

WARN Act Notice Letter

Letter · US · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A WARN Act notice letter is the written notice the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires a covered employer to give each affected employee at least 60 calendar days before a covered plant closing or mass layoff — stating whether the action is permanent or temporary, the expected dates, whether bumping rights exist, and which company official to contact for more information.

The letter itself is the mechanical part; the expensive mistakes happen around it. WARN notice is late if it is not received 60 days out, defective if a required element is missing, and incomplete if it only goes to employees — the state dislocated worker unit and local government must be notified too, and represented employees' notice goes to their union instead. Enforcement is through the courts: employees, their representatives, and local governments can sue, and liability can include back pay and benefits for the notice period missed.

This template gives you the employee-notice letter with a placeholder for every element the regulations require, plus the checks to run before sending, the companion notices, the delivery methods that count, and the records to keep. It is the notice step of our layoff / RIF policy, turned into a document you can send.

When to use this letter

Use this letter when [Your company] has determined — with counsel — that a planned plant closing or mass layoff is covered by the federal WARN Act, for affected employees who are not represented by a union. Where employees have a union representative, WARN notice is served on the representative instead and its required contents differ; do not send this individual letter as a substitute for the representative notice.

- Send it to every employee who may reasonably be expected to lose their job because of the closing or layoff — managers and supervisors included, and employees displaced through bumping where they can be identified.
- Part-time employees do not count toward the WARN trigger thresholds, but once WARN is triggered they are entitled to notice like everyone else.
- If you cannot tell which individual will experience the loss of a particular position, give notice to the current incumbent of that position.
- Where separations happen in waves, each group of employees is entitled to a full 60 days' notice ahead of its own separation date.

What to check before sending

- Coverage: counsel has confirmed the event is a covered plant closing or mass layoff — including the look-ahead and look-behind aggregation windows in the regulations — and the conclusion is documented. This is the WARN review step in our layoff / RIF policy.
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State law: every state where affected employees work has been checked for a mini-WARN law; some require more notice, more recipients, or more content than federal WARN.

- Dates: each employee has a specific expected separation date or a 14-day window; if you use a window, the 60 days run to the first day of the window, not the last.
- Bumping rights: you know whether they exist under [policy / collective bargaining agreement] and can state the position plainly.
- Contact: [name/role] is named in the letter, briefed, and resourced to take calls from the day it lands.
- Companion notices: the union, state dislocated worker unit, and local government notices are ready to be served by the same deadline (see below).

The letter template

[Date]

To: [employee name], [employee address]

Dear [employee name],

This letter is official notice under the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. [Your company] expects to carry out a [plant closing / mass layoff] at [site name and address]. [If the entire site is closing: The entire facility at this location will close.] This action is expected to be [permanent / temporary]. [If temporary and the duration is known: We currently expect it to last approximately [duration].]

The [closing / layoff] is expected to begin on [date / during the 14-day period beginning [date]]. Your employment with [Your company] is expected to end on [date / during the 14-day period beginning [date]]. These dates are our best estimate on the information we have now; we will tell you promptly if they change.

Bumping rights [do not apply to your position / apply to your position, as follows: [brief explanation of how displacement rights work and whom to speak to about them]].

If you have questions about this notice or what it means for you, contact [name, job title] at [phone number] [or email]. [Name] can also help with questions about final pay, benefits, and [severance / outplacement support, if offered].

[Optional but recommended: Free re-employment support — job search help, résumé assistance, and retraining — is available through the state's rapid response and dislocated worker services. Details are [enclosed / being arranged, and we will share them by [date]].]

[Only if notice is shorter than 60 days under a WARN exception, with counsel's sign-off: We were not able to give a full 60 days' notice because [brief statement of the reason]. We are giving this notice as soon as practicable.]

Sincerely,

[Name], [job title], [Your company]

The other required notices

The employee letter is only one of the notices WARN requires, and all of them are served by the same 60-day deadline:

- Union-represented employees: written notice goes to the chief elected officer of each union representing affected employees, not to the individuals. Its required contents differ from this letter — including the job titles of affected positions and the names of the workers currently holding them.
- State dislocated worker unit: the designated unit in each affected state. This notice is also what triggers rapid response re-employment services for your people, so treat it as help arriving, not paperwork.
- Chief elected official of the unit of local government where the closing or layoff will occur — the mayor, board chairperson, or equivalent. If the site sits in more than one local government, notify the one to which [Your company] directly paid the highest local taxes in the preceding year.
- The two government notices have their own prescribed contents. The regulations permit a shorter form provided the remaining information is maintained on site and readily accessible — if you use the short form, make sure that backup file genuinely exists.

Delivery and record-keeping

Any reasonable delivery method designed to ensure receipt at least 60 days before separation is acceptable — first-class mail, personal delivery (a signed receipt is optional but useful evidence), or inserting the notice into pay envelopes. A preprinted notice routinely included in every paycheck does not qualify as WARN notice.

Keep the WARN file alongside the RIF file at [system/location]: the coverage analysis, a copy of every notice as sent, the distribution list, delivery evidence, and any corrections sent when dates moved. Retain it for [period]; owner: [name/role]. If the notice is ever challenged, this file is the proof it went out on time, complete, to everyone entitled to it.

How to use this template

1. Confirm with counsel that federal WARN — or a state mini-WARN law — actually covers the event before editing anything; the thresholds and aggregation rules decide whether this letter is required at all.
2. Fill in the site, the action, whether it is permanent, and each employee's separation date or 14-day window — counting the 60 days to the first day of any window.
3. State the bumping-rights position plainly and name a contact who is briefed to take calls from day one.
4. Prepare the companion notices — union representative where employees are represented, state dislocated worker unit, and chief elected official of local government — to be served by the same deadline.
5. Choose a delivery method designed to ensure receipt, keep proof of when and to whom every notice went, and diary the dates so any schedule change triggers a prompt corrected notice.

6. Check each affected state's law before sending — several states require more than the federal minimum, and federal compliance does not satisfy them.

Official guidance

- › [DOL — WARN Act compliance assistance](#)
- › [DOL — Plant closings and layoffs](#)
- › [eCFR — 20 CFR Part 639 \(WARN regulations\)](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/warn-notice-letter-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.