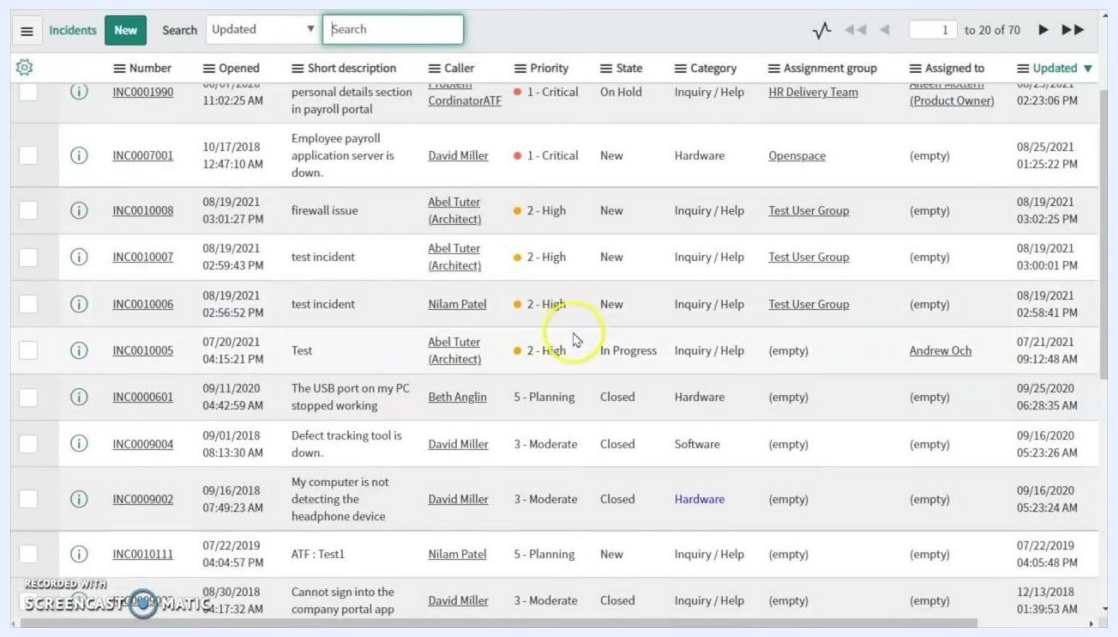
How to create a notification in ServiceNow for Priority 1 incidents

This guide walks you through how to create a notification in ServiceNow that automatically sends an email when an incident's priority changes to Priority 1 (Critical). You will configure the notification record, define its trigger conditions and recipients, and then test and verify that the email is delivered correctly.

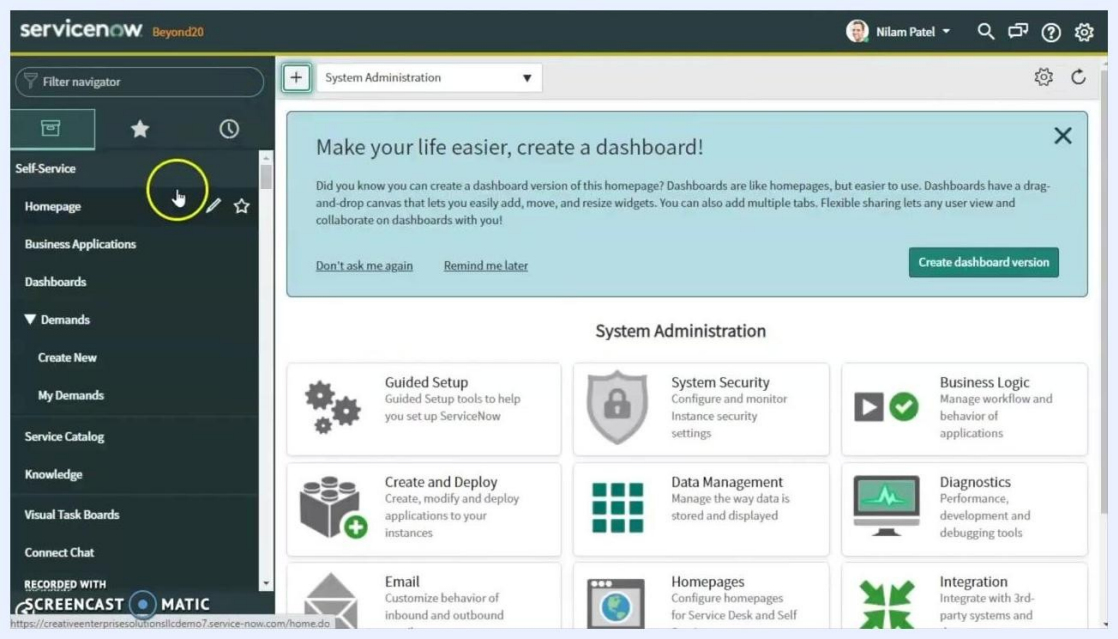


ServiceNow notification configuration showing the email template, subject, and message fields

Prerequisites

- Access to a ServiceNow instance with administrator privileges.
- Permission to navigate the System Administration area and create records under System Notification.

- An existing incident record (or the ability to create one) to use for testing.

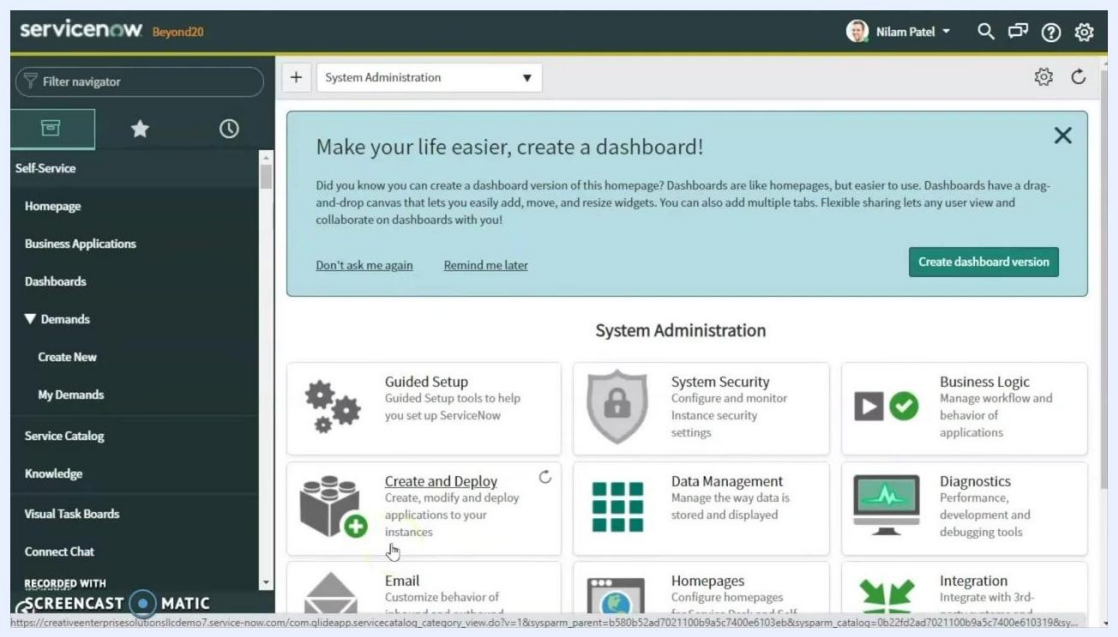


Beyond20 logo on a white background, marking the end of the video tutorial

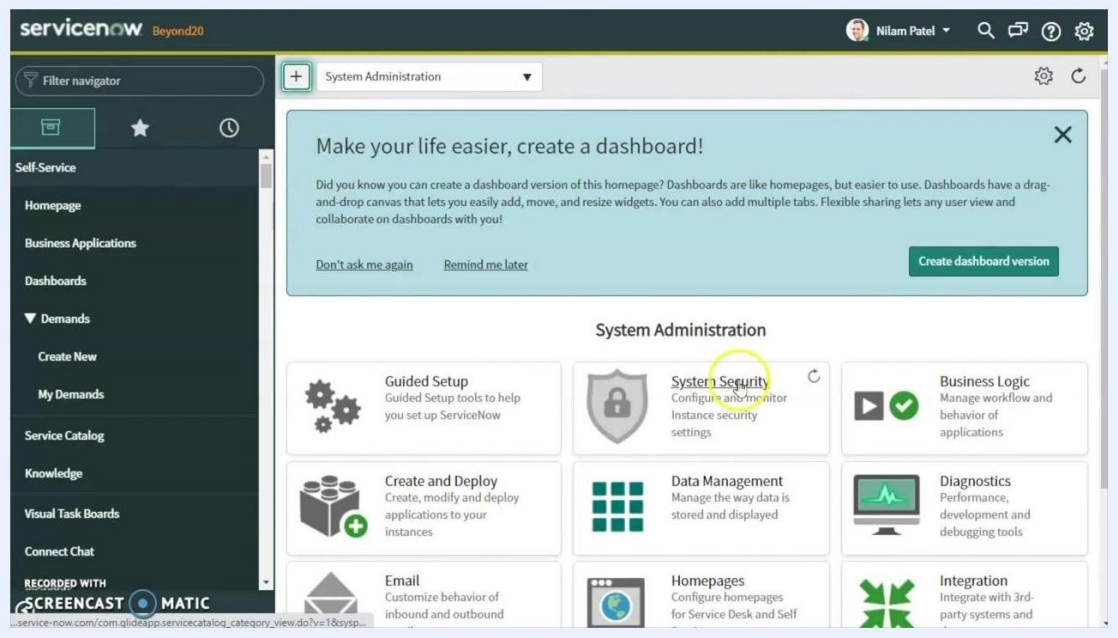
Part 1: Create the notification

Step 1: Access the ServiceNow dashboard

Log in to your ServiceNow instance and confirm you are on the main dashboard under System Administration. The dashboard displays administration options such as Guided Setup, System Security, Business Logic, Create and Deploy, Data Management, Diagnostics, Email, Homepages, and Integration.



