Support

Service Description

Applies to: *Office 365 Dedicated – Legacy Platform & vNext Platform Releases*

Topic Last Modified: *2014-01-08*

The Microsoft Office 365 Dedicated support organization is committed to helping your organization quickly and efficiently resolve service-related incidents that your Office 365 users might encounter. Support activities for Office 365 Dedicated plans include the following:

- **Help with aligning your service desk with Office 365 Dedicated support.** The Office 365 support team provides training and guidance that enables your service desk staff to support your end users and align your operations with Office 365 support services.
- **Respond to incidents escalated by your service desk.** The Office 365 support team helps you resolve service-related incidents that cannot be resolved by your service desk staff.
- **Record, track, and communicate support incident status.** The Office 365 support team that is working on escalated incidents provides, records, and communicates the status of each incident to your organization until the incident is resolved, service is restored, or the incident is archived.
- **Improve your satisfaction with support services.** The Office 365 support team is continually working to improve your satisfaction by monitoring and evaluating support service metrics and internal processes.

This service description presents an overview of the support services provided for organizations subscribed to Office 365 for enterprises Dedicated plans and ITAR-support plans. It outlines the roles and responsibilities that both your organization and Microsoft have in resolving service-related incidents that users might encounter when using the Exchange Online Dedicated, SharePoint Online Dedicated, and Lync Online Dedicated service offerings.

Shared Support Responsibilities

Microsoft Office 365 Dedicated service offerings have established Microsoft as a global leader in the delivery of messaging and collaboration "cloud services." This success comes in part from making effective and responsive support services an integral component of Office 365 offerings. When your organization invests in Office 365, Microsoft provides you with a comprehensive support framework that is designed to proficiently address and resolve service-related incidents.

Your organization will succeed in attaining the support experience it expects by having a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both your organization and Microsoft.

Customer Responsibilities

Your organization is responsible for providing support to your Office 365 end users. You must staff a centralized service desk with agents who handle calls directly from end users seeking support for the Office 365 services that they use. Your service desk can be staffed by call center personnel, on-site technicians, or subject matter experts. Your service desk operation may also include an internal support incident escalation process that is followed before escalating incidents to Microsoft.

Your service desk is responsible for the following:

- **Troubleshooting incidents to determine the problem and resolution prior to escalating incidents to Microsoft.** Support and diagnostic tools provided by Microsoft are available to use for troubleshooting when applicable.

- **Resolve as many incidents as possible including but not limited to:**
  - Incidents that can be resolved by reference to provided "how-to" articles and FAQs.
  - Incidents that can be resolved by use of Microsoft provided self-service tools.
  - Software configuration.
  - Client connectivity.
  - Client desktop support.

Support Service Description
Legacy Platform & vNext Platform Releases
Office 365 Dedicated & ITAR-Support Plans

- Service availability incidents within your span of control.
- Performance incidents within your span of control.

Microsoft Responsibilities

Office 365 support teams are the escalation point for your centralized service desk. Microsoft is responsible for the following:

- **Helping you align your service desk operations with Office 365 Dedicated support.** The Office 365 support team provides planning and other assistance that enables your service desk staff to incorporate support for Office 365 service offerings into its existing operations. For more information, see Service Desk Alignment Process.
- **Responding to incidents that escalate from your service desk.** The Office 365 support team helps resolve service-related incidents that cannot be resolved by your service desk staff.
- **Recording, tracking, and communicating support incident status.** The Office 365 support team that is working on escalated incidents will provide, record, and communicate the status of each incident to your organization until the incident is resolved, service is restored, or the incident is archived.
- **Improving your satisfaction with support services.** The Office 365 support team is continually working to improve your satisfaction by monitoring and evaluating support service metrics and internal processes.

The steps involved to engage Microsoft to provide support are described with the *Customer Operations Handbook* for your Office 365 Dedicated release. The handbook is accessible via the Release Documentation and Training Materials page of the Extranet site for Office 365 Dedicated and ITAR-support plan customers.

Microsoft Support Components

If your organization encounters problems with Office 365 services, Microsoft is ready to help. The Office 365 support teams' goal is to help you resolve technical problems rapidly and efficiently. As described in the sections that follow, Microsoft support includes several self-service tools and troubleshooting resources in addition to around-the-clock assisted technical support.

Self-Service Tools and Support Resources

Microsoft provides the following self-service tools to enable your service desk to configure operational behavior, perform administrative tasks, and resolve some service-related incidents for Office 365 service features.

