Microsoft Services Essential Support

Services Reference Guide

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Microsoft®
Services

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This document is a Reference Guide designed to help you understand the Microsoft Services Essential Support *Plan 1* and *Plan 2*. It may be updated from time to time. In the event of any conflict between this document and the Service Description which forms part of your contract, the Service Description will take priority.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Essential Support?
Essential Support is a suite of managed support offerings from Microsoft® that provide direct access to the services and technical expertise you need to help maximise the use of your Microsoft technology. The Essential Support family provides you with advice and guidance to help prevent problems occurring, helps answer your more complex queries on running Microsoft technology in your specific environment, and supports you in resolving issues quickly should they arise.

Plan 1 and *Plan 2* are two levels of Essential Support.

Essential Support *Plan 1* and *Plan 2* offerings are designed around four key service elements:
• Support Account Management
• Support Assistance
• Problem Resolution Support
• Training and Information Services

1.2 Support Account Management
Support Account Management builds an effective relationship between our account specialists and the management and technical staff in your organisation in order to understand your systems and application business goals, and ensure Essential Support helps you meet those goals. They will liaise with the primary contact in your organisation, the Customer Support Manager (CSM).

1.3 Support Assistance
Included with your contract are a number of hours for Support Assistance that you can use to contact Microsoft technical support engineers. The number of hours is determined by your Plan type. Accessed by telephone, these engineers are technical specialists who can help answer your more complex queries on how to undertake specific tasks or plan future changes to your Microsoft installation.

1.4 Problem Resolution Support
Problem Resolution Support offers responsive round-the-clock access to highly qualified senior engineers via telephone, or the web, providing accurate solutions to technology issues. 24x7 Support – support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year* Incident Resolution – identifying and prioritising incident severity. Escalation – assessing the impact of an incident on your business, and allocating appropriate technical resources and management accordingly.

1.5 Training and Information Services
Microsoft Technical Support Training is a compelling series of interactive Microsoft technical workshops, designed to help you discover the essentials of supporting Microsoft products in a variety of environments.
• Microsoft Enterprise Learning Library (MELL) – IT Professional Edition provides user subscriptions to a full range of online training and reference material published by Microsoft Press, including simulations and self-paced training and assessment, certification material to help prepare for Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP), user customisation, reporting and search tools
• TechNet Plus – the rich CD and web-based subscription service for Microsoft IT Professionals that includes extensive searchable information and beta software for testing purposes, as well as access to a web-based Online Concierge service and Managed Newsgroups that help you get your queries answered as quickly as possible
• Microsoft Premier Online Web Service – only available to Microsoft Services customers, which conveniently gathers all the support information you need in one place and includes information not available elsewhere that helps you anticipate problems before they may arise

*Excluding Public & Microsoft-observed holidays

2. Plan Options

Two Plan types are available. These are fixed packages but additional services can be purchased to add to your chosen Plan.
- **Plan 1** – basic level of Essential Support services
- **Plan 2** – increased levels of Essential Support services

For each of these plans, all of the key service elements are available, but differ in the amount of time available to perform Support Account Management and Support Assistance, and offer different levels of access to Incidents and Training.

Your contract will detail the Plan type you have purchased.

2.1 Customisable Options

The following options can be added once to the Plan 1 package, within the duration of your contract:
- 20 Support Account Management Hours
- A pack of 3 or 6 Problem Resolution Incidents
- A pack of 4 Support Assistance Hours
- A pack of 4 workshop places

3. Support Account Management

Achieving the levels of availability you require within your organisation is not so much about fast reactions to emergencies as preventing emergencies in the first place. That's why Support Account Management is important. Support Account Management is delivered by a telephone-based Technical Account Specialist (TAS), who regularly monitors your environment, plans the most effective use of resources available and researches issues you are about to face in order to reduce incidents, improve availability and lower your support costs.

