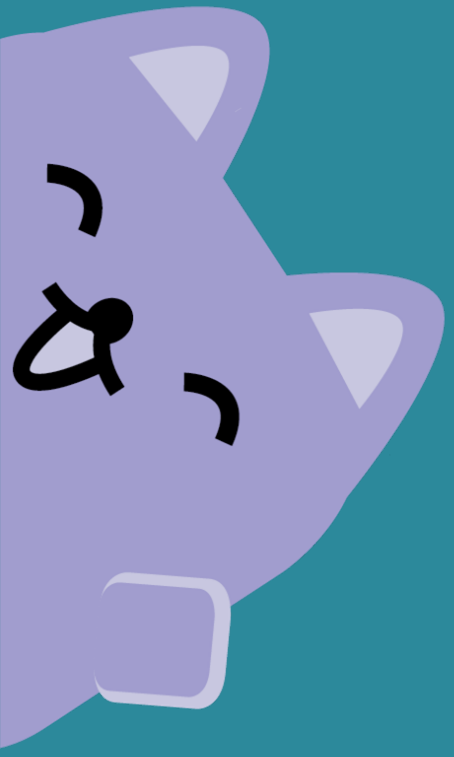
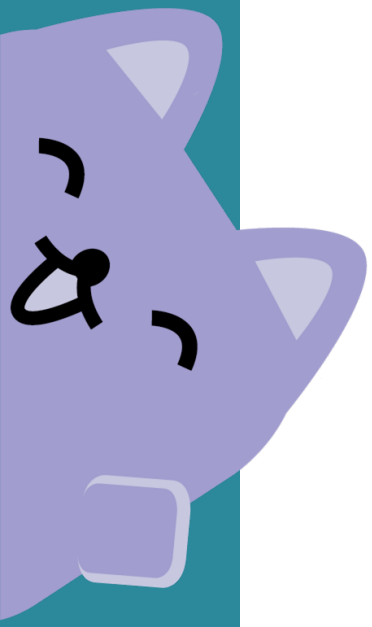


COMMUNICATING WITH HELPLINE REPORTERS

Response templates

What's Inside

Ten response templates to support you in every stage of the case lifecycle:



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Pro tip: For a ton more templates to help you navigate even the trickiest helpline reports, check out this blog post!

The first contact

Your first interaction with a reporter sets the tone for their experience. Your goal should always be to schedule a follow-up conversation to build rapport, get a better understanding of the circumstances, and ensure trust in the process.

- **Named reporter**
- **Anonymous reporter**
- **Vague report (named or anonymous)**

Named reporter

WHEN TO SEND IT:

As soon as possible after a concern is reported through your helpline, but no later than one business day.

WHO GETS IT:

Reporters who shared their contact information or identity either through the intake form or within the report narrative.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

Even if you think you have enough information to investigate, this message builds goodwill, lets the reporter state their expectations (so you can manage them), and ensures you're not investigating a misinterpreted allegation.

Subject: Next Steps

Hi _____,

Thank you for raising this concern—I appreciate that you took the time to share this with us. We'll treat this confidentially, and we ask that you do the same.

To get started, we'd like to set a time to talk more about this. (Don't worry! This is our normal process; we want to make sure we're on the same page about the issue, expectations, and any additional information we might need to look at. We'll also walk you through the process and what to expect.)

Let me know what times work for you over the next few days, and we'll get something on the calendar.

[OPTIONAL NON-RETALIATION MESSAGE: And as always, remember that we don't permit retaliation—so if you think someone is taking any kind of action against you for raising this concern, contact me immediately and let me know.]

Thanks again for speaking up!



Anonymous reporter

WHEN TO SEND IT:

As soon as possible after a concern is reported through your helpline, but no later than one business day.

WHO GETS IT:

Reporters that chose not to disclose their contact information or identity when submitting their report.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

This message helps the reporter understand that they can remain anonymous while providing the necessary information to conduct a thorough investigation.

It also explains that it's easier to avoid misinterpreting allegations and understanding the situation if the reporter is willing to have a dialog.

PRO TIP: *Include a link in your reply to schedule a call or anonymous chat session.*

Attach or link a Broadcat job aid that explains your helpline review process to help ease fears and promote transparency.

Subject: Next Steps

Thanks for speaking up! I know it can be a tough decision, and we appreciate you telling us about your concern. We'll treat this confidentially, and we ask that you do the same.

Our first step is always to make sure we fully understand the concern by connecting with you. This is our normal process; it ensures we're on the same page about the issue, expectations, and any additional information we might need to look at. We'll also walk you through the process and what to expect.