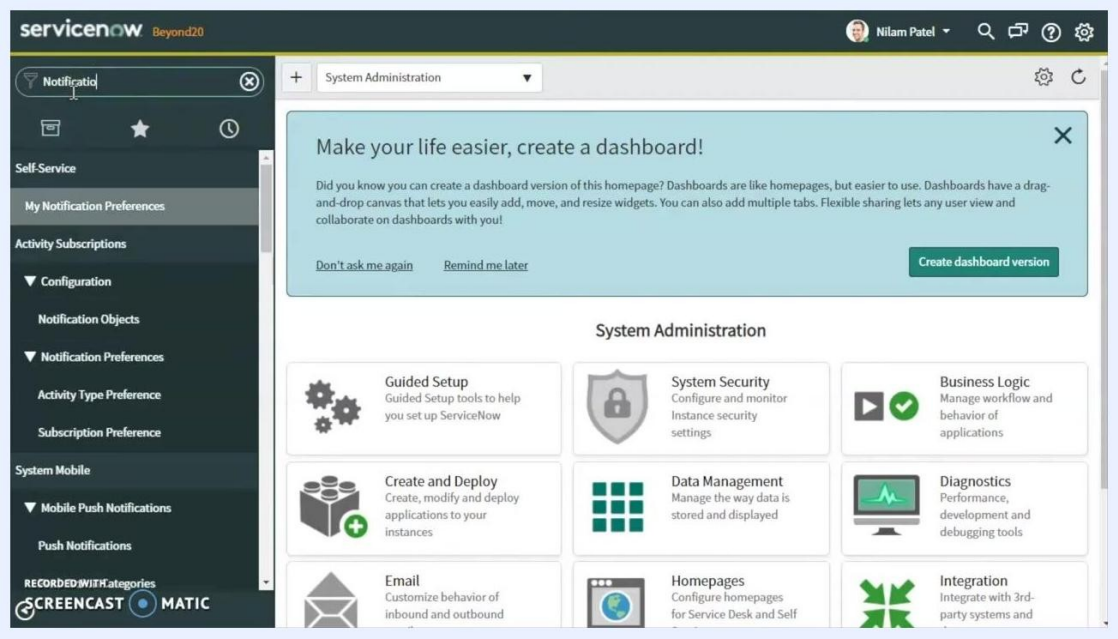
ServiceNow dashboard showing System Administration options and the navigation menu



ServiceNow System Administration dashboard showing Guided Setup, System Security, Business Logic, and other administrative tools

Step 2: Search for the Notification module

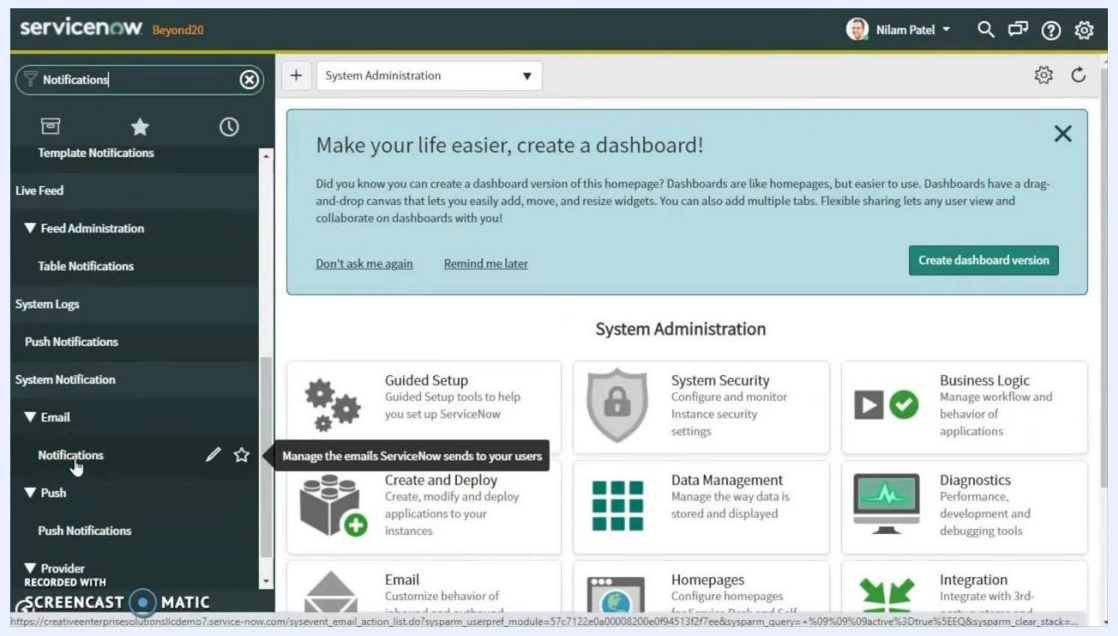
Click into the Filter navigator search bar at the top left of the screen and type Notification. Related menu items will appear in the left navigation pane as you type.



Filter navigator with 'Notification' being typed and related menu items displayed

Step 3: Navigate to email notifications

Under the expanded System Notification section, click Email, then select Notifications. This section lets you manage the emails ServiceNow sends to users.



System Notification, Email, and Notifications highlighted in the navigation menu

Step 4: Create a new notification record

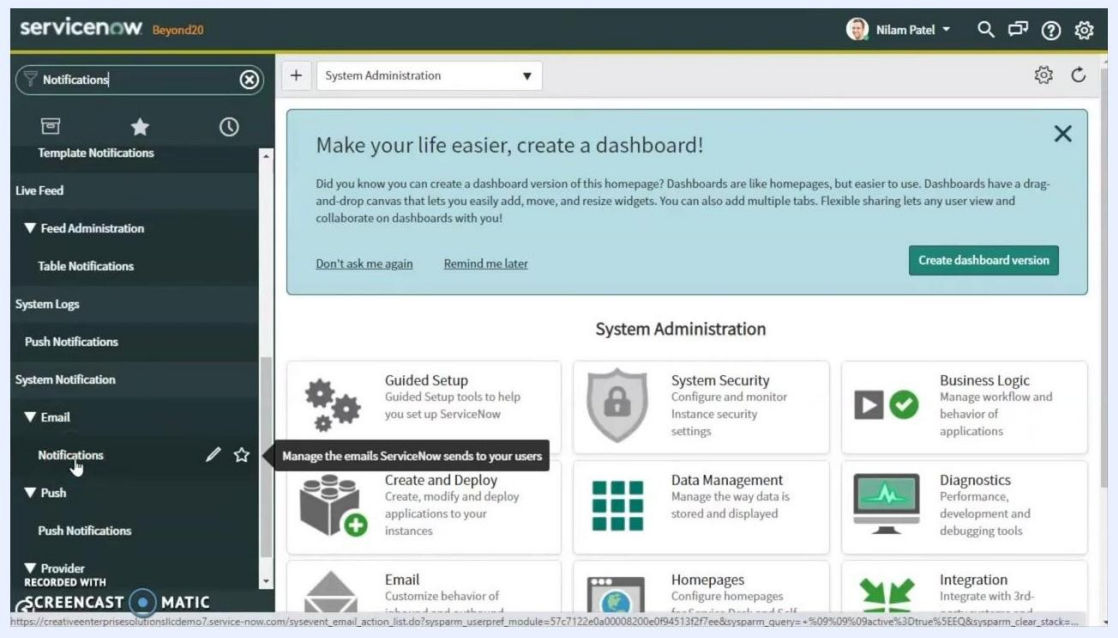
Click Notifications to open the notification management screen, then click New to start a new notification record.

Step 5: Configure the notification details

On the Notification form, enter the following:

- Name: Demo Notification
- Application: Global
- Active: checked

The form also includes tabs for When to send, Who will receive, and What it will contain.