Below is a table outlining the role of a Technical Account Specialist:

Activity	Plan 1 50 Hours per Contract	Plan 2 70 Hours per Contract
Your Profiling	Initial Basic Profile and Review as changes occur	Initial Profile and Review as changes occur
Contract and Support Delivery Plan	Start of Contract	Start of Contract
Contract and Support Delivery Review	Quarterly	Monthly
Proactive information sent to Your Primary Contact (CSM)	As appropriate, according to available time	As appropriate, according to available time
Incident Resolution tracking and escalation	When Incident Resolution is in progress	When Incident Resolution is in progress
Incident and Contract Status Reports	Monthly	Monthly

Acting as your advocate and your 'eyes and ears' for information within Microsoft, Technical Account Specialist's perform many functions in order to deliver Essential Support to your satisfaction, typically split between proactively working with your CSM, supporting your business goals, and responding to your company's technical support needs. These services are described in the following sections.

3.1 Planning and Account Management

The Technical Account Specialist:
- Creates and builds a close working relationship with your assigned contact
- Works with you, at the start of the contract, to create a Service Delivery Plan (detailing your environment) which builds your profile. The depth of investigation will depend on the nature of each system and the business dependency on it, as well as the degree of risk to which the system is subject. As a minimum, the Technical Account Specialist will seek to document the domain and networking infrastructure, the standard build for desktop and server machines, as well as detailing any mission-critical applications running on the Microsoft platform
- Holds regular Service Delivery Plan Reviews and makes necessary changes to the plans, and manages the implications of those changes
- Delivers to you a monthly report in an agreed format, showing the usage against the contract and any appropriate forecast usage for the next period

At the start of your Essential Support agreement, and annually thereafter, your Technical Account Specialist will conduct a teleconference Planning Session. At this session, he/she will explain in detail the Essential Support service to key contacts within your organisation. The aim is to ensure the best and most effective utilisation of the service.

Your Technical Account Specialist will send a **Support Usage Report** and conduct a status meeting by phone with your CSM. During this meeting, he/she will discuss overall status and any action plans required to ensure support issues are addressed with the appropriate resources.

The following topics may be covered during the status meeting:

Services Delivered and Progress
Proactive Services delivered and overall support usage
Progress against the Service Delivery Plan and changes required
Trends in support incident utilisation and recommendations for improvement

Plans
Proactive Services planned
Upcoming product or maintenance deployment plans
Actions required for the next period

Your Satisfaction
Current satisfaction with service delivery and overall satisfaction within your organisation

Issues and Action Plans
Issues requiring management attention
Actions required to resolve outstanding support incidents

These reports are useful for spotting trends in service utilisation and may highlight actions needed to improve diagnostic techniques, data collection and service delivery. Status reports also detail current utilisation of support incidents including: product and problem description; number of incidents opened, closed and unresolved.

3.2 Technical Support Management

General Support
As your advocate within Microsoft, the Technical Account Specialist ensures that you are given the support focus you need. Technical Account Specialists are unlikely to be experts in all the Microsoft products used, but will use their general skills to help resolve problems, without the use of an incident wherever possible, and manage the utilisation of other Microsoft resources to assist where needed. Their role is:
- Working with you and your support teams to obtain the most from Essential Support
- Managing the escalation of complex problems and ensuring the appropriate resources are applied to provide timely resolutions that meet your needs
- Advising on product and technical support issues which can help reduce problems and keep your systems running at peak performance
- Answering ad-hoc technical questions

They will liaise with engineers working on your calls to ensure their understanding of the technical and business impact of the problem, and also ensure there is open and engaging dialogue between our support engineers and your engineers during an incident.

Managing Escalations

Should an issue require escalation, the Technical Account Specialist will facilitate this process and ensure the problem is dealt with as quickly as possible, and that you are aware of the status of the escalated issue within the agreed times. Escalation is the process that systematically increases the level of resources, working to resolve incidents based on the impact of the problem to your business. Your Technical Account Specialist manages the escalation process and involves the appropriate Support Engineers, product development teams and Microsoft management. Your Technical Account Specialist also keeps your management and Microsoft's management up to date on recent progress. The key to effective escalation management is good communication and a joint commitment to providing the necessary resources. At times, you will be asked to commit in-house resources to work with us to isolate and troubleshoot the issue.

