

# SOP Template: Escalation Protocols and Approval Matrix

This SOP details the **escalation protocols and approval matrix** designed to streamline decision-making processes within the organization. It includes clear guidelines on identifying issues that require escalation, steps for notifying relevant personnel, roles and responsibilities at each escalation level, and the framework for obtaining required approvals. The objective is to ensure timely resolution of critical matters, maintain accountability, and facilitate efficient communication across teams and management tiers.

## 1. Purpose

To define a structured approach for escalating issues and obtaining necessary approvals in a timely and accountable manner.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, teams, and departments within the organization and covers all business-critical decisions and incidents requiring escalation.

## 3. Definitions

- **Escalation:** The process of raising an issue to a higher authority or management tier for resolution.
- **Approval Matrix:** A structured outline indicating who must approve various types and levels of decisions.

## 4. Escalation Protocols

1. **Identification:**
  - Employees must assess and identify incidents or decisions that surpass their authority or have significant business impact.
2. **Notification:**
  - Notify immediate supervisor and/or department head using established communication channels (email, ticketing system, etc.).
  - Document issue details, actions taken, and proposed next steps.
3. **Escalation Levels:**
  - Refer to the **Escalation Levels Table** below for appropriate channels based on urgency and severity.
4. **Tracking and Documentation:**
  - Maintain a log of escalated issues, responsible persons, actions taken, and resolutions for audit and review purposes.

## 5. Escalation Levels and Approval Matrix

Escalation Level	Trigger/Issue Type	Responsible Role	Required Approval	Turnaround Time
Level 1	Minor issues, routine deviations, team-level decisions	Team Lead/Supervisor	Team Lead	Within 24 hours
Level 2	Unresolved Level 1, moderate impact issues, cross-team dependencies	Department Manager	Department Head	Within 12 hours
Level 3	High impact, compliance/risk issues, customer escalations, urgent business interruptions	Senior Management	Director/VP	Within 4 hours
Level 4	Critical incidents, legal implications, severe business continuity risks	Executive Leadership	CEO/Board	Immediate (ASAP)

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Employee/Team Member:** Identify and promptly report issues requiring escalation.
- **Team Lead/Supervisor:** Assess the situation, escalate as needed, and coordinate response at Level 1.
- **Department Head/Manager:** Handle Level 2 escalations, liaise between teams, ensure documentation.
- **Senior Management:** Intervene in Levels 3 and 4, facilitate rapid decision-making, communicate with executive leadership.
- **Executive Leadership:** Oversee critical incident responses, make final approval decisions, communicate with stakeholders and board.

## 7. Communication Flow

1. Escalate issue via documented communication channel.
2. Notify all relevant parties as outlined in escalation table.
3. Provide timely updates at each escalation level.
4. Record outcomes, approvals, and actions in the escalation log.

## 8. Record Keeping and Review

All escalated issues and decisions must be logged in the central escalation register. This SOP should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in organizational structure or business requirements.

## 9. Appendix

- Sample escalation form
- Contact list for each escalation level
- FAQs on escalation protocols