SOP Template: Escalation Workflow for Unresolved Technical Issues

This SOP defines the **escalation workflow for unresolved technical issues**, detailing the systematic process for timely identification, reporting, and escalation of technical problems that remain unresolved within set timeframes. It establishes clear roles and responsibilities for initial support teams, escalation points, and management, ensuring efficient communication channels, priority assessment, and resolution tracking. The objective is to minimize downtime, enhance customer satisfaction, and maintain operational continuity through a structured escalation protocol.

1. Purpose

To provide a standardized process for escalating technical issues that cannot be resolved within predefined timeframes, ensuring timely and effective resolution.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all technical support staff, escalation points (Level 2/3 support, management), and any involved stakeholders handling technical issues within the organization.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Level 1 Support	- Initial issue identification & documentation - Attempt first-level resolution - Escalate if unresolved within the set timeframe
Level 2/3 Support	- Analyze escalated issues - Provide technical expertise for resolution - Escalate to management if issue persists
Management/Escalation Manager	- Address critical/priority issues - Allocate additional resources - Communicate with key stakeholders
Issue Owner	- Track issue status - Update relevant parties - Close the ticket once resolved

4. Escalation Workflow

1. **Issue Identification:** Technical issue detected and documented by Level 1 Support.
2. **Initial Troubleshooting:** Level 1 attempts resolution within *[X] hours*.
3. **Escalation Trigger:** If unresolved beyond set timeframe, escalate to Level 2/3 Support with all relevant documentation.
4. **Level 2/3 Assessment:** Advanced troubleshooting performed; issue resolved within *[Y] hours* or escalated to management if required.
5. **Management Involvement:** For unresolved or critical issues, management intervenes to allocate resources or communicate externally as needed.
6. **Resolution & Closure:** Once resolved, issue owner updates all stakeholders and formally closes the ticket, documenting the resolution and any follow-up actions.

5. Communication Protocols

- Use designated ticketing system for all updates and escalation notes.
- Notify issue owner and key stakeholders at each escalation step.
- Escalations must include complete issue documentation and history.
- Flag urgent issues using agreed indicators in all communications.

6. Priority Levels & Timeframes

Priority	Examples	Initial Response	Escalation Timeframe
High	System outages, critical security issues	Within 1 hour	Escalate to Level 2 in 2 hours; to management in 4 hours
Medium	Major feature not working, degraded performance	Within 4 hours	Escalate to Level 2 in 8 hours; to management in 16 hours
Low	Minor bugs, cosmetic issues	Within 24 hours	Escalate to Level 2 in 48 hours; to management in 72 hours

7. Documentation & Resolution Tracking

- Document each escalation with time, description, actions taken, and responsible persons.
- Maintain resolution logs for trend analysis and continuous improvement.
- Conduct post-issue reviews for critical escalations.

8. Review & Continuous Improvement

Review escalation cases quarterly to identify recurring issues, process gaps, or improvement opportunities. Update the SOP as needed to reflect technological or organizational changes.

9. References

- Company Ticketing System Guide
- Incident Management Policy
- Communication Guidelines