3.3 Proactive Services

TASs have access to broad and specific technical information and, applying their knowledge of your environment, determine which information is appropriate for onward transmission.

You will be encouraged to use the Training and Information Services, as well as the Support Assistance resources available within your contract, to help prevent issues from occurring.

Security and Critical alerts and fixes will be forwarded to you in a timely manner and discussed as to the appropriateness to your own environment.

The Essential Support service level purchased will determine the available time from your Technical Account Specialist. It is important to establish priorities at the start of your Essential Support agreement to facilitate planning for the effective use of this time.

3.4 Essential Support Team

Your Technical Account Specialist co-ordinates a team of specialists who deliver additional Essential Support services. Members of the team include:

Initial Response Team (IRT) – the Initial Response Team is a technical and incident management team who will build an initial understanding of your technical issue, the business impact and the technical environment in which you work. With this information, your incident will be directed to the most appropriate resource for speedy and effective resolution.

Technical Support Engineers – product and technology specialists who provide answers for your support incidents. Your incident will be assigned to a Support Engineer from one of many technology groups. This assignment may change as problem diagnosis progresses. Your technical issues follow a strict escalation process, applying the correct technical and management resources.

We work with the following individuals from your organisation:

Customer Support Manager (CSM) – the primary contact for managing your Essential Support relationship and the main contact for the TAS. The CSM is usually a manager with primary responsibility for day-to-day support operations.

Named Contacts – 3 other individuals identified as the authorised users of Essential Support by the CSM and who act as potential secondary contacts for the Technical Account Specialist.

Effective use of these resources is key to the successful execution of Essential Support for your business. An important goal of the Technical Account Specialist is to work with you to identify the individuals in your organisation and their appropriate role.

4. Support Assistance

Support Assistance hours help reduce your exposure to problems with your IT Infrastructure, increase your system availability and supportability, accelerate your deployment cycle, and ensure Microsoft products are properly adapted to your environment.

Support Assistance can include any combination of the following:
- Reactive Support Assistance. These services help you resolve problems that are related to, but not attributed to, Microsoft Products
- Proactive Support Assistance. These services provide you with advice and guidance on how to design, develop and deploy our products, including:
  – Supportability Advice: informal advice and guidance intended to help you implement our technologies in ways that prevent common support issues and decrease the likelihood of system outages
  – Porting and Migration Assistance: to assist you in devising strategies for porting or migrating applications and data to our technologies, including the validation of specific techniques and identification of potential problem areas.

Responsibilities

Your Technical Account Specialist will discuss Support Assistance with your CSM and together they will identify, prioritise and appropriate use. Your Technical Account Specialist will then co-ordinate the activity and deliver the results in the requested format to your nominated contact within the agreed timescales.

5. Training and Information Services

Training and Information Services provide a comprehensive selection of resources to help you develop and maintain the technical knowledge successfully to utilise, deploy and support Microsoft products. The following sections briefly describe each of these services.

5.1 Support Training Workshops

Technical Support Training Workshops are a compelling series of specific Microsoft technical hands-on workshops, designed to help you discover the essentials of Microsoft products in the context of common business scenarios, as well as the fundamentals of best practice in operations. The topics are support focused, with special emphasis on planning for, and avoiding, common issues in a support environment. These workshops will be available throughout the UK for you to book, subject to availability.

A list of current courses and locations, available from your Technical Account Specialist, are likely to include:
- Desktop Deployment
- Messaging
- O/S Troubleshooting
- Manageability
- Security
- Microsoft Operations Framework

Your Technical Account Specialist can work with you to assist in booking the most appropriate Support Training Workshops.

5.2 Microsoft Enterprise Learning Library (MELL)

Microsoft Enterprise Learning Library (MELL) – IT Professional Edition offers user subscriptions to a full range of online training and reference material published by Microsoft Press. These include simulations and self-paced training and assessment, certification material to help prepare for Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) exams, user customisation, reporting and search tools.

MELL offers comprehensive training solutions for your entire organisation. It was built with direct input from the teams that actually design the software, such as Microsoft Windows®, Office, the .NET server products, and databases. The main focus for MELL IT Professional Edition software training is for the professional who manages and supports Microsoft technology.