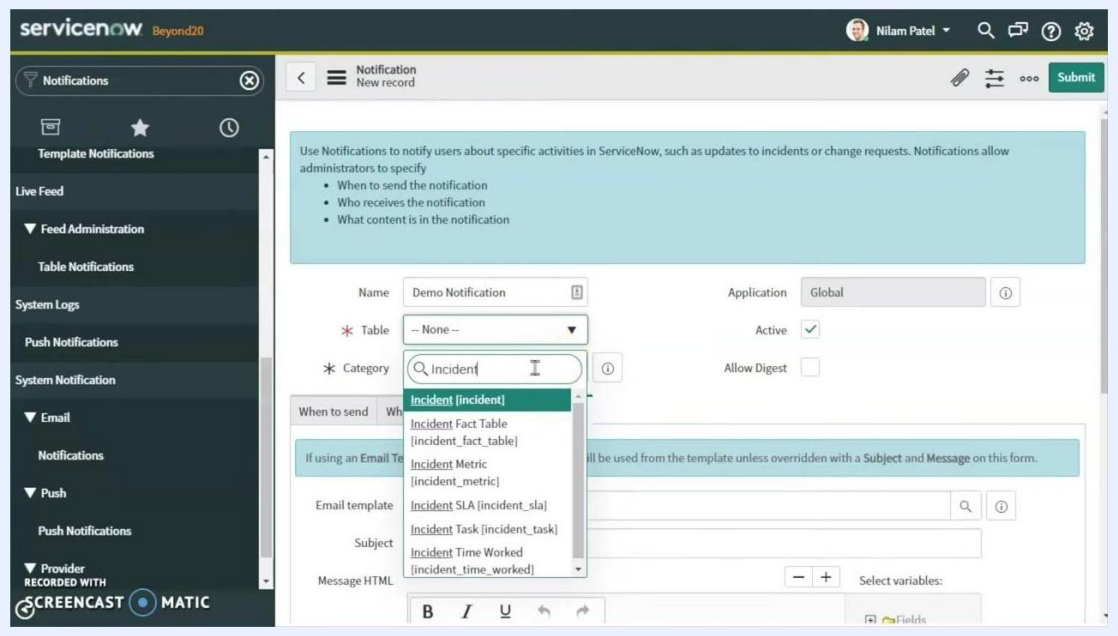
Notification creation form with 'Demo Notification' entered as the name

Step 6: Select the table

In the Table field, type and select Incident [incident] from the dropdown list. This ensures the notification is triggered based on incident records.

Step 7: Set the category (optional)

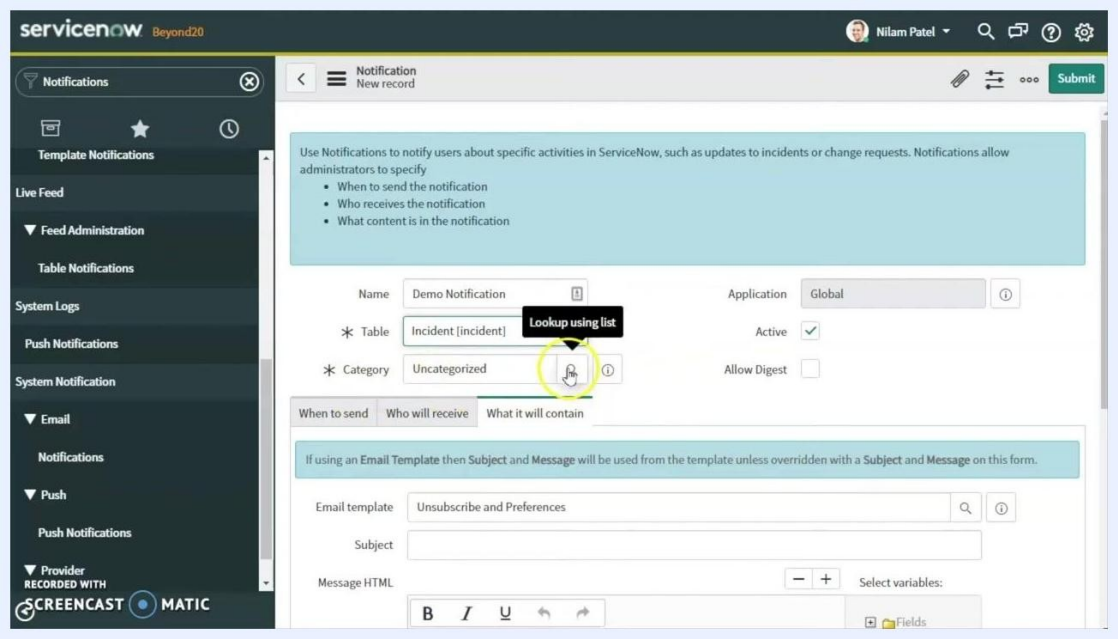
By default, Category is set to Uncategorized. If you want to trigger notifications for a specific category, click the lookup icon next to the Category field and choose the desired category. For this example, leave it as Uncategorized.



Category field set to 'Uncategorized' with the lookup option highlighted

Step 8: Customize category conditions further (optional)

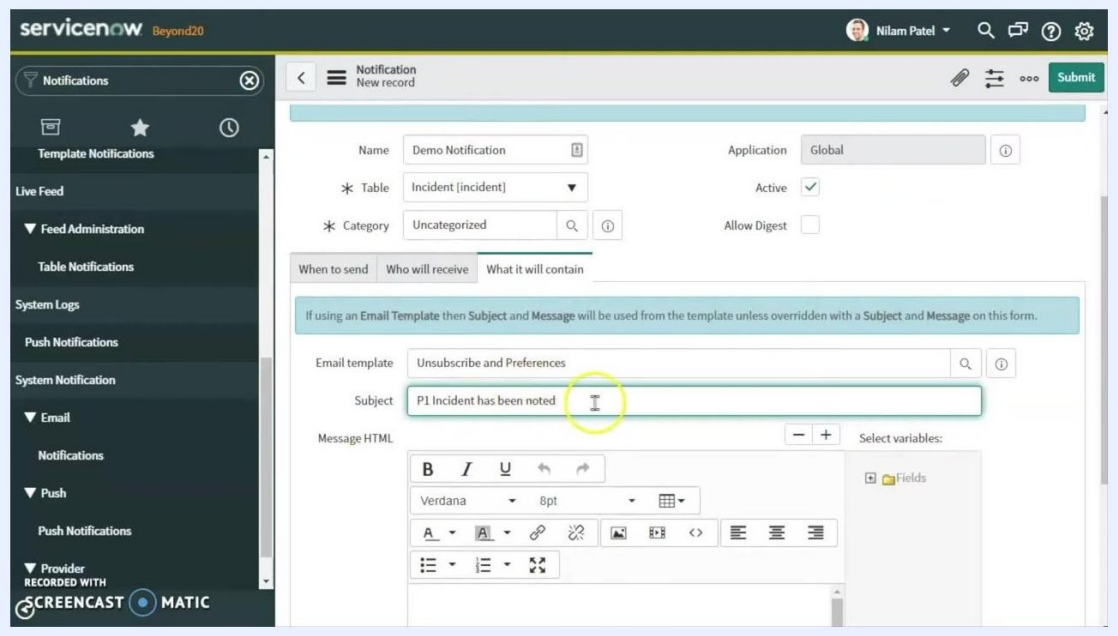
If you want the notification to trigger only for a P1 incident in a specific category, use the lookup list to set the category accordingly.



Category lookup list open for further customization

Step 9: Configure the email template and subject

On the What it will contain tab, locate the Email template field and select Unsubscribe and Preferences. In the Subject field, enter P1 Incident has been noted. This subject will appear in the email sent to recipients.



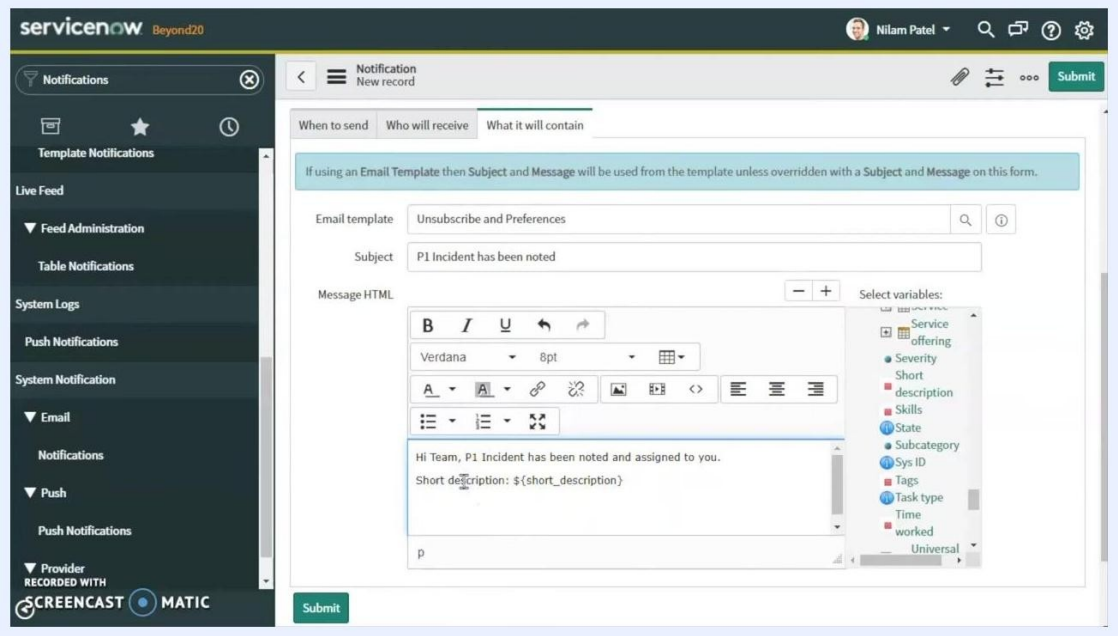
Notification form with 'Unsubscribe and Preferences' set as the email template and 'P1 Incident has been noted' as the subject

Step 10: Compose the email body

In the Message HTML section, enter the body of the email:

- Hi Team,
- P1 Incident has been noted and assigned to you.

