

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Reporting and Escalation of Discrepancies or Issues

This SOP details the process for **reporting and escalation of discrepancies or issues** within the organization. It covers the identification and documentation of discrepancies, timely communication to relevant stakeholders, clear escalation pathways based on issue severity, roles and responsibilities of personnel involved, and follow-up actions to ensure resolution. The goal is to enhance transparency, accountability, and prompt corrective measures to maintain operational efficiency and quality standards.

## 1. Purpose

To outline the standardized process for identifying, reporting, escalating, and resolving discrepancies or issues to ensure effective communication, accountability, and timely corrective actions within the organization.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, consultants, and relevant stakeholders engaged in the organization's operations where discrepancies or issues may arise.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Discrepancy	Any deviation from established processes, standards, or expected outcomes.
Issue	A problem, concern, or risk that could affect operational efficiency or quality standards.
Escalation	The process of reporting issues to higher levels of management or authority when resolution is not achieved at the current level.

## 4. Responsibilities

- **All Employees:** Identify and report discrepancies or issues promptly.
- **Line Managers/Supervisors:** Review and assess reported issues, initiate corrective actions, and escalate according to severity.
- **Quality/Compliance Team:** Monitor issues, support investigations, track resolutions, and ensure documentation.
- **Senior Management:** Provide guidance, resources, and make decisions on unresolved or critical issues.

## 5. Procedure

1. **Identification:**
  - Observe and recognize any discrepancies or issues during operations.
2. **Documentation:**
  - Document the details of the discrepancy or issue using the Discrepancy Report Form (See Appendix A for Sample Form).
  - Include: date, time, location, description, and individuals involved.
3. **Initial Reporting:**
  - Submit the report to the immediate supervisor or designated contact within 24 hours of identification.
4. **Assessment & Classification:**
  - The supervisor/manager assesses the severity (minor, moderate, critical) and potential impact.
5. **Escalation Pathway:**
  - For **minor** issues: Address at the local level. Document actions and closure.
  - For **moderate** issues: Notify departmental manager and quality/compliance team. Initiate corrective action plan. Monitor until resolved.
  - For **critical** issues: Immediate escalation to senior management and relevant stakeholders. Activate contingency plans if needed.
6. **Communication:**

- Keep the reporter and relevant stakeholders informed of progress and resolution steps.

#### 7. Resolution & Follow-Up:

- Implement corrective/preventive actions.
- Verify effectiveness and document resolution.
- Conduct follow-up review if necessary.

#### 8. Closure:

- Record closing details, date, and responsible personnel in the tracking system.
- Archive documentation for audit and improvement purposes.

## 6. Escalation Matrix

Issue Severity	Responsible for Initial Review	Escalation Level	Timeframe for Escalation
Minor	Line Manager/Supervisor	None/Local Resolution	Within 24 hours
Moderate	Department Manager	Quality/Compliance Team	Within 12 hours
Critical	Senior Management	Executive/Board & Relevant Stakeholders	Immediate/Within 2 hours

## 7. Records and Documentation

- Maintain all reports, forms, investigation notes, and communications in a secure, retrievable manner.
- Retain records in accordance with company policy and regulatory requirements.

## 8. Training

- All relevant staff will be trained on this SOP during onboarding and refreshed annually.

## 9. Review and Improvement

- This SOP will be reviewed biennially or after any significant incident to incorporate lessons learned and best practices.

## Appendix A: Sample Discrepancy Report Form

Field	Detail/Description
Date/Time	
Reporter Name/Contact	
Description of Discrepancy/Issue	
Location	
Individuals Involved	
Initial Actions Taken	
Severity Assessment	Minor / Moderate / Critical
Escalation Details	
Resolution & Follow-up	
Closure Date	
Responsible Person	