Key product features that will make this service work for you include:

- Search – allowing users quickly to find the information they need to be more effective in their jobs
- MELL – can run in the background on the user's desktop, allowing them quick and direct access to questions they may have on the other applications they are using concurrently
- MELL is also customisable, so that the training managers can design learning programmes specific to the particular trainee's needs, resulting in a more effective and efficient training solution

When the training programme is designed, it can be easily deployed on your existing network infrastructure, as it is simply installed on one of your central servers and accessed by the licensed users with a common web browser. If you already have a Learning Management System installed from another company, the MELL training titles will simply plug into this system, provided they are compliant with 'SCORM' standards.

With MELL, you will always have the most up-to-date training and reference materials from Microsoft, as you are entitled to any content updates for the life of your product licence. This will ensure you continue to get the most out of your investments in other Microsoft technologies, helping you to improve productivity and lower support costs.

Your Technical Account Specialist can work with you to ensure you are able to use MELL effectively in your organisation and that you get the regular updates throughout your contract to keep MELL current.

5.3 Microsoft Premier Online

Essential Support customers receive access to Microsoft Premier Online – a secure website that provides customised information and two-way communication with Microsoft.

From the Microsoft Premier Online Site, you can access many unique technical resources, and hints and tips on how to get the most from your Essential Support agreement, as well as getting access to:

- NewsFlashes and other product information
- Security Issues bulletins and Critical Problem Alerts (CPAs) on known problems, and convenient on-line access to hot-fixes and Service Packs
- Support webcasts where you can watch live presentations online and participate in Q&A sessions
- TechNet resources online
- Microsoft Knowledge Base of technical articles
- Microsoft's troubleshooting tools and guides, used by Microsoft's own support engineers and only available to Essential Support customers

You can also:
- Register for upcoming Support webcasts and review transcripts from previous sessions
- Submit support incidents electronically via Web Response
- Check status of support incidents electronically

5.4 Security Bulletins, Product NewsFlashes and Critical Problem Alerts

To keep up with the latest information about Microsoft products and newly discovered support issues, you may subscribe to our Product NewsFlashes, Critical Problem Alerts and Security bulletins. Product NewsFlashes contain important and time-sensitive information about the deployment and use of Microsoft products and technologies, including known problems, Service Pack releases, hot-fixes and updates to the Microsoft Knowledge Base. Critical Problem Alerts and Security Bulletins summarise critical or security issues specific to Microsoft products in your environment and recommend solutions or workarounds.

You can gain full access to this information by subscribing to the relevant service on the Microsoft Premier Online site. An email notification mechanism will automatically deliver regularly scheduled information as requested by you, including Product NewsFlashes, Critical Problem Alerts, Virus Notifications and monthly webcast Schedules directly to your mailbox.

Your Technical Account Specialist will assist you in identifying the most appropriate subscriptions for you and your technical environment to ensure you are receiving only the most appropriate information.

5.5 Participating in Support Webcasts

Support webcasts are regular technical briefings held either via phone conferences or using the Microsoft Windows Media® Player. They provide information on key areas of Microsoft technology and are focused on support topics and emerging products. During the Support webcasts, participants have the opportunity to hear 30-60 minute technical briefings from Microsoft programme managers, developers and support engineers. After the presentation, specific questions can be posed to the panel. Phone-ins are available specifically for Essential Support customers.

To ensure that participants get the most out of each webcast, the technical level of each presentation is classified according to the following model:

100-level: Provides an overview of the topic and assumes little prior expertise.

200-level: Assumes 100-level knowledge and a fairly complete understanding of the product features. The 200-level roundtables may include case studies that review a range of common scenarios or features.

300-level: Assumes 200-level knowledge and an in-depth expertise with using the product or technology in an operational environment. The 300-level roundtables may include complex case studies that illustrate specific points of the product, which are key to improving performance or interoperability.

400-level: Assumes the deepest level of technical knowledge. The content enables you to push products to maximum performance, achieve the broadest possible interoperability and create applications using advanced features.