We can have this conversation anonymously through the helpline, or we can set up a confidential conference line that you can dial into to speak with us directly. Let us know what you're most comfortable with.

[OPTIONAL NON-RETALIATION MESSAGE: And as always, remember that we don't permit retaliation—so if you think someone is taking any kind of action against you for raising this concern, contact me immediately and let me know.]

[CLOSING GREETING]



Vague report (named or anonymous)

WHEN TO SEND IT:

As soon as possible after a concern is reported through your helpline, (but no later than one business day), and you need more information to proceed.

WHO GETS IT:

Reporters who left out important details necessary to investigate the concern.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

This message shows you are making a good faith effort to look into their concern. It politely and clearly explains that you can't move forward without specific key details. Plus, the questions you have are neatly organized into a numbered list, which makes responding simple for the reporter.

PRO TIP: *Include a link in your reply to schedule a call or anonymous chat session.*

Attach or link a Broadcat job aid that covers how you keep reporter's identity confidential and steps you take to protect them from retaliation.

Subject: More information needed

Thanks for speaking up! We'd like to get started on looking into your concern, but we need to get a few more details so we know where to start.

Specifically, we need to know:

1. [Include the bare minimum you'd need to know to open a case, like who, what, when, and how.]

You can share these details by replying to this message through the helpline or we can set up a confidential conference line that you can call and speak with us directly. Let me know what you're most comfortable with.

Thanks again for your help—we look forward to hearing from you.

[CLOSING GREETING]



Follow-ups for more info

Use the next few templates when you need to follow up for more information from the reporter. You'll likely use these most for anonymous reports, but you can also leverage them when you hit a roadblock mid-case and need more details.

- **First follow-up**
- **Second follow-up**
- **Third (and last) follow-up**

First follow-up

WHEN TO SEND IT:

5-7 business days after the first contact.

WHO GETS IT:

Reporters who've been unresponsive to your first request for more information.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

You're leading with the importance of the request by calling out that you can't move forward without their response. You're also listing the questions that you need answered so it's easy for the reporter to understand exactly what you need to know.

PRO TIP: *Be specific about why these missing details are needed so it's clear that you're taking the concern seriously.*

Subject: More information needed

Hi there,

I am following-up on my previous note—we need more information from you so that we can look into [a specific allegation]. Specifically, we need to know:

1. Question 1
2. Question 2
3. Question 3

We're happy to connect in any way you feel comfortable, but we can't move forward until we hear back from you.

Please reply with these additional details or let me know a good time to connect this week.

[CLOSING GREETING]



Second follow-up

WHEN TO SEND IT:

5-7 business days after the first follow up.

WHO GETS IT:

Unresponsive reporters.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

You're asking the reporter for a meeting in case responding to your questions in writing feels overwhelming.

PRO TIP: *Focus on explaining why you can't move forward without these details so it's clear you're committed to investigating the concerns once you have more to go on.*

Subject: Please respond—more information needed

Hi again,

I am following up on my last note. We need more information about [add specifics if you're hitting a roadblock mid-investigation; otherwise just remove this sentence] in order to move forward.

Let me know a good time to speak this week—or can you otherwise send us this information in response.

[CLOSING GREETING]



Third (and last) follow-up

WHEN TO SEND IT:

You've already asked for additional information multiple times and it's been over a month since the report was made. You've also determined that there are no other reasonable ways to get the missing details.

WHO GETS IT:

Unresponsive reporters.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

You're making it very clear that nothing else will happen if they don't respond and that you've made several other attempts to connect with them.

PRO TIP: *If the reporter was named, consider calling them directly. If you reach their voicemail, keep your message vague, like "Hey, this is [NAME] on the Compliance Team. I need your help with something. Please give me a call back when you get this."*

Make sure to send this before closing the case so that any auto-generated message about case closure comes after this was sent to the reporter.

Subject: Not enough information to proceed

Hello,

I am reaching out one last time to let you know the status of your case. Because we do not have enough information to proceed, we have no choice but to administratively close this case.

When you can, please respond to this note with more information and we'll be happy to re-open the matter.

Thanks again for speaking up!

[CLOSING GREETING]



Status updates

The next two templates are your “holding pattern” notes—a way to keep reporters engaged during the investigation. Use these when you don’t need more information but want to reassure them that the case is progressing.

- **Initiated by the Compliance Team**
- **Requested by the reporter**

Initiated by the Compliance Team

WHEN TO SEND IT:

7-14 business days after your last communication or when promised.

