SOP Template: Escalation Matrix and Issue Referral Steps

This SOP defines the **escalation matrix and issue referral steps** to ensure effective resolution of problems within the organization. It outlines the hierarchy of contacts for escalating issues, provides clear guidelines for identifying when and how to escalate concerns, establishes timelines for responses at each level, and details the documentation required during each referral stage. The goal is to facilitate timely communication, prevent unresolved conflicts, and enhance accountability throughout the issue management process.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, departments, and functions within the organization for issue reporting and conflict resolution.

2. Escalation Matrix

Level	Escalation Contact	Description	Response Time	Required Documentation
Level 1	Immediate Supervisor / Team Lead	First point of contact for all issues.	Within 1 business day	Issue Report Form
Level 2	Department Manager	If unresolved or urgent, escalate to manager.	Within 2 business days	Updated Issue Report & escalation notes
Level 3	Division Head / Senior Management	For complex or cross-departmental issues.	Within 3 business days	Complete escalation history, supporting evidence
Level 4	Executive Leadership / HR	Critical issues, policy violations, or unresolved conflicts.	Within 5 business days	Comprehensive documentation of escalation trail

3. Issue Referral Steps

1. **Identification**
   - Recognize and log the issue using the Issue Report Form.
   - Gather relevant facts and supporting evidence.
2. **Initial Resolution Attempt**
   - Submit to Level 1 contact; allow response within defined time frame.
   - If resolved, close the issue and document resolution details.
   - If unresolved, proceed to next escalation level.
3. **Escalation**
   - Refer the issue to the next level as per the escalation matrix.
   - Attach all previous correspondence, actions taken, and notes.
4. **Review and Response**
   - Escalation contact reviews the issue, coordinates investigations, and responds according to timeline.
5. **Closure**
   - Document the resolution, lessons learned, and update tracking systems.
   - Communicate outcome to all stakeholders involved.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Report issues promptly and provide necessary information.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Address and resolve issues at their level or escalate if needed.
- **Senior Management/HR:** Ensure policy compliance and intervene on critical issues.
- **All Contacts:** Maintain records of actions, decisions, and timeline adherence.

5. Documentation Requirements

- Use standard Issue Report Forms at every stage.

- Record escalation steps and dates.
- Maintain confidentiality and store records securely.
- Update resolution status in issue tracking system.

6. Review & Continuous Improvement

- Review escalation cases quarterly to identify trends and process gaps.
- Incorporate feedback to refine SOP.

Note: For emergencies or immediate threats, bypass standard matrix and contact appropriate authorities directly.