A three-month schedule of upcoming webcasts is maintained on the Microsoft Premier Online site. At least one month prior to each webcast, details about the session will be posted and you can register to participate. Approximately one week prior to the webcasts, the accompanying PowerPoint® slides and any additional pre-reading materials are posted and available for download.

Immediately following each webcast, the session abstract and the PowerPoint slides are posted to the Microsoft Premier Online site. If you are unable to attend a session, each webcast is recorded and available for two weeks via a replay service. Detailed directions for replay are available with the webcast information. In addition, full transcripts are posted approximately three weeks after each session.

Your CSM can also receive quarterly CDs containing archives of previous webcasts and other Microsoft Premier Online content.

5.6 Using Web Response

Authorised contacts may access Essential Support engineers via Web Response through the Microsoft Premier Online site and submit support incidents. Web response is only for severity B or C problems.

5.7 Checking Incident Status using Microsoft Premier Online

Microsoft Premier Online allows authorised contacts to view incident logs for status on our progress on your support incidents, and authorised contacts can also provide their own update.

5.8 Microsoft TechNet Programme and TechNet Plus CD Subscription

Microsoft TechNet is a central information resource designed for IT professionals who plan, install, configure and support Microsoft products. The programme consists of the TechNet CD, access to the TechNet web site, the TechNet Flash Newsletter and local TechNet community events/briefings.

Your subscription with Essential Support is to TechNet Plus, Single Server Edition, available in either DVD or CD format, and includes quarterly updates. It can help to reduce the cost of technology ownership, increase end-user productivity and build your technical expertise. TechNet Plus includes the following key components:

• Pre-release Microsoft Beta software	• Seminar-online CDs
• Complete Microsoft Knowledge Base	• Case Studies
• Updated Service Packs	• Evaluation and Reviewers' Guides
• Drivers and Patches	• Strategy and White Papers
• Training Materials	• Total Cost of Ownership information
• Support services: Managed Newsgroup	• Support Services: Online Concierge

Essential Support customers receive at least one monthly subscription to TechNet Plus, which includes a licence for a single server with unlimited user access. The subscription is registered to the CSM, unless otherwise specified, and profile information can be changed by calling the TechNet subscription centre on: 0800 281 221.

Your Technical Account Specialist can assist you with the effective use of the whole range of TechNet resources.

6. Problem Resolution Support

As an Essential Support customer, you are assured of access to Problem Resolution Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week*. Customers are encouraged however, to submit any requests for support during normal business hours whenever possible for non-critical issues. Technical issues on supported products can be reported via telephone and electronic means (as available). All issues go through a defined technical and management escalation process, with response times that correspond to the severity level of your service requests. Incidents with a critical business impact are assigned within one hour to specially trained engineers who work non-stop alongside you until the Microsoft product is back up and running.

6.1 Summary of Process

Essential Support has an established escalation process to ensure the most efficient resolution of all technical incidents. All incidents go first to the Initial Response Team (IRT) then to the Technical Support Engineers.

