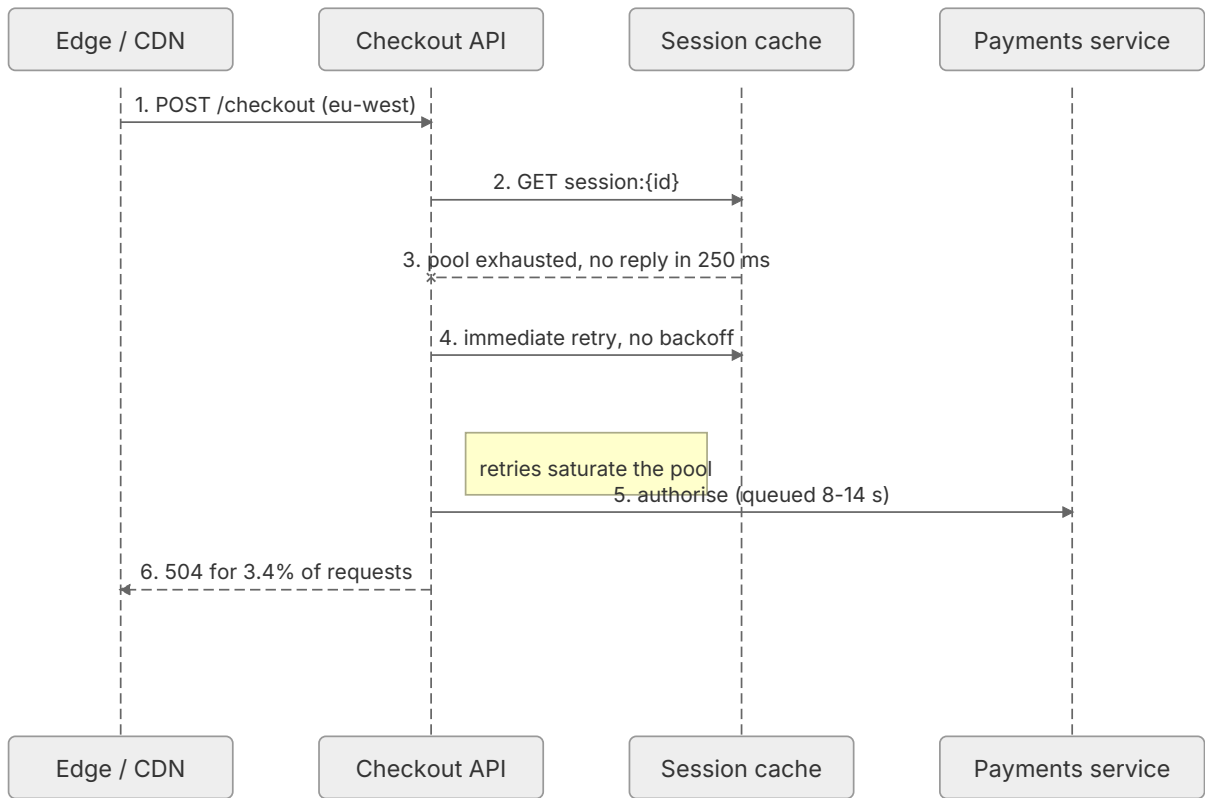


Incident postmortem: checkout latency in eu-west (INC-2417)

Field	Detail
Severity	SEV-2 — degraded customer-facing checkout
Duration	94 minutes (09:47–11:21 UTC), 14 September 2026
Impact	3.4% of checkout attempts failed; p95 240 ms → 11.2 s
Status	Resolved — 4 of 6 remediation items complete

On 14 September 2026, checkout requests served from the `eu-west` region slowed from a 240 ms p95 to 11.2 s p95 for 94 minutes, and 3.4% of attempts failed outright. Every failed authorisation was retried automatically or surfaced to the customer with a clear error, so no payment was lost and no card data was exposed.

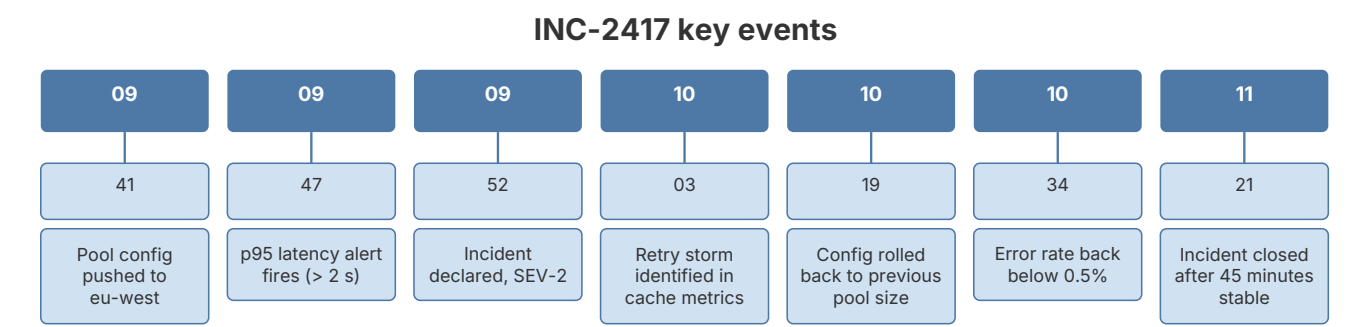
How it unfolded



Warning

The retry helper had `backoff: "none"` because a flat retry loop passed review as "simpler than the jittered one". Review guidance for shared connection pools now requires jittered backoff with a retry budget.

Timeline (UTC)



Root cause

The session cache pool was reduced from 128 to 32 connections to free capacity for a batch job. At peak checkout volume the smaller pool drained in under a second, and the retry helper re-issued every failed GET immediately and without jitter, so retries consumed the pool faster than it could recover.

```
// config/session-cache.ts - what shipped
connectionPool: {
  max: 32, // reduced from 128 for the batch job
  acquireTimeoutMs: 250,
  retry: { attempts: 3, backoff: "none" },
},

// config/session-cache.ts - fixed
connectionPool: {
  max: 128,
  acquireTimeoutMs: 250,
  retry: { attempts: 3, backoff: "jittered", budgetPerMinute: 500 },
},
```

No dashboard tracked pool wait time, so the failure mode was invisible until latency alerts fired six minutes later.

Action items

#	Action	Owner	Due
1	Restore pool size and add jittered retry budget	Payments Plat.	Done
2	Dashboard pool wait time, queue depth and retry rate	Observability	Done
3	Alert on pool saturation at 80% for 2 minutes	Observability	Done
4	Load-test config changes to shared pools at peak volume	Payments Plat.	30 Sep
5	Enforce jittered backoff for all pooled clients in review guide	Engineering	10 Oct
6	Add config-freeze check to the maintenance-window runbook	SRE	17 Oct