"Your site is down" client emails

Three calm emails for a client outage: the first notice, the update and the all clear with a short incident summary.

Copy, adapt and send. Replace anything in [brackets] with your own details.

EMAIL 1: FIRST NOTICE (WITHIN 15 MINUTES)

Subject: [Site name] is down. We are on it.

Hi [Client name], [site address] stopped responding at about [time, time zone]. We have confirmed it from more than one network and are working on it now. Next update by [time, within the hour], even if nothing has changed. Nothing is needed from you. If customers ask, the site is temporarily unavailable and they can reach you at [email address].

EMAIL 2: UPDATE

Subject: Update on [site name]: [still down / partly back]

Hi [Client name], status: [down / partly working]. Cause so far: [plain language, or "still narrowing it down, we have ruled out X and Y"]. What we are doing now: [current step]. Your content and data: [safe / last backup at time]. Next update by [time].

EMAIL 3: ALL CLEAR

Subject: [Site name] is back up

Hi [Client name], the site has been working normally since [time]. Downtime: about [duration], from [start] to [end]. What happened: [one sentence]. Impact: [orders, forms or email affected, or "none we know of"]. What we did: [one sentence]. What we are changing: [one concrete step, with a date]. Reply here if anything still looks wrong on your end.

BEFORE YOU SEND

- ☐ Confirm from outside your network: a phone on mobile data, plus curl -I or an uptime checker.
- ☐ Note the exact symptom: timeout, 500, 503, DNS failure or certificate error. It tells you who to contact.
- ☐ Check the host status page and your monitoring alerts before naming a cause.
- ☐ Promise update times, never fix times, and meet every one.
- ☐ Log times, actions and who you spoke to, for the summary and the invoice.
- ☐ Do not blame the host, a plugin or the client in writing until you know.