WHO GETS IT:

Helpline reporters and any interviewed witnesses who shared additional concerns or requested case updates.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

You're proactively keeping everyone in the loop regardless of whether you have any major updates. It's a great way to keep the lines of communication open, show empathy, and reinforce that you care about the issues that were raised.

PRO TIP: *Consider noting when they'll hear from you again, so no one is left wondering.*

Subject: Update

Hi [NAME IF YOU HAVE IT],

I have a quick update on the matter you raised.

We're still actively reviewing your concerns and are making good progress.

We don't have any additional questions for you at this time, but I wanted you to know where things stood. As I'm sure you can appreciate, it's critical that our work is thorough and so our process might take longer than expected.

I'll do my best to keep you informed, but please feel free to check in at any time for a status update, and I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have.

Thanks again for speaking up—I appreciate it.

[CLOSING AND SIGNATURE]



Requested by the reporter

WHEN TO SEND IT:

You've received a request for a status update on the investigation.

WHO GETS IT:

A helpline reporter or other involved party who reached out.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

This message recognizes that things are taking longer than the requestor expected and explains why this is. It also keeps communication open by inviting additional information.

PRO TIP: *If you have an idea of timeline, it's OK to mention it but don't make any promises or give specific dates. Instead say things like, "I'll be in touch in the next few weeks" or "we hope to finish the investigation later this month."*

Then, if your timeline changes, reach back out with an update to let them know.

Subject: Update

Hi [NAME],

Thanks for reaching out. We're actively reviewing this, but it's still in progress. It's important to us that we do a thorough review—and sometimes, like here, that means things take a little bit longer so we can be sure that we've got it right.

If you have any additional information you'd like to share, please let me know and I'll be happy to set up a time to chat, or you can share it through the helpline if you prefer.

Thanks again for raising this, and please don't hesitate to check in any time that you want an update. Otherwise, I'll be in touch if we need more information or when we close the case.

[CLOSING AND SIGNATURE]



Closing the case

These final two templates help you close the loop on the case without fretting over putting too much in writing.

- **Named reporter**
- **Anonymous reporter**

Named reporter

WHEN TO SEND IT:

Your review or investigation has concluded.

WHO GETS IT:

The helpline reporter, key interviewed witnesses, and other involved parties who asked for case updates.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

It goes beyond "this case is closed" and shares how the findings were determined without sharing confidential details. It also mentions that improvements were made to avoid future issues or confusion and then concludes by expressing appreciation for speaking up.

PRO TIP: *Don't let this important step fall through the cracks. Recognizing everyone's contributions and letting them know where the case stands generates good will and motivates others to work with you in the future.*

Subject: Your case is now closed

Hi [NAME],

I have a final update on the concern you raised. We've now completed our review, and I wanted to let you know that the case is closed and the concerns you've raised were deemed [SUBSTANTIATED, UNSUBSTANTIATED, PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED].

Per our normal process, we found and reviewed relevant documents, interviewed necessary witnesses, and made case findings—all tailored to the issue that you raised.

If you'd like to know more, I'm happy to set up a call with you to catch up. As you can appreciate, my ability to give you specific findings or actions will be somewhat limited to protect the confidentiality and privacy of those involved, but I'm happy to share what I can about process improvements or fixes we've implemented.

Either way, thanks again for taking the time to raise this concern—you did the right thing. And please don't hesitate to reach out again when you see something that could be a potential issue.

[CLOSING AND SIGNATURE]



Anonymous reporter

WHEN TO SEND IT:

Your review or investigation has concluded.

WHO GETS IT:

Reporters who remained anonymous for the duration of the review or investigation process.

WHY THIS MESSAGE WORKS:

Anonymous reporters are usually more anxious about speaking up, so this message starts and ends with empathy by reminding them they did the right thing and how it positively impacts everyone at your organization.

Subject: Your case is now closed

Thanks again for speaking up. I know takes courage to make your voice heard when you see a potential issue, and I really appreciate you coming forward. People like you help us make [COMPANY] a better place to work.

At this time, our review has been completed. Per our normal process, we found and reviewed relevant documents, interviewed necessary witnesses, and made our findings—all as appropriate to the concerns you raised. Based on this evidence, this report has been [SUBSTANTIATED, UNSUBSTANTIATED, PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED].

As you can appreciate, I can't give you specific findings or actions to protect the confidentiality and privacy of those involved, but I wanted to make sure you knew that we conducted a thorough review and are taking appropriate actions. If you'd like to discuss further, I'm happy to set up a call to chat more about the specifics.

Either way, I'd like to personally thank you for raising the concern—it matters. Please don't hesitate to reach out again when you see something that could be a potential issue.

[CLOSING GREETING]