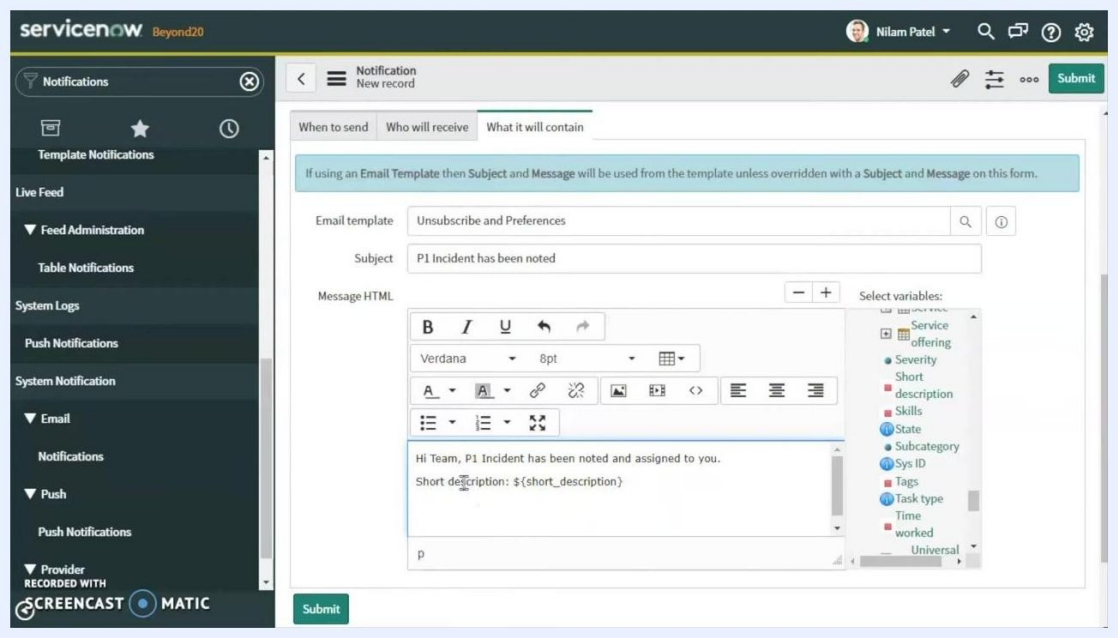
You can personalize the greeting with the user's name using variables, but this example uses "Hi Team".



Message HTML field with the greeting and notification message entered

Step 11: Insert incident details using variables

Click the Fields section to the right of the Message HTML editor and insert the variable for the short description by adding the line Short description: ${short_description}. You can optionally use the full description or other variables, but this example adds only the short description.



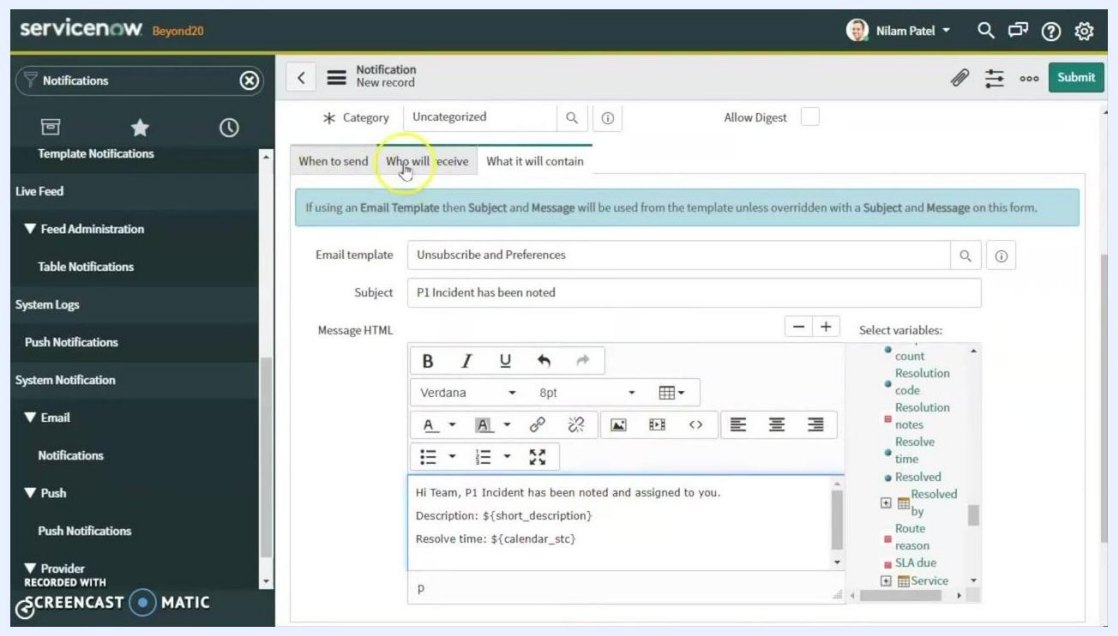
Message HTML field with the short description variable inserted and the Fields variable list visible

Step 12: Add additional variables (optional)

If desired, add more variables from the Fields list, such as Description or Resolution time. This demonstration includes only the short description, since resolution time is not configured.

Step 13: Add the resolution time variable (optional)

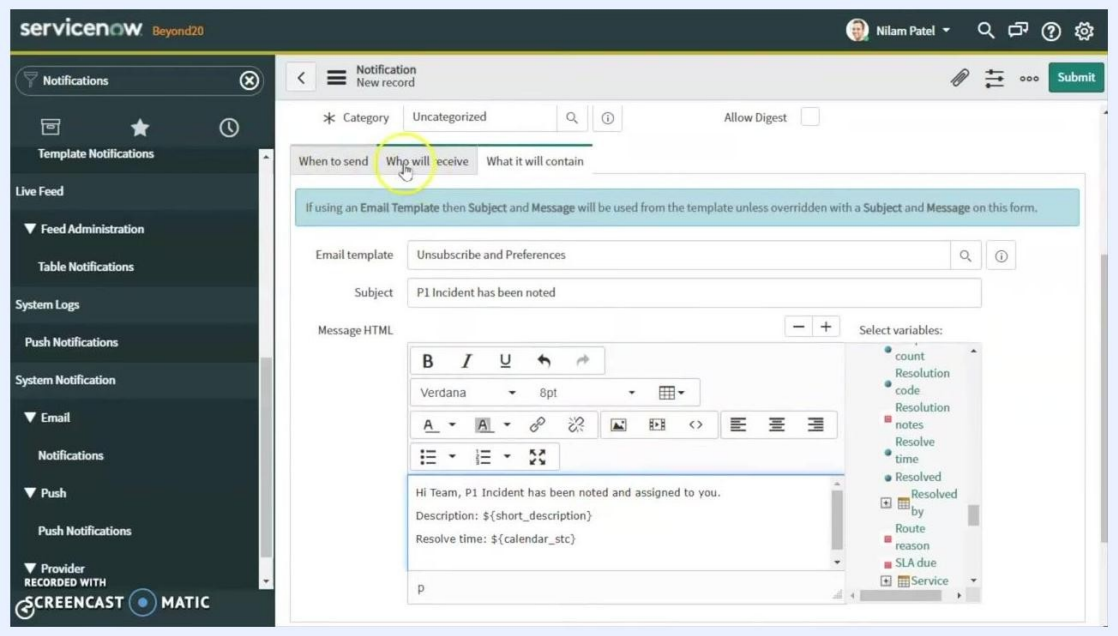
You can also add the resolution time variable for additional context by inserting the line Resolve time: ${calendar_stc}. Note that this value may not display if resolution time is not configured.



Message HTML field with the resolve time variable added and the variables list visible

Step 14: Configure when to send the notification

Click the When to send tab and set Send when to Record inserted or updated. Check both Inserted and Updated so that notifications are sent for new and existing incidents alike.