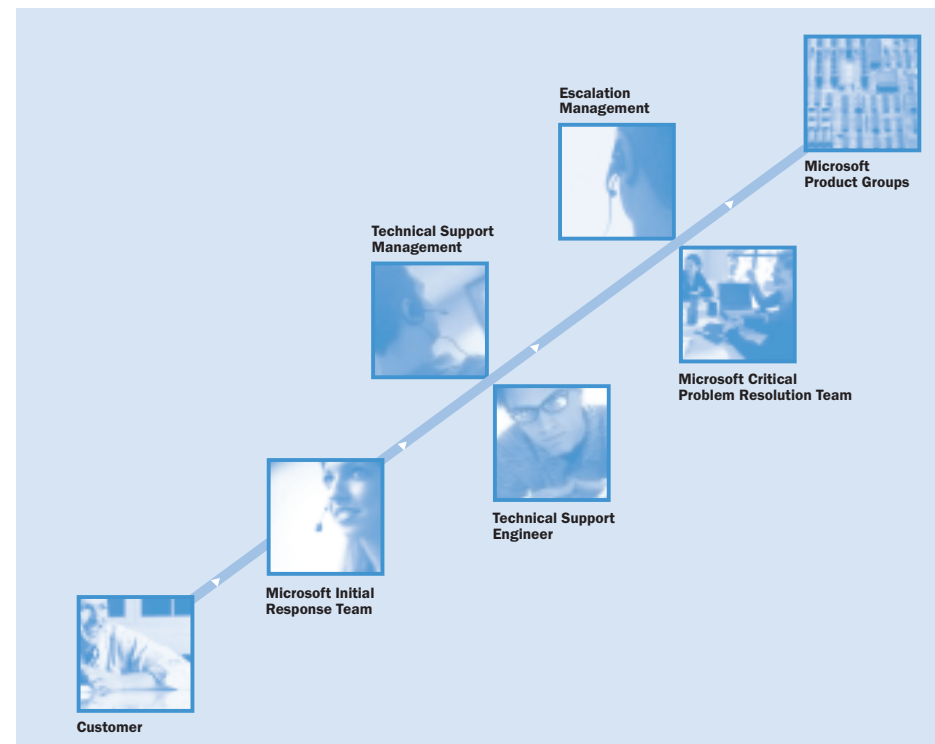The Initial Response Team is dedicated to Managed Support and is specially trained to:
• Understand the technical issue
• Discuss the impact to the business and assign the relevant severity
• Ensure that the correct resources are assigned to the issue
The team has a breadth of knowledge across the whole of the Microsoft software range.

If necessary, incidents are escalated to a higher level of technical expertise. The escalation process has two primary components:

1. A planned and orderly increase of the appropriate technical resources made available to resolve a critical situation.

2. A planned and orderly increase in the management visibility of that situation within Microsoft.

Escalation Process

Escalation Management

Microsoft Product Groups

Technical Support Management

Microsoft Critical Problem Resolution Team

Technical Support Engineer

Microsoft Initial Response Team

Customer

6.2 Before You Submit an Incident

By having the following information available when you contact Microsoft, the IRT will be able to focus quickly on defining the cause of your issue.

What is the impact of this issue on your business and what severity level do you want to apply?

Issue details:
• A description of the circumstances leading up to the issue
• Measures applied to date
• Frequency of issue
• Any error logs, error messages or symptoms recognised

When you call – please provide:
• Your Access ID Number or Contract number
• Details of the configuration – software products, including version numbers and service packs applied

6.3 Submitting an Incident

To ensure that Essential support incidents receive the right resources, at the right time, we need to understand the impact of the problem on your business. All incidents are handled by the Initial Response Team.

6.3.1 Submitting Incidents via Web Response

To submit incidents via the web you must have an authorised Access ID Number. Check with your CSM or Technical Account Specialist to determine if your Access ID Number has been authorised.
When you have submitted all the pertinent information and your preferred method of contact, your incident will be dealt with by a member of the Initial Response Team.

6.3.2 Submitting Incidents via Telephone

When calling the Essential Support phone number, the Initial Response Team will log your incident, allocating a unique Service Request Number (SRN). In the unlikely event of an IRT member not being available immediately to log an incident, the person placing the incident may leave a voice mail message. These voice mails are responded to promptly by the Initial Response Team. The IRT will work with you to document your problem in as much detail as possible, including exact error numbers, text and information about your environment. It is advisable to have access to the system affected and any documentation necessary to answer their questions.

6.4 Incident Management

When the call has been logged with the IRT it is transferred to the appropriate product queue and a Technical Support Engineer will call you back within the timescales appropriate to the severity of the incident.

Ownership of an incident will rest with a specific team and will be managed by your Technical Account Specialist, so you can contact Microsoft at any time during business hours to get a progress update or discuss details of an incident.

6.5 Severities

The levels of Severity that you can assign to an incident are shown in the table on the following page, along with typical time scales for response and the expected level of effort.

* Excluding Public and Microsoft-observed holidays.

