

SOP Template: Incident Escalation and External Authority Notification

This SOP defines the process for **incident escalation and external authority notification**, detailing the criteria for escalating incidents within the organization, the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in the escalation, and the procedures for notifying external authorities when necessary. It ensures timely and effective communication to manage incidents appropriately, comply with legal requirements, and minimize potential impacts.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized process for escalating incidents and notifying relevant external authorities to ensure appropriate management, legal compliance, and mitigation of potential impacts.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and third-party vendors who identify, manage, or escalate incidents within the organization.

3. Definitions

- **Incident:** Any unplanned disruption or event affecting business operations, security, safety, or the environment.
- **Escalation:** The process of raising the level of response to an incident due to its severity, complexity, or impact.
- **External Authority:** Regulatory body, law enforcement, or other government agency that may need notification.

4. Criteria for Escalation

1. Incident exceeds department or team resolution capability.
2. Incident involves legal, regulatory, or reputational risk.
3. Incident has actual or potential impact on health, safety, or environment.
4. Potential criminal activity or security breach is suspected.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Incident Reporter	Identify and report incidents per reporting procedures.
Immediate Supervisor	Assess severity and determine need for escalation.
Incident Response Team	Manage escalated incidents, coordinate response and documentation.
Compliance/Legal Officer	Advise on legal/regulatory notification requirements and coordinate with external authorities as needed.
Senior Management	Approve notifications to external authorities when required. Provide oversight.

6. Escalation Procedure

1. **Incident Identification:** Any employee who identifies an incident must report it immediately to their supervisor.
2. **Assessment:** The supervisor assesses the incident, referencing the criteria for escalation.
3. **Escalation:** If criteria met, the incident is escalated to the Incident Response Team.
4. **Investigation:** The Incident Response Team investigates and documents the incident, determining the potential need for external notification.
5. **Documentation:** All actions, communications, and decisions must be recorded in the incident log.

7. External Authority Notification Procedure

1. Determine if notification is legally or contractually required (consult Compliance/Legal Officer).
2. Prepare and review communication before release. Obtain approvals from Senior Management.
3. Notify the appropriate external authority using established channels (e.g., regulator portal, law enforcement contact).
4. Record details of the notification (time, recipient, method, content) in the incident log.

8. Records and Documentation

- Incident log entries
- Communication with external authorities
- Reports and investigation documentation

9. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Conduct post-incident reviews to assess response effectiveness.
- Update this SOP as necessary to address identified gaps.

10. References

- Relevant laws and regulations
- Internal incident reporting guidelines
- External authority notification requirements