

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Helpful Hints For Writing An Apology Letter

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You should consider using the following as a guide to structure and a way to set out your letter of apology.

1. Reason for writing - Make a statement about the concerns for everyone's feelings about the offence or offences. For example:

- I am writing to you because I am feeling _____ about how I have treated you.
- I am writing to you because I am feeling _____ about you and _____ about what I have put you through.

2. Statement of apology - Give clear and specific details of the offence and harm caused. For example:

- I am very sorry for _____.
- I want to apologise for _____.

3. Statement of responsibility - Make a statement about who is responsible for what happened. For example:

- I know I am fully responsible for what happened and my actions that day. I should not have _____ because _____.
- I know _____ (co-offenders names if appropriate) and I am responsible for what happened that day. I know I am accountable for my actions and the choices I made that day. We should not have _____ because _____.

4. Understanding of impact to others - Write about what you have learnt about how the offence has impacted on people. For example:

- I am starting to realise some of what I have put you through. It must have been _____ when _____.
- I must have frightened you _____.
- I betrayed you by _____.

5. What are you doing about changing your behaviour - Let the people you are writing to know what you are doing to change your behaviour or going to do so you don't get into trouble again. For example:

- I am seeing a counsellor so that I can make sure that nothing like this will happen again. I have learnt _____.

- I am learning to understand what I have put you through and I am working out what I need to do so I don't get into the same situation again. I know I should _____.

6. Statement about distancing - Let people know that you are not coming back to hurt them again. For example:

- I will stay away from your home/shop and your family/staff as I do not want to cause any of you any further hurt.

7. Recurrences - Write about your readiness and ability to face consequences. For example:

- I know I must take responsibility for my actions. I know that I have committed a criminal offence as well as betraying you. I am ready to handle whatever consequences that I will have to face by you, my family, the community and the Police/Court.

8. Future intentions - Let the people you are writing to you know about your goals and plans for the future. For example:

- I am turning my life around and I am now _____ (list what you are doing i.e. getting counselling, looking for a job, got a job or traineeship, back at school etc).
- Since the conference I have _____.
- If I see you or your family members I will be respectful.
- I believe that you have every right to feel angry and betrayed.
- I am not asking for you to forgive me I just want you to know that I am really sorry for what I did to you.