

## ESCALATION PROCESS

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to explain the escalation path for incident response cases.

### **Scope**

This procedure will cover how and when cases are to be escalated. It will also define the technical and managerial notification sequence.

### **Definitions**

#### **Technical Case Escalation**

The process of involving increasing levels of technical capability in solving a problem. The goal is to ensure that the appropriate resources are involved in resolving the problem in a timely fashion.

#### **Management Case Escalation**

The process of alerting increasing levels of management to the existence of a customer situation. The goal is to make resource owners aware of problems that may require additional resource allocation or process guidance.

#### **Call Center Representative**

Customer Support Rep. coordinates all incoming calls to the Technical Support group. This includes but not limited to logging support calls, verifying contract information and escalation notifications.

#### **Technical Support Engineer**

Technical Support Engineers works all first level support cases. On a particular issue or product, a TSE could be a Product Lead if the case is on a topic that is in an area of expertise for the individual.

#### **Senior Technical Support Engineer**

Technical Support Engineer Product Leads are Senior TSE's who assist other TSE's in resolving escalated cases. On a particular primary issue or product, the TSE Product

Lead is the Product Specialist for the group and is the interface to Engineering.

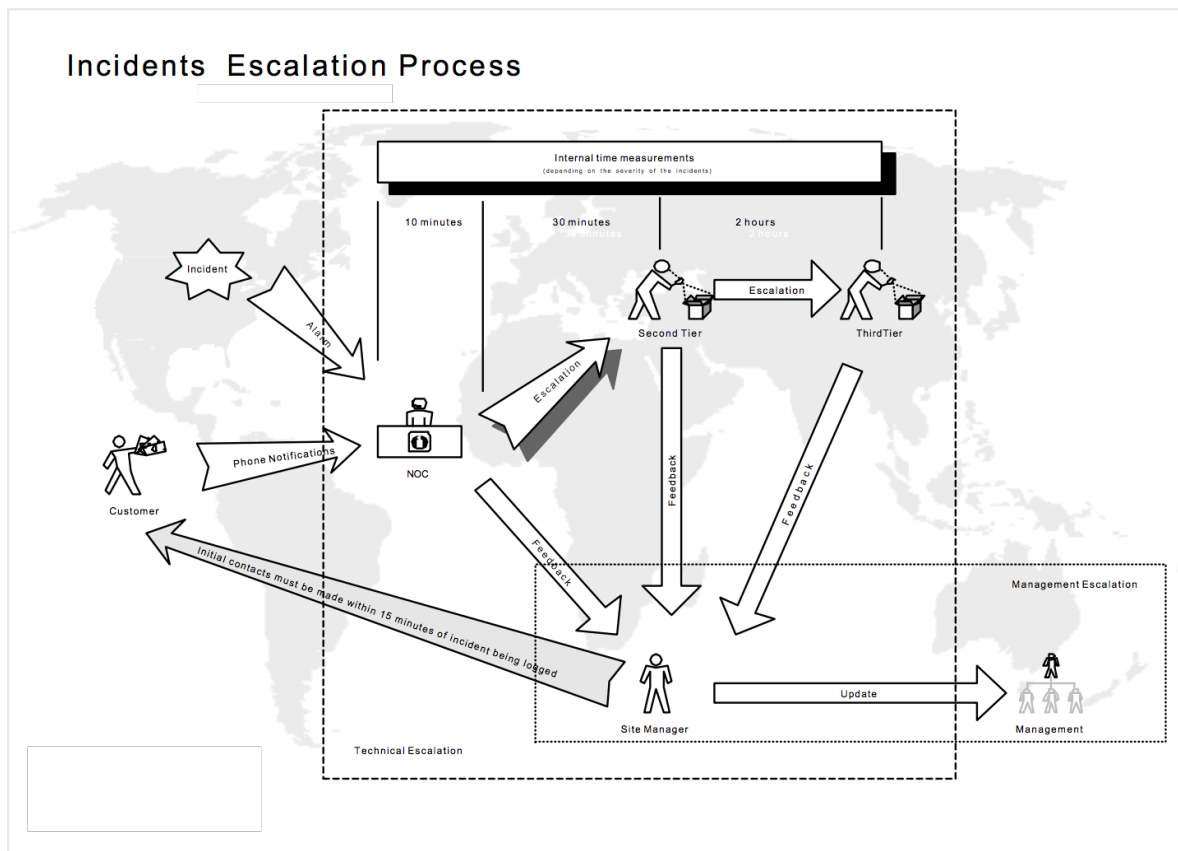
#### **SLA**

Service Level Agreement.



## Procedure

### Escalation Process



There are two formal processes for problem escalation at COMPANY, technical escalation and management notification. Technical escalation is the process of involving increasing levels of technical capability in solving a problem. The goal is to ensure that the appropriate resources are involved in resolving the problem in a timely fashion. Management notification is the process of alerting increasing levels of management of the existence of a customer situation. The goal is to make resource owners aware of problems that may require additional resource allocation or process guidance.

Problems are separated into several severity levels depending upon the availability of the system and the overall impact to business performance. If there is ever a dispute about the severity of a given situation, the customer will make the final determination. The severity levels are:

#### 1 - Emergency/ Network Down

Severity Level 1 is a reproducible emergency condition, which makes the use or continued use of any one or more services impossible. The condition requires an

immediate solution that is not already available. COMPANY's NOC will initiate an effort to verify the reported problem within one (1)

hour of receiving the problem report, provide continuous effort to arrive at a fix or work-around, and provide Customer with the final form of the fix ("Final Fix").

