

Small Public Company Controllers & Finance Leaders: Steal This “On Track / At Risk” Filing Status Email Template

How to update leadership clearly without sounding vague, reactive, or unprepared.

How to Use This Guide

This is a copy-and-paste communication tool. Use it when you need to update:

- The CEO
- CFO
- Board
- Audit committee
- Executive leadership
- Internal finance stakeholders

Pick the version that matches your current filing status:

1. On Track
2. At Risk
3. Behind / Needs Escalation

Then replace the bracketed sections with your details. Rule of thumb: If you are not 100% sure you are on track, do not say “we should be fine.” Use the **At Risk** version. Clear beats comfortable.

The Filing Status Email Template

Version 1: On Track

Subject Line:

Filing Status Update: On Track for [FILING / DATE]

Email Copy:

Hi [NAME],

Quick filing status update.

We are currently on track for [FILING / DEADLINE].

Here’s where things stand:

Completed:

- * [Item 1]
- * [Item 2]
- * [Item 3]

Still in progress:

- * [Item 1]
- * [Item 2]

Current confidence level: High.

At this point, we do not see any material timing issues, but we are continuing to monitor open items closely.

Next milestone:

[Next key deadline or review date]

Support needed:

[None / Decision needed / Resource needed]

I’ll send the next update by [DATE].

Best,

[YOUR NAME]

Version 2: At Risk

Subject Line:

Filing Status Update: At Risk — [ISSUE / AREA]

Email Copy:

Hi [NAME],

Quick filing status update.

We are currently at risk for [FILING / DEADLINE] due to [ISSUE / OPEN ITEM].

This does not mean the filing will be late, but it does mean there are items that need attention now.

Primary risk:

[Explain the issue clearly in 1–2 sentences]

Current impact:

- * [Timing impact]
- * [Review impact]
- * [Auditor / disclosure / documentation impact]

What we are doing now:

- * [Action 1]
- * [Action 2]
- * [Action 3]

Support needed:

[Decision / resource / prioritization / leadership input]

Next milestone:

[Date / action / expected resolution point]

Current confidence level: Moderate.

I’ll provide another update by [DATE] or sooner if the risk changes.

Best,

[YOUR NAME]

Version 3: Behind / Needs Escalation

Subject Line:

Filing Status Update: Escalation Needed

Email Copy:

Hi [NAME],

I want to flag that we are currently behind on [FILING / PROCESS AREA].

The primary issue is [CLEARLY STATE ISSUE].

This needs escalation because it may impact:

- Filing timeline
- Review process
- Auditor response time
- Leadership approval
- Final submission readiness

What caused the delay:

[Brief explanation]

Current status:

[Where things stand right now]

What needs to happen next:

- * [Action 1]
- * [Action 2]
- * [Action 3]

Decision or support needed:

[Specific request]

Target recovery plan:

[How you plan to get back on track]

Current confidence level:

Low / Moderate.

I recommend we align on next steps by [DATE / TIME] to protect the filing timeline.

Best,

[YOUR NAME]

The 5-Part Filing Update Rule

Every filing status update should include these five things:

1. Current Status

Are we on track, at risk, or behind? No vague language.

2. Primary Risk

What could delay the filing or weaken confidence? Say it early.

3. Action Plan

What is already being done? Leadership needs to see movement, not just problems.

4. Support Needed

What decision, resource, or prioritization is required? Do not bury the ask.

5. Next Milestone

What happens next, and when? This keeps everyone aligned.

What Not To Say

Avoid these phrases:

- “We should be fine.”
- “Everything is mostly on track.”
- “There are just a few things left.”
- “We’re waiting on a couple items.”
- “No major concerns at this point.”

These sound harmless. But in filing season, vague language creates false confidence. Use clear status language instead:

- “On track”
- “At risk”
- “Behind”
- “Escalation needed”
- “Decision needed by [DATE]”

Leadership can handle risk. What they cannot handle is surprise.

Why This Matters

A filing update is not just an email. It is a trust signal. When leadership asks, “Are we on track?” they are not only asking about the deadline. They are asking:

- Can we trust the process?
- Do we know where the risks are?
- Is finance ahead of the issue?
- Will the board be surprised?
- Are we in control?

The problem is that most teams soften the update because they do not want to create alarm. That usually backfires. Soft updates delay decisions. Clear updates create action. At the small public company level, reporting is no longer just accounting. It is leadership communication. And the cleaner the communication, the less chaos shows up at the end. At the small public company level, reporting is no longer just accounting. It is leadership communication. And the cleaner the communication, the less chaos shows up at the end.

What To Do Next

If you can fill this template out clearly, your process probably has decent visibility. If you struggle to fill it out, that is the signal. It usually means there are gaps in:

- Ownership
- Timing
- Auditor coordination
- Documentation
- Disclosure readiness
- Leadership visibility

Brimmer Company helps small public companies create cleaner reporting structure, clearer leadership communication, and stronger filing discipline.

Schedule a Confidential Strategy Call

We’ll walk through your current reporting process and identify where visibility gaps are building before they become board-level problems.

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