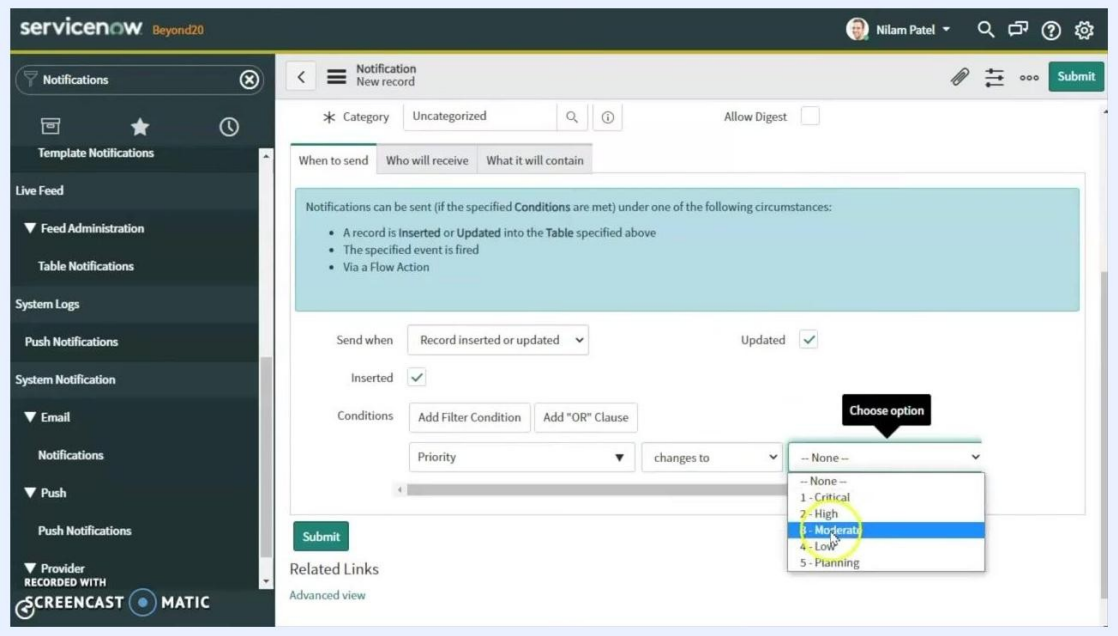
When to send tab with 'Record inserted or updated' selected and both Inserted and Updated checked

Step 15: Set the trigger condition for priority

In the Conditions section, click Add Filter Condition and set:

- Field: Priority
- Operator: changes to
- Value: 1 - Critical

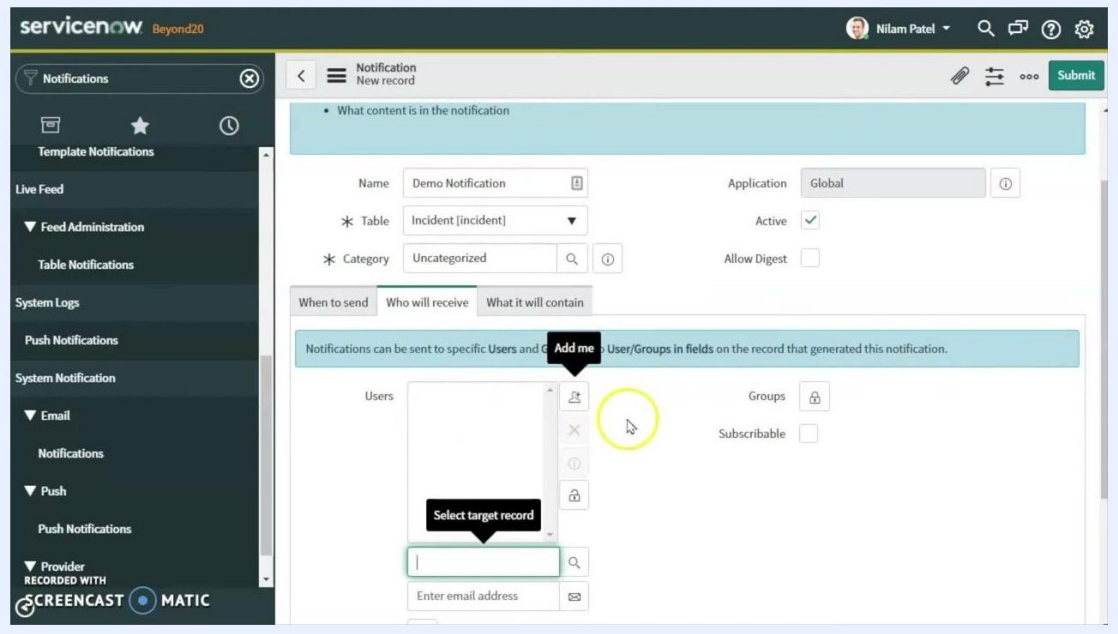
This ensures the notification is sent only when the incident's priority changes to Critical.



Conditions section with Priority 'changes to' '1 - Critical' selected

Step 16: Specify notification recipients

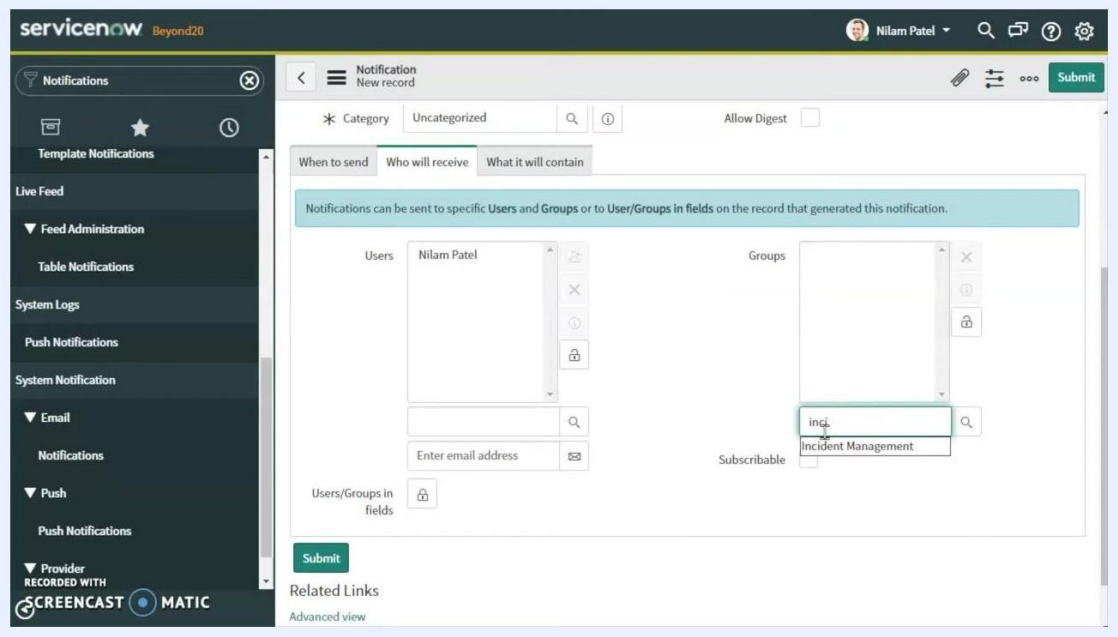
Click the Who will receive tab. To add yourself as a recipient, click the Unlock Users icon, then click Add me. Your name will appear in the Users list.



Who will receive tab with Unlock Users and Add me options highlighted

Step 17: Add groups as recipients

In the Groups field, type Incident Management and select it from the dropdown. This adds the Incident Management group as a recipient of the notification.



Groups field with Incident Management selected as a recipient

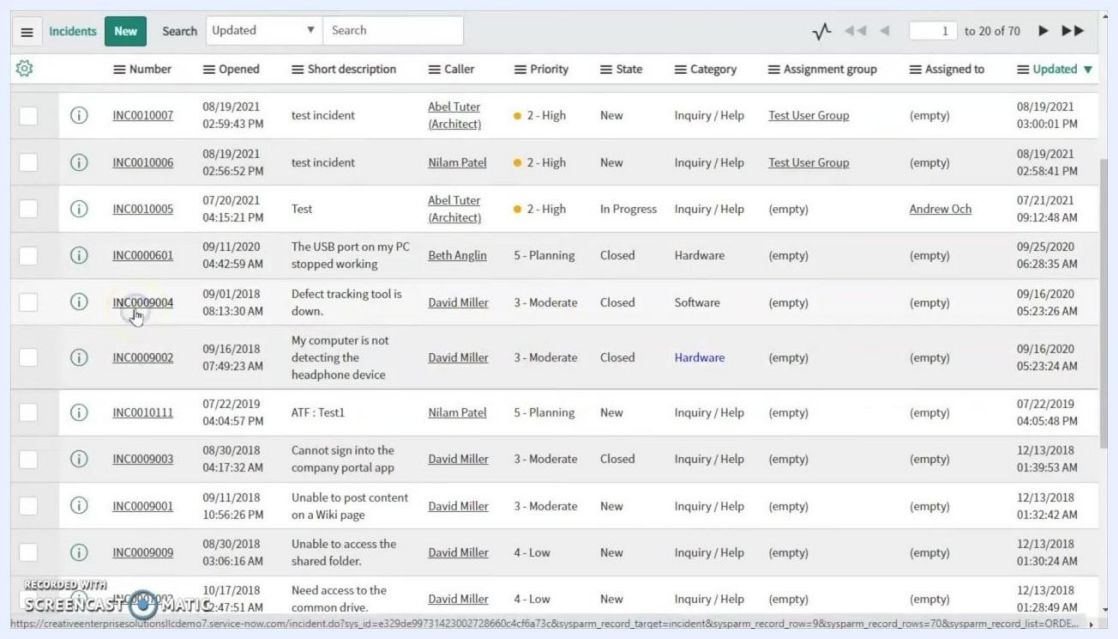
Part 2: Configure and test the incident notification

