

## Reply to complaint about non-delivery

Note how this letter is apologetic but firm. Though E.F. Baden accept responsibility for the problems Forham Vehicles face in delivering their consignment to their Greek customers, Herr Zeitman rejects the threat of legal action by drawing Mr Blackburn's attention to a clause in their contract stating that the company will not be responsible for *unforeseen circumstances*. However, Herr Zeitman is flexible enough to realize he must not antagonize his customer, so he allows Mr Blackburn the opportunity to cancel the order if he can make other arrangements.

This letter illustrates two main points: first, do not commit yourself to contracts unless you are absolutely certain they can be fulfilled; second, always try and be as flexible as possible with customers or associates even if you are in a strong position – it will improve your business reputation.

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29 June 20—

Mr M. Blackburn  
Forham Vehicles plc  
Lever Estate  
Scarborough YO11 3BS

Dear Mr Blackburn

Thank you for your letter of 20 June concerning your order (No. VC 58391), which should have been supplied to you on 3 June.

First, let me apologize for your order not being delivered on the due date and for the problems you have experienced in getting in touch with us. Both are the result of an industrial dispute which has involved our administrative staff and employees on the shop floor, and has held up all production over the past few weeks.

The dispute has now been settled and we are back to normal production. There is a backlog of orders to fill, but we are using associate companies to help us fulfil all outstanding commitments. Your order has been given priority, so we should be able to deliver the dynamos before the end of this week.

May I point out, with respect, that your contract with us has a standard clause stating that delivery dates would be met unless unforeseen circumstances arose, and we think you will agree that an industrial dispute is an exceptional circumstance. However, we understand your problem and will allow you to cancel your contract if it will help you to meet your commitments to your Greek customers. But we will not accept responsibility for any action they may take against you.

Once again let me say how much I regret the inconvenience this delay has caused, and emphasize that it was due to factors we could not have known about when we accepted your delivery dates.

Please let me know if you wish us to complete your order or whether you would prefer to make other arrangements.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

*Rolf Zeitman*

Rolf Zeitman  
Managing Director