



Progress Report

A progress report is a report in which you are updating information about a project. Progress reports make it possible for management and clients to stay informed about a project and to change or adjust assignments, schedules, and budgets. These types of reports are used for projects that have many steps from onset to completion and are issued at regular intervals. If you are sending your progress report within your company, send a memo, but if it is going outside of your company you should send a letter.

1. Tone:

- A. Whether you are reporting good or bad news, your job in the report is the same: you provide a clear and concise account of your activities.
- B. Avoid defensive language. Even if you are behind schedule, maintain honest communication.
- C. There are instances where you may be tempted to either withhold information or mislead your reader. This is unethical. Always respond honestly.
 - I. If the deliverable isn't what you thought, describe the events that led to the conclusion and explain how the deliverable will be different than what you expected.
 - II. If you are running out of time, explain why you are behind and give a new expected date for completion.
 - III. If you are going over budget, you must report this and explain why you need more money.

2. Format:

- A. Create a template of your first progress report for the entire project and use that template for each consecutive report after the first.
- B. Incorporate headings and subheadings to organize the report and maintain the same headings for the duration of the project.
 - I. You may divide the headings under Project Information, Costs, Work Completed, and Work Schedule.
 - II. Not only will this organization make reading the report easier for your audience, but it will also help keep you on track while writing the report.

3. Content:

The progress report has a subject line, an introduction, a body, a conclusion, and possible recommendations.

- A. Subject Line: Be specific—"Progress Report for XXX July 14, 2011." Include the subject line in all forms of communication—e-mail, memo, or letter. Even if you are merely sending an email or message for the purpose of asking a question or making a comment, use the subject line with the project name.
- B. Introduction: The introduction includes the following:
 - I. The title of the project.
 - II. The date.
 - III. The names, titles, and contact information of the participants.
 - IV. The project status summary.
 - V. General information about the schedule, cost, and expected completion date—reveal if you are on schedule or behind, etc.
 - VI. If this is the first progress report of the project, you will identify the project, methods used, materials, cost, and completion date.



- VII. After the first progress report, your introduction will contain only a transitional introduction that briefly refers to the first report.
- C. Body: The body includes the following:
 - I. A description of the status of the project in detail.
 - II. The cost to date as far as materials, labor, etc.
 - III. An estimate of the remaining costs of materials, labor, etc.
 - IV. A “Work Completed” section does the following:
 - a) Details what you have done up to that point.
 - b) Details what you have left.
 - c) Work schedule that details what you will do between certain dates.
 - d) Complications you may foresee.
 - e) Include tables, graphs, drawings, or charts to assist your audience members’ understanding of the information and in presenting the organization of schedules.
- D. Conclusion: The conclusion includes the following:
 - I. A summary of the predicted schedule.
 - II. An explanation of future steps.
 - III. The reasons for any delay.
 - IV. A predicted completion date.
 - V. Recommendations:
 - a) Recommended actions related to the schedule.
 - b) Request for the next group of resources and workers.
 - c) An estimated delivery date for the necessary machinery, tools, materials etc.