

Press statement *template*

For when something goes wrong and people are asking. Send the short holding statement first, as soon as you have confirmed the basic facts; follow it with the full statement when you know more; and agree the answers to likely questions before anyone speaks. Replace everything in [brackets] and delete the grey notes. If there is a legal or safety issue, have a lawyer read it first.

01 Before you write

Write down what you know for certain, what you do not know yet, who signs off, and who speaks. Say nothing you have not confirmed.

Confirmed facts: [list]

Not known yet: [list]

Signs off: [names]

Spokesperson: [name, title]

02 Holding statement

About 100 words, sent within the first hour or two. Say what happened, that you are dealing with it, what affected people should do, and when you will update. No speculation, no blame.

[Date and time]

We are aware that [what happened]. [Who is affected, if known.]

We are [what you are doing now].

[What affected people should do, and how to reach you.]

We will share an update by [time and date].

03 Full statement: what happened

When you know more. The facts in order: what, when, how many people, and the cause if you are sure of it.

[What happened, when, and how many people were affected]

[The cause, if confirmed]

04 Full statement: what you are doing

What you have done, what you are doing now, and what will change so it does not happen again.

[Done]

[Doing]

[Changing]

05 Full statement: apology and quote

If you got it wrong, say sorry plainly, once. One quote from a named leader that takes responsibility, not one that repeats the facts.

"[Quote]," said [name], [title].

06 Q&A prep

The questions journalists, customers and staff will ask, with the agreed answer to each. Include the hard ones. If the answer is not known yet, the answer is when you will know.

Q: [question] A: [answer]

Q: [question] A: [answer]

Q: [question] A: [answer]

07 Who hears first

The order matters: the people affected and your own staff should never learn it from the news.

1. [Staff]

2. [Affected customers]

3. [Partners, investors, regulators if required]

4. [Press and public]

08 Where it goes

Every place people will look: your website or status page, social channels, email to customers, and replies to journalists. Use the same words everywhere.

[Website or status page]

[Social channels]

[Email]

[Press replies]

09 Update log

Each update with its time, so nobody contradicts an earlier one.

[Time]: [what was said, where]

10 Media contact

One named person who will answer every call and email the same day.

[Name], [title], [email], [phone]