Step 1: Review the notification configuration

Open the notification record you created and confirm the following fields:

- Name: Demo Notification
- Table: Incident [incident]
- Category: Uncategorized
- Application: Global
- Active: checked

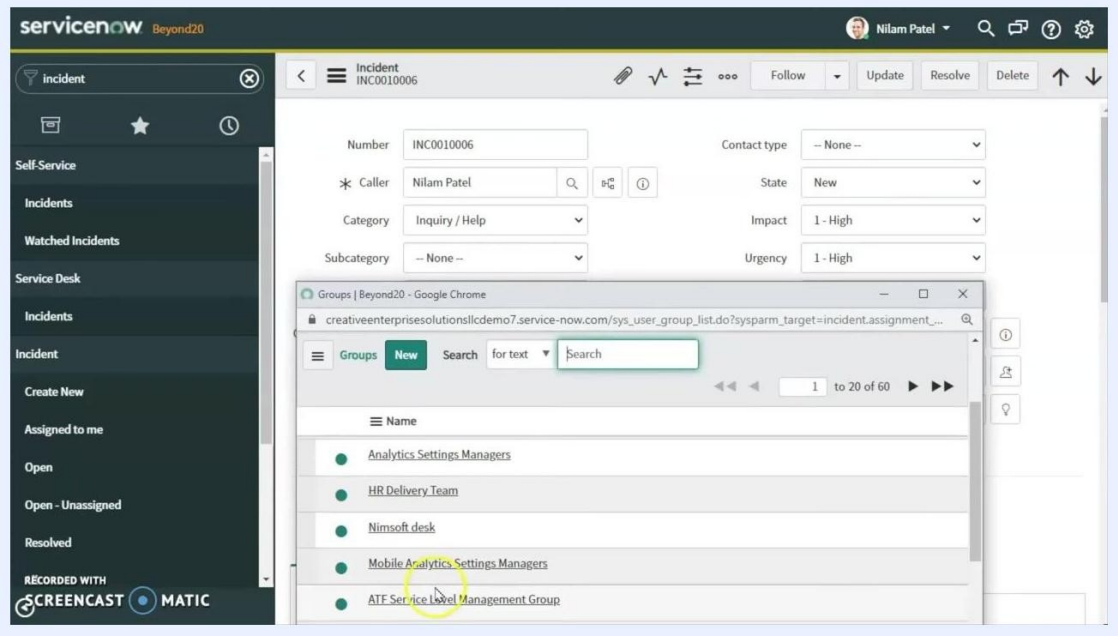
- Allow Digest: unchecked



ServiceNow incident list with an incident of Priority 3 - Moderate being selected

Step 2: Confirm the trigger condition

On the When to send tab, confirm Send when is set to Record inserted or updated, with Inserted and Updated both checked. Confirm the filter condition is set to Priority changes to 1 - Critical.



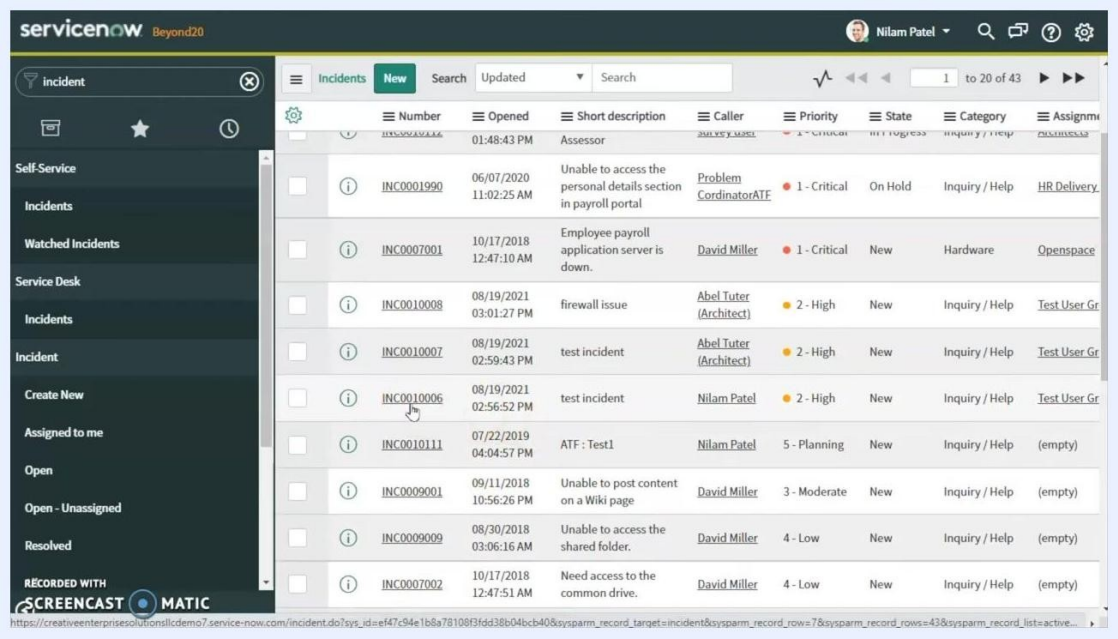
ServiceNow incident record with updated assignment and short description fields, ready to save

Step 3: Confirm notification recipients

Click the Who will receive tab and confirm the recipients, such as the incident management group or specific users.

Step 4: Confirm the notification content

Click the What it will contain tab. Confirm the email template (such as Unsubscribe and Preferences), the Subject set to "P1 Incident has been noted", and the message entered in Message HTML.



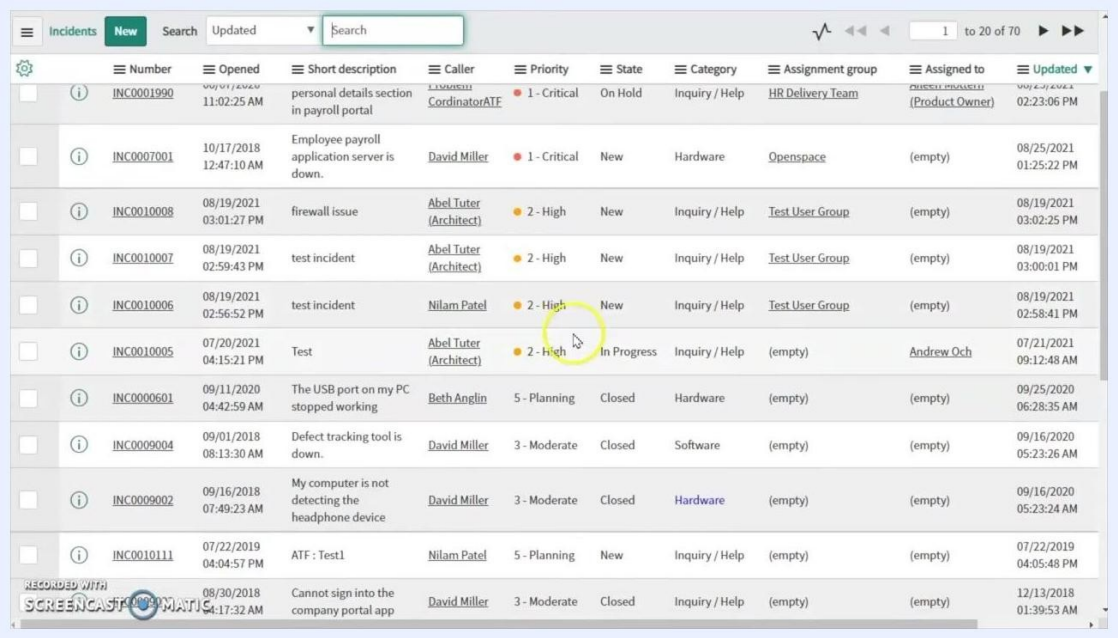
ServiceNow incident record with the assignment group selection window open

Step 5: Save the notification

Click the menu icon (three dots) in the top right of the form and select Save to save the notification configuration.

Step 6: Open the incident list

Use the left navigation pane to search for and open the Incidents list. The list displays columns such as Number, Opened, Short description, Caller, Priority, State, Category, Assignment group, Assigned to, and Updated.



