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Sent a transactional SMS with a mistake: what you can undo and how to send the correction

WhatsApp & APIs

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Sent a transactional SMS with a mistake: what you can undo and how to send the correction

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The short answer: an SMS that has gone out **cannot be deleted or recalled**. What you can undo are the ones still **scheduled**: through the API they can be cancelled before their time. For the ones already sent, you send **a short correction**, only to the people who got the mistake, saying what is right, and you fix the source of the error before the next send.

What can still be undone

Message status	What you can do
`scheduled`	Cancel it with `POST /v1/sms/messages/{id}/cancel`. If the credits had already been taken, they go back to the balance.
`queued` or `sending`	Too late to cancel: the API answers `409` with `not_cancellable`. Get the correction ready.
`sent`	It has gone to the mobile operator. Only a correction is left.
`failed`	It did not go out. Fix the text or the number before sending again.

How to write the correction

1. **Start with «Correction:»**, so the customer links it straight to the earlier message.
2. **Give only what is right**, with the same reference as the first one: the order, invoice or booking number.
3. **Apologise once, briefly.** Long explanations use up parts and help nobody.

4. **If the mistake changes what the customer must do** (pay, turn up, collect), say so clearly and give a contact.

Mistake	Correction
Wrong amount	`Correction: invoice FT 2026/118 is 1,250 MT, not 1,520. Sorry for the mistake.`
Wrong time	`Correction: your appointment on 20/11 is at 10:30, not 13:00. Sorry for the mistake.`
Sent to the wrong person	`Sorry: you received an SMS by mistake that was not meant for you. Please ignore it.`

Did the message carry someone else's details?
If the mistake sent one customer's data to another, a correction is not enough: tell the affected customer, keep a record of what happened and review your system before sending again.

Finding out who got the mistake

In API answers the number comes masked, so the list of recipients lives **in your own system**: that is where you keep each SMS `id` with the order or customer. With that list, send the correction only to those people. A correction sent to every customer causes more confusion than the mistake did.

So it does not happen again

1. **Test your texts in the Sandbox** with realistic sample data: **test cases in the Sandbox**.

2. **Use templates with blanks to fill.** In the SMS Center, a template with an unfilled part in square brackets, such as [DATE], cannot be sent.

3. **Check where the data comes from**: the mistake is nearly always the wrong field in the database, not the SMS.

RECOMMENDED

Want fewer mistakes, and easy corrections, in your notices? See Transactional SMS.

See Transactional SMS →

SEE ALSO

- Test cases for transactional SMS in the Sandbox: wrong numbers, long texts, no credits, repeats
- Tracking each transactional SMS: the message id, masked numbers, statuses and charged
- Cancellation and refund SMS: confirming that an order was cancelled or the money returned
- SMS history and scheduling: statuses, filters and what happens when a message fails
- What never to put in a transactional SMS: passwords, full card numbers and private details
- SMS templates and AI: ready-made messages, the template library and improving a text

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