

Greater clarity and 24% fewer words

Original text

If the information needed is not received within thirty days of the date of this letter, your file will be put on inactive status. Your claim, however, will remain on our system and can be reopened at any time. Should you need further assistance or wish to pursue the claim at a later date, please contact me at XXXXXXXX and I will be happy to help you.

Edited text

If we do not receive the requested information by <date>, your claim will become 'inactive'. However, your claim will remain on our system and can be re-activated at any time. If you have any questions or would like to re-activate the claim, please contact me on <phone>. We're here to help.

Explaining the edits

If we do not receive the requested information by <date>, your claim will become 'inactive'. However, your claim will remain on our system and can be re-activated at any time. If you have any questions or would like to re-activate the claim, please contact me on <phone>. We're here to help.

Comment [GP1]: A letter is a conversation between your organisation and the reader. It is appropriate to use words like 'we', 'us', 'me', 'I', 'you'.

Comment [GP2]: Uses the active voice rather than the passive. Generally prefer the active voice; it is easier for readers and conveys the message more quickly.

Comment [GP3]: Identify the information that the reader needs to provide. Presumably, this has been described elsewhere in the letter.

Comment [GP4]: You know the date the letter is being sent, and your systems should be able to add 30 days. There is no need to require the reader to do a date calculation.

Comment [GP5]: 'become inactive' is clearer than 'put on inactive status'. 'Inactive status' is a flag on your systems, not something the reader necessarily understands.

Comment [GP6]: The 'however' belongs at the beginning of the sentence rather than splitting the thought as is done in the original. Keeping single thoughts together is easier for readers.

Comment [GP7]: We re-activate inactive files; we re-open closed files. Muddling the terminology can confuse the reader.

Comment [GP8]: My pet hate: using 'should' when we mean 'if'. 'should' has an alternate meaning, as in 'you should do that'. This alternate meaning is more common in spoken English, and so may cause problems for less literate readers or those with English as a 2nd language. 'If' is the best word to use when writing conditions.

Comment [GP9]: 'Questions' is probably more appropriate. 'Further assistance' implies the reader needs help – a little demeaning.

Comment [GP10]: 'like' is better than 'wish' here. It conveys more intent than just 'wishful thinking'.

Comment [GP11]: 'Re-activate' is probably better understood than 'pursue'. (the first definition of pursue in my dictionary is 'follow with intent to kill, capture or overtake')

Comment [GP12]: This could be a variable field with the extension number of the person dealing with this claim.

Comment [GP13]: I short, sharp final sentence that states the intention of your organisation.