. It is closed today, do not come into the office. Please work remotely and await further instruction.

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