Severity	Customer's situation	Expected Microsoft Response	Expected Customer Response
A	Significant business impact: • Customer's business has significant loss or degradation of services • Needs attention within 1 hour	• 1st call response in 1 hour or less • Continuous effort on a 24x7 basis • Notification to Senior Managers at Microsoft	• Allocation of appropriate resources to sustain continuous effort on a 24x7 basis • Rapid access and response from change control authority • Management notification
B	Moderate business impact: • Customer's business has moderate loss or degradation of services, but work can reasonably continue in an impaired manner • Needs attention within 2 hours	• 1st call response in 2 hours or less • Effort during business hours only	• Allocation of appropriate resources to sustain business hours continuous effort • Access and response from change control authority within 4 business hours
C	Minimum business impact: • Customer's business is substantially functioning with minor or no impediments of services • Needs attention within 4 hours	• 1st call response in 4 hours or less • Effort during business hours only	• Accurate contact information on case owner • Responsive within 24 hours

With your consent, the severity will be changed, up or down, as the impact changes on your business. The higher the severity, the more resource is applied to resolving the issue, and the faster it moves through the escalation process.

We request that you adhere as closely as possible to the guidelines, since they are used to set our internal priorities. To avoid possible network delays and preserve response times, we request that all Severity A issues should be submitted by telephone.

Severity A incidents receive an escalated level of commitment from Microsoft. For Severity A incidents, we may ask our Technical Support Engineers to work their non-standard hours, reassign critical resources from other activities, or request a Technical Support Engineer to work around the clock until a problem is fully resolved. In order for this commitment to be effective, similar levels of commitment should exist within your organisation. If this commitment cannot be matched, you can chose not to have your incident worked on outside normal standard business hours.

It is not unusual for an issue to change severity during the resolution process. A problem that initially starts as a Severity A situation may be reclassified as Severity B upon implementing a workaround.

We use these guidelines in conjunction with business rules applied by our incident management systems to judge our effectiveness and progress in resolving incidents. It is important that you communicate any changes to your Technical Account Specialist or Technical Support Engineer, so the severity level may be adjusted accordingly.

6.6 Escalation Process

1. Calls are logged with the Initial Response Team, who, together with you, will assign the severity of the incident and route it to the most appropriate support team.

2. A Technical Support Engineer will begin working with you on your incident. These Engineers have a broad range of skills and access to a variety of other resources.

3. If an incident is unresolved, the Technical Support Engineer may enlist the help and support of a higher level engineer or, if the incident is critical, the Microsoft Critical Problem Resolution team will be brought in.

4. Your Technical Account Specialist and the Technical Support Engineer, if appropriate, can escalate an Incident to Microsoft Product Groups. This is significant, as the original software development teams are committed to resolving critical issues regarding released versions of Microsoft products. In some cases, where an incident has a high impact on your business, Microsoft Product Groups can create your specific code to resolve an incident, at an additional charge to you.

6.7 Product Changes and Hotfixes

Issues that require product changes, where no feasible workarounds exist, may be eligible for a Hotfix. A Hotfix is a special build for a specific customer to fix a specific problem. Limited testing is performed on a Hotfix, and it should not be put into a production environment without rigorous testing by your staff. A Hotfix can only be redistributed outside your organisation if we have given our written consent, and you should contact your Technical Account Specialist to discuss the redistribution process.

Collections of Hotfixes are periodically made available to all customers through rigorously tested Service Packs. Service Packs include documentation identifying each Hotfix number and a brief description of the problem and resolution.

6.8 Your Responsibility in Escalation

Actively managing your resources and controlling the process of information exchange during an incident is an important role for the CSM.

For a successful conclusion to any incident, and most importantly for incidents with a high business impact, it is a key requirement that the escalation procedures are clearly understood, by both Microsoft and its customers. Everyone involved in the process must participate with an equally high level of commitment. While the escalation process increases the level of Microsoft resource, it is important that you also have a mechanism in place for escalating the incident within your own organisation, either in terms of technical resource allocation or management visibility. For this reason, Microsoft strongly encourages you to define and document your own internal escalation procedures.

6.9 Checking Incident Status

You can check your incident status electronically via Microsoft Premier Online.

6.10 Closing the Incident

After a solution or workaround has been provided to your organisation, the Technical Support Engineer or your Technical Account Specialist close the incident.

Following closure, you will be invited to participate in a survey to determine your level of satisfaction with the handling and resolution of your incident.