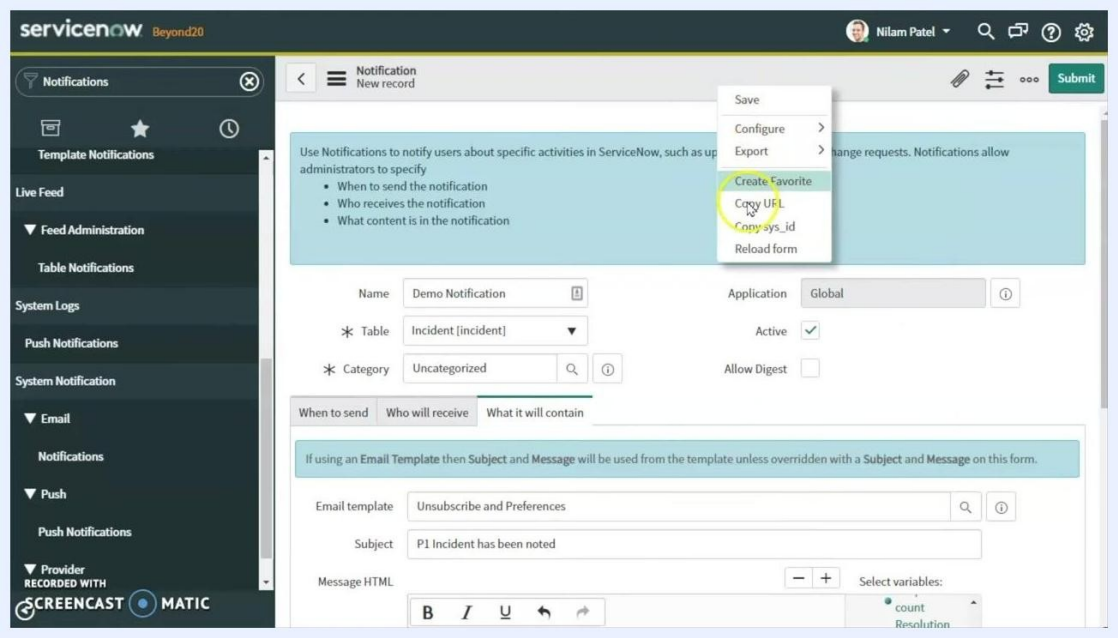
ServiceNow notification configuration with the Save menu open

Step 7: Select an incident to test the notification

Identify an incident with Priority = 3 - Moderate (or another value you want to change) and click its incident number to open the record.

Step 8: Update the incident priority and assignment

In the incident record, change Priority to 1 - Critical. Click the lookup icon next to Assignment group to open the group selection window and choose the appropriate group (for example, "Portfolio Managers"). Assign the incident to a specific user if required (for example, Megan Burke).



ServiceNow notification configuration showing the trigger condition for Priority changing to 1 - Critical

Step 9: Add notes and save the incident

In the Short description or Notes section, add a note such as "demo notification", then click Save to update the incident.

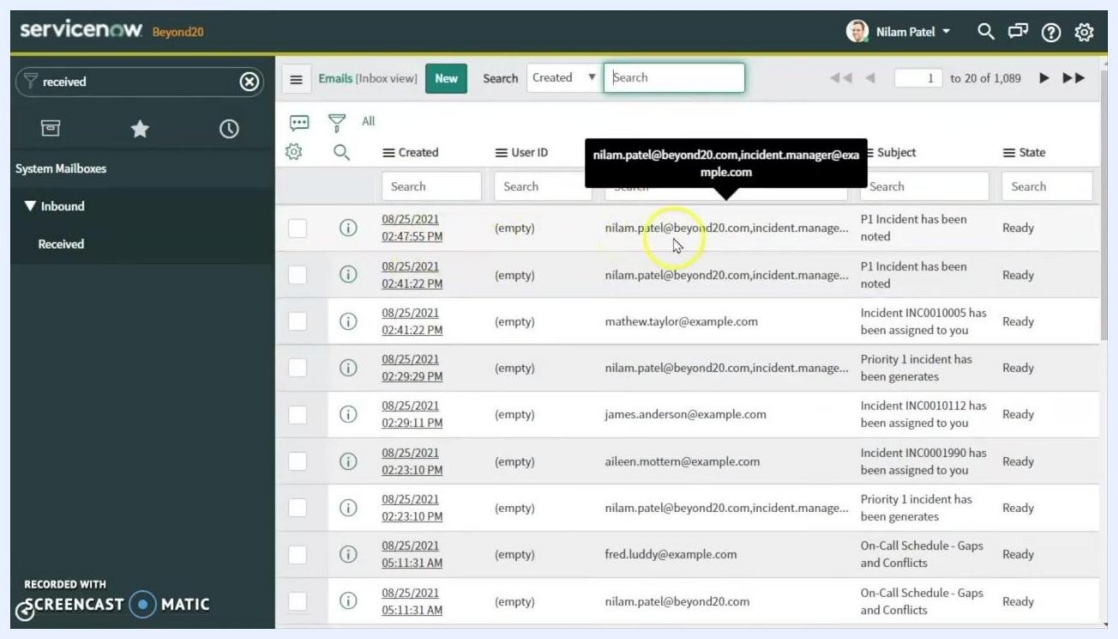
Part 3: Verify notification delivery and the email log

Step 1: Save the updated incident

Confirm the incident record shows:

- Priority: 1 - Critical
- Assignment group: Portfolio Managers
- Assigned to: Megan Burke

- Short description: test incident

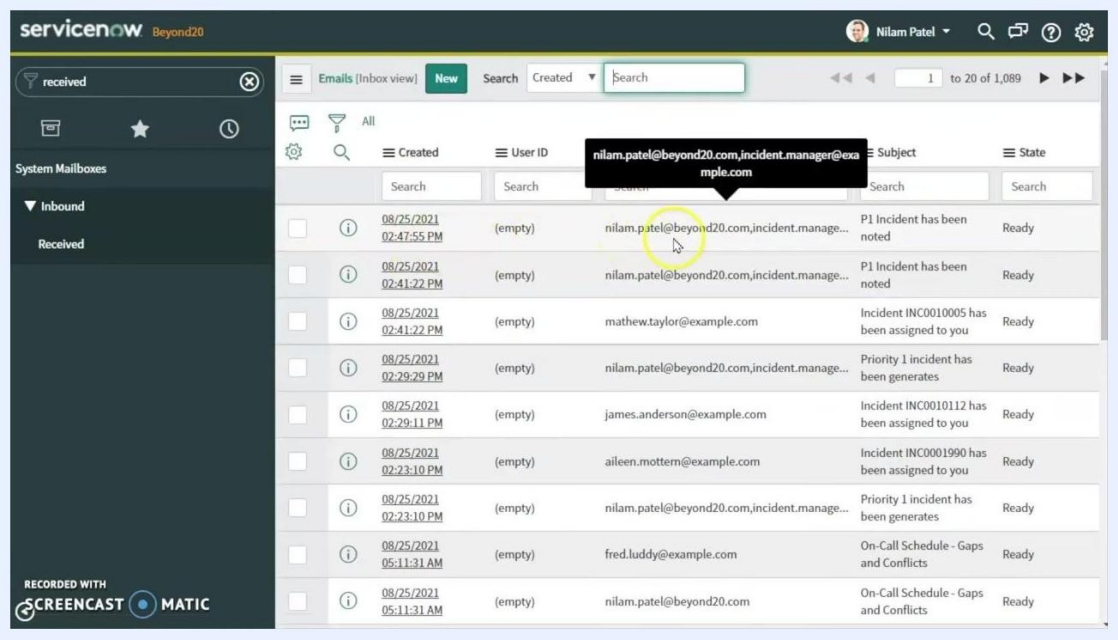


ServiceNow incident record with the Save menu open and updated Priority, Assignment group, and Assigned to fields

Click the menu icon (three dots) at the top right of the incident form and select Save to commit the changes.

Step 2: Navigate to the email log

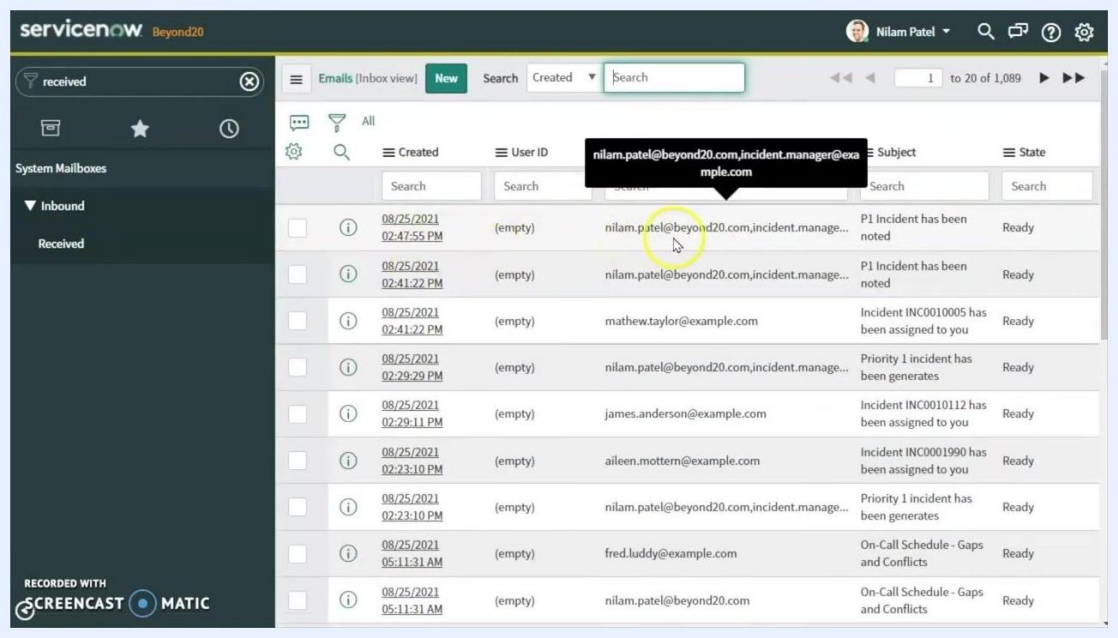
In the left navigation pane, use the filter navigator to search for "received". Under System Mailboxes, click Received to open the list of received emails.



