

# SOP Template: Supplier Communication and Escalation Channels

This SOP establishes clear **supplier communication and escalation channels** to ensure effective and timely exchange of information between the organization and its suppliers. It defines the protocols for regular communication, issue reporting, and resolution procedures, as well as the hierarchy for escalating unresolved matters to higher management. The goal is to maintain strong supplier relationships, promptly address concerns, and support uninterrupted supply chain operations.

## 1. Purpose

To define standardized communication and escalation protocols for interacting with suppliers, ensuring efficient information flow, issue resolution, and escalation of unresolved concerns.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and departments involved in supplier management, communication, and issue resolution, as well as to all approved suppliers.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Procurement Team	Primary point of contact for routine supplier communications and issue management.
Supplier Relationship Manager	Oversees communication channels, ensures adherence to protocol, manages escalated issues.
Quality Assurance	Coordinates with suppliers on quality-related concerns and participates in escalations.
Senior Management	Involved in high-level escalations and resolution of critical issues.
Supplier Representative	Responds to communications, reports issues, and collaborates on resolution steps.

## 4. Communication Protocols

- **Regular Communication:**
  - Schedule periodic meetings (e.g., monthly, quarterly) with key suppliers.
  - Maintain clear contact lists for all supplier representatives.
  - Share updates on forecasts, requirements, and performance metrics.
- **Ad-hoc Communication:**
  - Utilize email or designated messaging platforms for day-to-day queries and updates.
  - Document all significant communications for reference.
- **Meeting Records:**
  - Document meeting minutes and share with all relevant parties.

## 5. Issue Reporting and Resolution

1. Identify and document the issue, including relevant facts and impact.
2. Communicate the issue to the supplier's designated contact person via email or official channel within 24 hours of identification.
3. Supplier acknowledges receipt and proposes a resolution timeline (typically within 48 hours).
4. Both parties collaborate to resolve the issue within agreed-upon timelines.
5. Document resolution or actions taken, and update all stakeholders.

## 6. Escalation Channels

If an issue remains unresolved after initial discussions:

1. Escalate to the Supplier Relationship Manager and equivalent supplier authority.
2. Arrange a joint meeting for further discussion and agreement on corrective actions.
3. If unresolved, escalate to Senior Management and supplier's top management with full documentation of steps taken.
4. Senior leadership reviews, decides on further action, or initiates alternative supplier sourcing if necessary.

Escalation Level	Contact	Response Time	Resolution Timeline
Level 1	Procurement Team / Supplier Rep	Within 24 hours	3 business days
Level 2	Supplier Relationship Manager / Supplier Supervisor	Within 48 hours	5 business days
Level 3	Senior Management	Within 72 hours	As per criticality

## 7. Documentation and Records

- Maintain records of all communications, issues, resolutions, and escalation steps.
- Store documentation securely and ensure accessibility for future reference and audits.

## 8. Review and Improvement

- Review this SOP annually or after major incidents.
- Update protocols based on lessons learned and feedback from stakeholders.
- Provide training to reinforce standards and updates.