

CLIENT BOUNDARY VIOLATION RESPONSE SCRIPTS

Warm, firm, and final language for the moments that test your boundaries.

For each violation you'll see three versions. Read them, then write the one in the voice you'd actually use. Escalate only as needed.

Part 1 — Scope & Delivery

Out-of-scope request

Client asks for work beyond the agreement.

WARM

Happy to help with that – it's outside our current scope, so I'll send a quick add-on so we keep things clean.

FIRM

That falls outside what we agreed. Here's the cost to add it.

FINAL

I can only proceed on out-of-scope work with an approved add-on. Want me to send it?

IF IT ESCALATES: If it repeats, restate the scope document in writing and pause new work until acknowledged.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Endless revisions

Client exceeds the revision limit.

WARM

We've hit the revisions included in your package. I can add a round at [rate].

FIRM

Additional revisions are billed per our agreement. Shall I invoice for another round?

FINAL

I'm pausing edits until the revision add-on is approved.

IF IT ESCALATES: Reference the revision-policy line in the contract.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Last-minute timeline change

Client moves the deadline up unreasonably.

WARM

I want this to be great. My standard delivery is [date]; a rush is possible at [rush rate].

FIRM

I can't compress quality work into that window at standard rate. Rush option attached.

FINAL

The standard timeline stands unless the rush option is approved.

IF IT ESCALATES: Hold the line; do not absorb rush work for free.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Part 2 — Communication & Access

After-hours messages

Client contacts you outside business hours expecting a reply.

WARM

Thanks for this! I'll pick it up during office hours, [hours].

FIRM

I respond within business hours, [hours]. I'll get to this then.

FINAL

My hours are [hours]. Messages outside that are answered the next business day.

IF IT ESCALATES: Set an auto-responder stating your hours.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Constant 'quick questions'

A stream of small asks fragments your day.

WARM

Great question – let's batch these into our next check-in so nothing gets lost.

FIRM

I keep client questions to our scheduled check-ins so I stay focused on your project.

FINAL

I'll cover this at our standing call; that's where your project gets my full attention.

IF IT ESCALATES: Move to scheduled office hours only.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Demanding immediate replies

Client expects instant responses.

WARM

I'll have a thoughtful answer for you by [time].

FIRM

My response window is [X hours]; you'll hear from me within it.

FINAL

I don't provide instant replies – it protects the quality of your work.

IF IT ESCALATES: Restate the response-time policy in writing.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Part 3 — Payment

Late payment

An invoice is past due.

WARM

Quick nudge – invoice [#] is past due. Can you confirm the date it'll be paid?

FIRM

Invoice [#] is overdue. Per our terms, work pauses until it's settled.

FINAL

Work is paused and a late fee applies per our agreement until payment clears.

IF IT ESCALATES: Pause delivery; apply the late terms you set.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Work before deposit

Client wants you to start before paying.

WARM

I'm excited to start – work begins as soon as the deposit is in.

FIRM

My process requires the deposit before any work starts.

FINAL

No work begins without the deposit; this one is firm.

IF IT ESCALATES: Never start on the promise of payment.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Part 4 — Ending Engagements

Releasing a misaligned client

The fit is wrong and it's time to part ways.

WARM

I don't think I'm the best fit for what you need going forward. Here's a clean handoff.

FIRM

I'm concluding our engagement as of [date]. Here's what's delivered and your next steps.

FINAL

This engagement ends [date]. I've documented deliverables for a smooth transition.

IF IT ESCALATES: Document everything; refund only per the contract.

Write the version you'd actually use:

Responding to disrespect

A client crosses a line you won't tolerate.

WARM

I want a respectful working relationship for both of us. Let's reset how we communicate.

FIRM

I don't continue work inside a disrespectful dynamic. Here's what I need to keep going.

FINAL

I'm ending our engagement due to repeated disrespect, effective [date].

IF IT ESCALATES: Your safety and dignity outrank any contract.

Write the version you'd actually use:
