

Plain Language in Practice: Before and After

Scenario: Service Update Notice

Version A: Formal Language

Notice of Service Update

This correspondence is to inform you of a forthcoming change to your service account, effective May 1. As part of a scheduled system update, certain service features will no longer be available in their current form.

To avoid any disruption, account holders are required to review the updated service terms and complete the necessary confirmation process no later than April 15. Failure to complete this process within the specified timeframe may result in a temporary suspension of service.

Additional information, including revised terms and conditions, is available on our website. If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact our customer support office during standard business hours, 8am-6pm.

Key characteristics:

dense paragraphs

passive voice

abstract language

deadline buried

Version B: Plain Language

Service Update: Action Required

Your account will be updated on **May 1**, and some features will change.

To keep your service active:

1. Go to our website
2. Review the updated service terms
3. Follow the prompts to confirm your account

Deadline: April 15

If you do not complete these steps by April 15, your service may be temporarily suspended.

For more information, visit our website.

If you have questions, contact customer support between 8am-6pm.

Key characteristics:

short sentences

active voice

clear action

defined next steps

The information is the same in both versions. The difference is how quickly a reader can understand what's changing and what action to take.

Both versions meet basic communication requirements. Only one makes the next step clear.

