

SOP Template: Tiered Escalation Criteria and Trigger Points

This SOP defines **tiered escalation criteria and trigger points** to systematically identify and manage issues based on their severity and impact. It ensures timely intervention by establishing clear thresholds for escalating incidents, enabling efficient communication and resolution within the organization. The document outlines roles and responsibilities, escalation levels, decision-making protocols, and response timelines to maintain operational stability and prevent minor problems from escalating into major crises.

1. Purpose

To establish a structured approach for escalating issues in a timely manner, preventing operational disruption and ensuring appropriate resource allocation at each escalation tier.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and key stakeholders involved in incident and issue management within the organization.

3. Definitions

- **Escalation:** The process of transferring an issue to a higher authority or support level.
- **Trigger Point:** A predefined threshold or condition that indicates when escalation should occur.
- **Severity Level:** Classification of the impact and urgency of an issue.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Frontline Support/Staff:** Initial incident identification, resolution, and timely escalation if unresolved.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Review escalated issues, make decisions regarding further escalation, and ensure communication.
- **Executive Team:** Final authority during major incidents, responsible for organizational decisions and stakeholder communication.

5. Escalation Levels & Trigger Points

Level	Severity Definition	Trigger Points	Responsible Party	Response Timeframe
Tier 1: Minor/Low	Minimal impact, routine operational issues. No immediate risk to business operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incident unresolved after 2 business hours• Repeated minor issues within one month	Frontline Staff/Support	Initial response within 1 hour; escalate after 2 hours if unresolved
Tier 2: Moderate	Medium impact, potential to affect productivity. Degraded service to one or more departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incident unresolved after 1 hour• Service degradation affecting more than one user/team• Repeated Tier 1 escalations (3+ in a week)	Supervisor/Manager	Initial response within 30 minutes; escalate after 1 hour if unresolved

Level	Severity Definition	Trigger Points	Responsible Party	Response Timeframe
Tier 3: Major/Critical	High impact, severe disruption to business operations. Potential compliance or safety risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service outage (mission critical systems) Risk to compliance, safety, or reputation identified Incident unresolved after 30 minutes 	Executive Team/Senior Leadership	Immediate notification; response within 15 minutes

6. Decision-Making Protocols

- Document all actions and decisions during the escalation process.
- Utilize incident management tools to track escalations and communications.
- Escalations can be triggered manually if staff believe impact is underestimated.

7. Communication & Documentation

- Escalate via established channels: phone, email, or incident management system.
- Log all escalation details: date, time, persons notified, and response.
- Notify key stakeholders as defined per escalation tier.

8. Review & Revision

- SOP reviewed annually or after any major incident.
- Stakeholder feedback incorporated into future SOP updates.

9. Appendices

- Escalation contact list
- Incident report templates
- Flowchart of escalation process