7. Your Satisfaction

As your support advocate within Microsoft, your Technical Account Specialist is strategically positioned to help you get the most value from your Essential Support agreement. Our experience shows that effective relationships between Customers and their Technical Account Specialist result in higher satisfaction with the services provided. We strongly encourage you to work closely with your Technical Account Specialist to help develop and strengthen that relationship, which is key to the success of your Essential Support agreement.

Our success is measured by your satisfaction with the quality of service received. Your satisfaction is the most important and visible metric we use to evaluate the performance of your Technical Account Specialist, Support Engineers, Essential Support management, as well as all other Essential Support services you receive.

Microsoft conducts bi-annual surveys of the Essential Support service. The CSM will be automatically surveyed, and will be asked to respond to a mix of questions using a numeric rating scale and open-ended questions. The CSM will also be given the opportunity to comment on areas for improvement or other matters of importance. The results allow us to detect positive or negative trends over time and make appropriate adjustments. Please let us know what you think. We want you to be VERY SATISFIED with the Essential Support service!

Glossary

Access ID Number
The account number you will use when submitting incidents to Microsoft Services Essential Support.

Critical Problem Alerts (CPAs)
Electronic alerts available through the Microsoft Premier Online that enable you to take steps to avoid potential high-impact problems.

Critical Problem Resolution (CPR) Team
This team consists of Escalation Engineers – they are senior technical support professionals.

Customer Support Manager (CSM)
The designated management contact in your organisation who is the primary contact for the Technical Account Specialist and co-ordinates in-house support activities, prioritises utilisation and controls access to services provided under Essential Support.

Design Change Request (DCR)
A request to modify a product that is working as designed, but the design is not what your organisation needs and/or wants.

Escalation Management
The process used by TASs or Support Engineers to ensure appropriate resources are applied to complex problems.

Group Contacts
Individuals authorised to submit incidents and/or access the Microsoft Premier Online, using a single shared ID.

Hotfix
A special build to fix a specific problem where no feasible workaround exists.

Incident
A single support issue and the reasonable effort needed to resolve it.

Initial Response Team (IRT)
The first point of contact when you call Microsoft with an incident. This team collects summary data and routes your call to the appropriate Technical Support Engineer.

Online ID
The personal ID you create when accessing Microsoft Premier Online for the first time.

Planning Session
An initial teleconference meeting between you and the Technical Account Specialist to outline the elements of Essential Support and begin planning for their use.

Product NewsFlashes
Regularly produced newsletters containing support information available through Microsoft Premier Online.

Service Delivery Plan
A plan created and updated by the Technical Account Specialist that defines the utilisation of Essential Support services through the year.

Service Pack
A Service Pack consists of a set of hot fixes for a particular product.

Service Request
A single support issue, allocated a unique number. Also known as an incident.

Support Webcasts
Regular online events with Microsoft developers and engineers to promote knowledge transfer on key Microsoft technologies and support topics.

Microsoft Premier Online A secure website for Essential Support customers, containing Knowledge Base access, Product NewsFlashes, Critical Problem Alerts, Service Packs, Hotfixes, Support webcasts and Web Response.

Status Meetings
Regular meetings with your Technical Account Specialist to discuss the delivery and performance of Essential Support services.

Status Reports
Regular reports, prepared by your Technical Account Specialist, which outline support utilisation.

Support Assistance
Telephone advice on product implementation and supportability, and how your operations might be modified to reduce costs.

Technical Account Specialist (TAS)
A Microsoft Certified Professional with extensive technical experience. Your Technical Account Specialist manages your overall support relationship with Microsoft for services delivered under Essential Support.

Technical Support Training Workshops
Specific training available to Essential Support customers, concentrating on the supportability and manageability ofMicrosoft products.

TechNet Plus
A CD-ROM subscription that provides current evaluation, deployment and support information on all the Microsoft business products.

Web Response
The application located on Microsoft Premier Online that enables you to submit incidents via the web.

To find out more or to find a partner
visit **www.microsoft.com/uk/essentialsupport** or contact your Microsoft representative.