ServiceNow navigation with 'received' searched in the filter navigator and the incident record shown in the main panel

Step 3: Locate the notification email

In the Emails [Inbox view] list, look for the entry with the subject "P1 Incident has been noted". Confirm it was sent to the intended recipients (for example, nilam.patel@beyond20.com, incident.manager@example.com) and that the State column shows Ready.



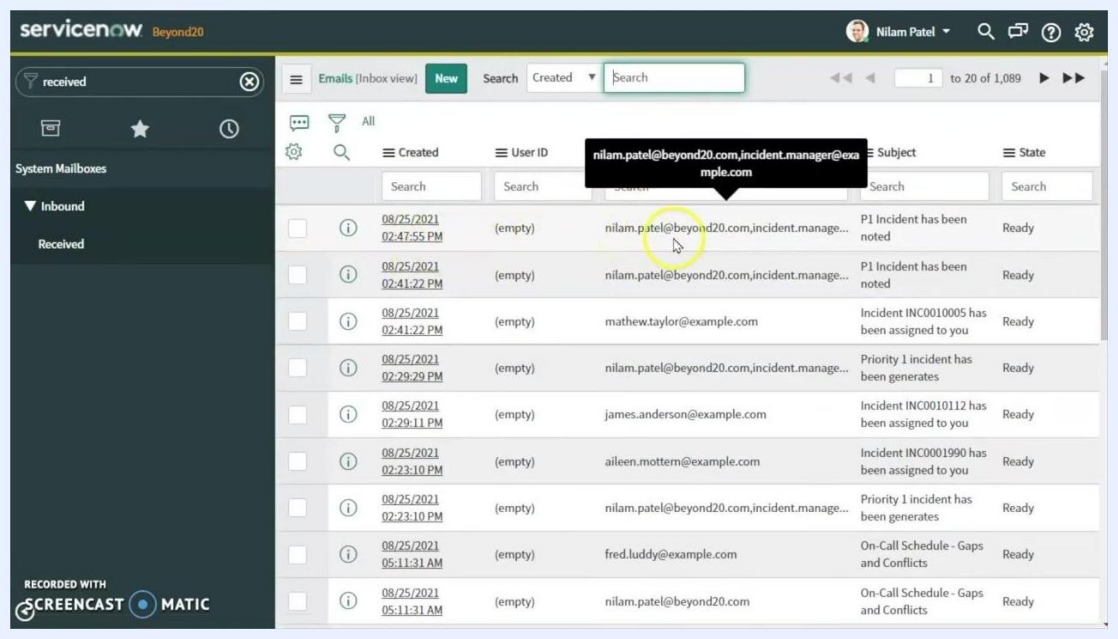
ServiceNow Emails Inbox view showing the received email with the subject 'P1 Incident has been noted' and recipient details

Step 4: Preview the notification email

Click the email entry with the subject "P1 Incident has been noted" to open its details, then click Preview Email. Confirm the preview contains:

- The greeting and message: "Hi Team, P1 Incident has been noted and assigned to you."
- Description: test incident
- Resolve time: (blank if not configured)
- Links for Unsubscribe and Notification Preferences

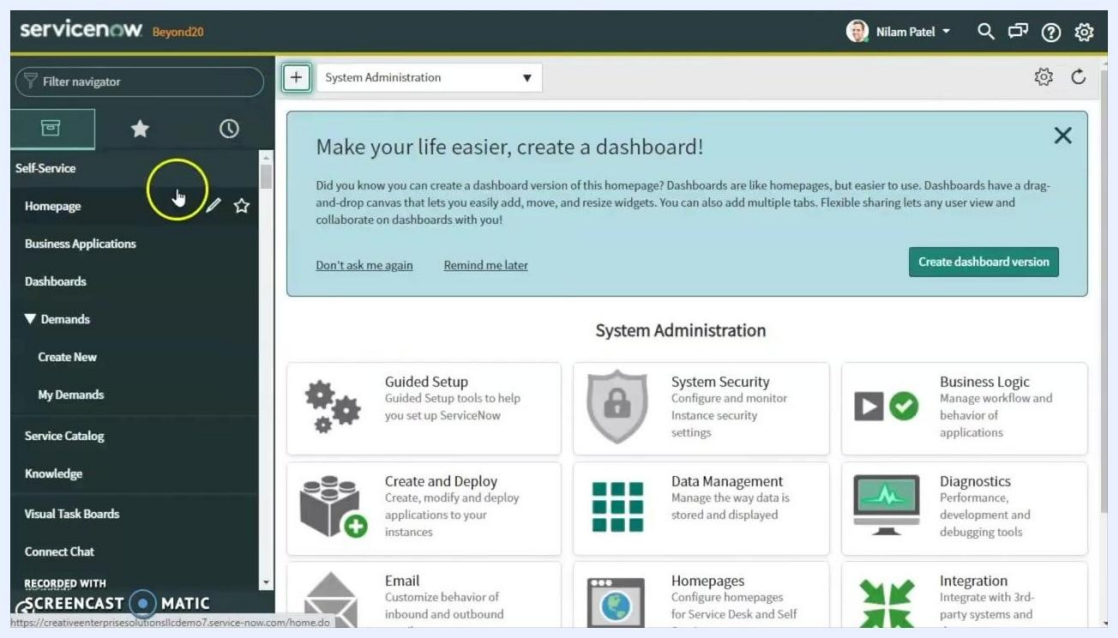
- A reference ID (for example, Ref:MSG0002762_PXcTjfpQwkLeUJuukzEk)



ServiceNow Preview Email window showing the notification content for a P1 incident, including description and reference ID

Step 5: Review the email log details

Scroll down in the email details view to see the Headers and Email Log. Confirm the notification source and version in the headers (such as X-ServiceNow-Source and X-ServiceNow-SysEmail-Version), and review the Email Log for additional delivery information.



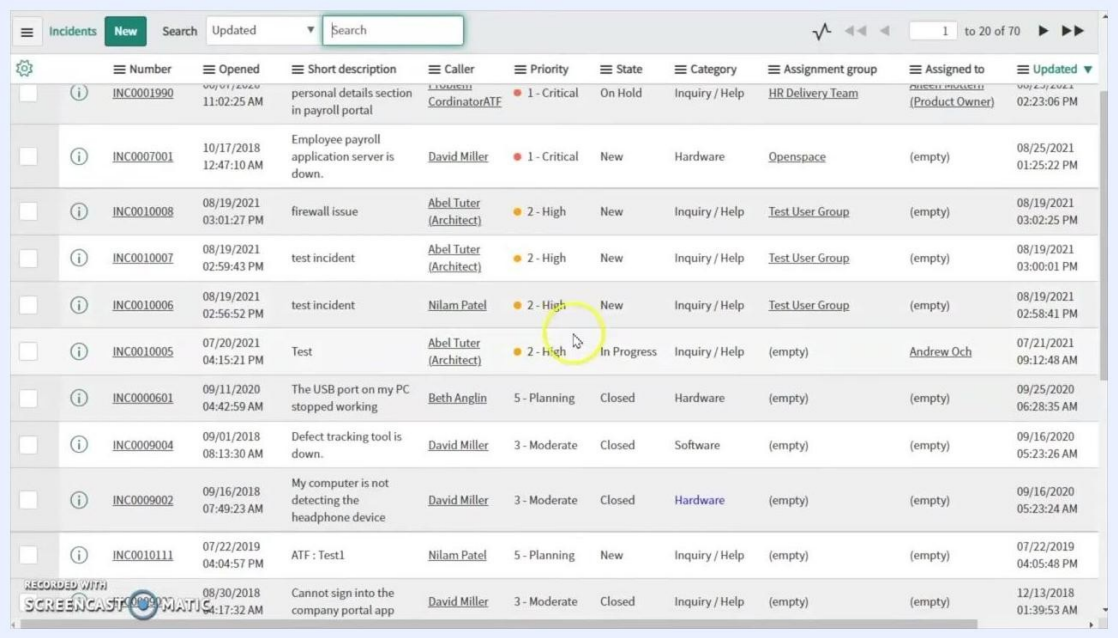
ServiceNow email details screen showing headers, content type, and email log for the notification email

Step 6: Return to the administration dashboard

Use the navigation pane to return to the Homepage or System Administration dashboard. From here you can access additional configuration options such as Guided Setup, System Security, Business Logic, and Data Management.

Summary

You have now learned how to create a notification in ServiceNow that triggers an email when an incident's priority changes to Critical (P1). You configured the notification's trigger conditions, recipients, and email content, then tested it by updating an incident's priority and assignment. Finally, you verified that the email was generated correctly by reviewing the Received email log and previewing the notification content.



ServiceNow incident list showing multiple incidents with various priorities and states