## 2 - Critical

Severity Level 2 is a reproducible condition which makes the use or continued use of any one or

more services difficult and which you cannot circumvent or avoid on a temporary basis. COMPANY's NOC will initiate an effort to verify the reported problem within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving the problem report, provide Customer with a fix or work-around within ten (10) days of receipt of the problem, and include a Final Fix in the next succeeding Version after the fix or work-around has been developed.

## 3 - Major Impact

Severity Level 3 is a reproducible limited problem condition, which is not critical in that no loss of access to services occurs and which can circumvent or avoided on a temporary basis. COMPANY will begin work on error identification and verification within two (2) days of receipt of the problem.

## 4 - Minor Impact

Severity Level 4 is a minor problem condition or setup/configuration error, which can be easily circumvented or avoided. Additional requests for new changes or suggestions, which are defined as new configuration in existing Service Level Agreement, are also classified as Severity Level 4. COMPANY will begin work on error identification and verification within five (5) days of receipt of the problem.

### Technical Escalation Matrix

Severity Level	Escalation Sequence			
	Call Center	Site Manager	Ops Manager	SLA resolution
	NOC	Ops Services Lead	Ops Services Lead	N/A
Down Sys-S/W	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
Critical	5 minutes	1 hour	2 hours	???
Major	20 minutes	6 hours	N/A	???

Minor	12 hours	24 hours	N/A	???
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All times represent maximum time elapsed from initial call receipt before escalation notification to

the next level. At the time intervals listed, an automatic notification of the problem is generated. Actual engagement of the next tier (except for the TSE notification, which is a reminder) should then occur, if the following conditions are met:

- The resources currently working the issue have made little or no progress in resolving the issue and have not identified a plan to do so.
- The customer has provided all requested data and procedures.

The following section will describe in detail the process to be used for all call-out situations; i.e. All NOC staffs should follow the steps listed in any event of incident occurring.

### **Contact Process**

- Initiate the paging procedure in all situations and call the appropriate person(s) during the prime time periods. The initiator of the call should refer to the COMPANY contact list for the appropriate pager number to be used for paging. If a response to the 'page' has not been received within 15 minutes for a non-prime time incident, the first person listed on the COMPANY contact list is to be called. Enter the problem into the incident reporting system.
- If the shift supervisor/helpdesk is unable to make 'live' contact within 10 minutes after the page for a prime time incident and 15 minutes for a non-prime time incident, he/she is to automatically escalate the process to the next higher level (i.e. if unable to reach the site manager contact the operation manager) by paging and calling.

### **Problem Resolution**

- If after 30 minutes from the beginning of the 'incident', or 1 hour for non-prime time, the problem has not been resolved the shift supervisor is to determine the impact to service levels. If the estimated time for resolution is exceeded or service levels become impacted he/she is to contact the site manager responsible for the affected area. At that time the shift supervisor/NOC is to discuss with the site manager what the impacts of the situation are, what options are available and obtain an estimated time for resolution to the current problem. The shift supervisor/NOC will determine the need for a technical representative attending the next morning's operational review meeting depending on the impact and severity of the problem. Update the incident with the time of contact and decisions reached.
- If the problem has not been resolved after 30 minutes from contacting the responsible site manager during prime time, or 1 hour during non-prime time, the shift supervisor/NOC is to contact the NOC manager. The shift supervisor/NOC is to bring the NOC manager up to date with the current situation and await further direction from the NOC manager. A technical representative is to attend the next morning's operational review meeting to describe the events and actions taken. Update the incident with time of contact and decisions reached.
- At the next morning operational review meeting a representative from the affected area may be in attendance to provide insight as to the cause, work-around and estimated time for final solution to the problem that occurred in accordance with steps 1 and 2 above. If a technical representative is not required, a fully documented narrative of the incident will be contained in the incident report reviewed at the morning meeting. If a required attendee does not appear at the next morning meeting a call will be placed to the responsible manager and the manager's manager.

## Management Notification Matrix

Severity Level	<b>Notification Sequence</b>			
	Site Manager	Operation Services Manager	Director, Operation Services	*All
	Ops Services	Ops Services	Ops Services	Executives
Down Sys-S/W	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate

Critical	1 hour	2 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Major	6 hours	24 hours	N/A	N/A
Minor	20 days	30 days	N/A	N/A



Note: These notifications are based on Customer Support Management discretion  
Automatic notifications occur during normal business hours only

### **Management Contact / Customer Escalations**

Regardless of how well this process is designed and implemented, there will no doubt come a time when a customer wants to escalate an issue directly to a manager at COMPANY. If a customer wishes to escalate an issue, a call should be placed to the appropriate dispatch center, which is NOC in this case. The person calling should inform the NOC's staff who takes the call that he would like to escalate a case and should provide the case #. After taking the customer's contact information, the NOC's staff will then contact one of the Site Managers for the customer involved and make him/her aware of the issue. A Site Manager will then contact the customer to discuss the situation further and make certain that the appropriate resources are involved in resolving the issue.

Site Managers are available 24 hours a day to respond to customer escalations.

### **Metrics and Performance Goals**

Standard response and resolution statistics measured daily.

### **Corrective Action Loop**

Issues that are not resolved within the guidelines will be reviewed by the management team and corrective actions will be determined to prevent future non-conformities.