The Patch Check

Before the next urgent patch ships, check what it was tested on, how far it could reach, and how you'd undo it.

Microsoft's preliminary report on its November 2026 outage says a July fix rolled out in stages and ran clean for more than three months, and that its load testing "tended to focus on weaker hardware with fewer cores." I'd fill this in for the last urgent patch my team shipped.

Pick the patch

The last urgent patch we shipped _____

Whose patch it was (ours, or a vendor's we let in) _____

Why it was urgent (being exploited, a vendor deadline, something else) _____

Did it go through a change freeze, and who approved the exception? _____

Test against production

For each row, write what the patch was tested on and what production actually runs. "Close enough" counts as no.

WHAT	WHAT WE TESTED ON	WHAT PRODUCTION RUNS	MATCH?
Example: Hardware	*(the lab servers)*	*(the newest servers in the fleet)*	*No, lab is older*
Hardware and cores			
Storage			
Data (size and shape)			
Traffic (mix and peak)			
A bad day (a failover in progress, some capacity already out)			

If a row doesn't match, write what you ran instead that reproduces it. For hardware and traffic, that can be running the patch first on a slice of your newest production hardware at peak. For a bad day, that means a game day: force a failover and pull some capacity while the patch runs on your newest production hardware at peak. For a vendor's patch, the rows are what you ran it on before you let it in, not what the vendor says it tested.

What we did for each gap _____

Did we test it against the contracts of the systems around it, not only end to end? _____

How far it could reach

Chase said its bug reached other banks "when we were party to a transaction involving other banks." Count the people outside your own systems too.

Every region, service and partner that would feel it if it went wrong _____

What stops it at the first one _____

The last time we saw that stop a bad change, in a drill or for real _____

If one server stops answering, where does its traffic go, and can the rest take it? _____

If most of the fleet is down at once, how do we bring servers back without the waiting traffic knocking them over again? _____

How we'd undo it

How we'd undo it today, and how long that takes _____

How we'd undo it or fix it three months from now, with other changes on top of it, and how long that takes _____

The longest the business owner has agreed to live with _____

The last time we undid a change that old, in a drill or for real _____

Who can make that call at 2 AM without a meeting _____

Who signs off

The person who decides it's tested well enough to ship _____

PASS OR HOLD

Pass if all four are true:

1. Every row matches, or you ran a step that reproduces the gap. For the bad-day row, a canary at peak isn't enough; it has to run on your newest production hardware at peak traffic, with a failover forced and some capacity pulled at the same time. A gap that's only written down doesn't pass.
2. In the last year you've seen a failure contained at the first region or partition, in a drill or for real, not just a rollout paused.
3. In the last year you've undone or fixed a change at least three months old, with other changes on top of it, within the time the business owner agreed to, in a drill or for real.
4. The person who signed off saw this page with every gap filled in.

That's my bar. Nothing in Microsoft's report shows the July change was run on its newest hardware at peak with a failover and lost capacity at once, so on this bar it would be held on the bad-day row. It ran clean through a staged rollout on production hardware, which is the canary most of us would accept. On a hold, if the bug is being exploited, I'd still ship, in stages, with someone watching the first group. If it isn't, I'd close the gap first.

This is the order I'd go in. It doesn't replace a security review or your change process. The Microsoft quotes are from its preliminary post incident report of November 15, 2026. The Chase quote is from its social media post, reported by CBS News on November 17, 2026.

I sell AI software. You don't need any to fill this in.

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