- **Exchange Admin Center (EAC).** The EAC allows your service desk to perform tasks like managing mobile devices, handling permissions, tracking messages, and eDiscovery functions.
- **Remote Windows PowerShell.** This remote command line connection allows for common configuration and read-only tasks to be performed without escalation to Microsoft.
- **Blackberry Administration Service (BAS).** BAS is a web-based administrative console that is available if you are using Blackberry Enterprise Server (BES) to manage Blackberry devices that are connected to the Exchange Online service. Your service desk can perform many administrative, troubleshooting and reporting tasks using BAS.
- **Knowledge base articles.** Microsoft provides you with knowledge base articles to resolve common service-related incident without escalation to Microsoft.

Customer Portal

The Customer Portal is used by Microsoft to provide you with a centralized location to access support documentation including troubleshooting guides, knowledge base articles, support reporting, and ticket status. Access to escalation templates, service desk training documentation, and other tools are also available to your organization via the portal.

Secure File Store (ITAR-support plans)

To comply with federal data security requirements (FISMA/FedRAMP and ITAR), a Secure File Store is provided as a secure location to exchange files between authorized Microsoft support team personnel and your service desk. The Secure File Store is deployed on a customized SharePoint portal designed specifically for this purpose and it resides within the Microsoft security boundary.

Technical Support Team

The Office 365 support team is comprised of support professionals who are trained and certified in Microsoft cloud services. If your service desk is unable to resolve incidents leveraging the available self-service resources, you can escalate these incidents to Microsoft support. The Office 365 support team accepts escalations for service-related support issues as described in the agreement between Microsoft and your organization.

Escalation scenarios that the Office 365 support team will not accept include but are not limited to the following:

- Your networking infrastructure.
- Your hardware.
- Microsoft on-premises software that is not part of the Office 365 service offering.
- Non-Microsoft software.
- Your operational procedures.
- Your architecture.
- Your IT service management process errors, system configuration errors, or human error.

Support Availability

The Office 365 support team is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Support services are available in English only.

Service Request Management Process

A service request specific to a support incident is created when a support incident is escalated from your service desk and accepted by the Office 365 support team. In the service request management process, each escalated incident is assigned a unique service request number for tracking purposes. Your organization receives status updates about the service request throughout the service request life cycle via email or telephone.

Office 365 support professionals are able to resolve the majority of incidents and problems that they are assigned. Incidents and problems that cannot be resolved by the support professionals are escalated to additional resolver groups. If an incident is escalated to an additional resolver group, support professionals are responsible for communications with your organization.

Incident Severity Level Assignments and Response Times

Microsoft prioritizes support incidents in a manner consistent with the severity level that your organization has reasonably determined, and in accordance with the definitions shown in the table below. You may request a change in severity level at any time through the life of the support incident by contacting the Office 365 support team with an updated business impact statement.

The table below details the responsiveness and ongoing communications targets based on the severity of a given incident.

Severity Level	Definition	Initial Response Goal	Communication Goal
1 **Catastrophic**	Catastrophic business impact in which a service, system, network, server, or critical application is down, impacting production or profitability of multiple	Can only be declared by Microsoft	Microsoft updates your organization every one hour. You update Microsoft every hour.

Severity Level	Definition	Initial Response Goal	Communication Goal
	Office 365 customers.		
A **Critical**	Critical business impact in which service, production, operations, or development deadlines are severely impacted, or where there will be a severe impact on production or profitability. Core services are degraded.	1 hour	Microsoft updates your organization every two hours. You update Microsoft every two hours.
B **Urgent**	Moderate business impact. Significant problem where use of the service is proceeding, but in an impaired fashion.	1 hour	Microsoft updates your organization every 24 hours.
C **Important**	Minimum business impact. Important incident, but does not have significant current service or productivity impact for your organization. Single user is experiencing partial impact.	1 hour	Microsoft updates your organization every 72 hours.
D **Advisory**	Used for non-production requests.	N/A	Microsoft updates your organization as necessary or agreed upon.

Support Service Description
Legacy Platform & vNext Platform Releases
Office 365 Dedicated & ITAR-Support Plans
© 2015 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Microsoft

Page **8** of **13**

Severity 1 and Severity A Incident Response Management

Microsoft classifies incidents that have the potential to impact service availability as Severity 1 or Severity A incidents. There is a formal process used for responding to Severity 1 and Severity A incidents. The goal of this process is to minimize service outage time, and success is reflected in performance against the service availability service-level agreements (SLAs).

If a service outage occurs, information regarding the outage is gathered and sent to stakeholders, operations teams, and key technology contacts.

As part of its incident response, the Office 365 support organization takes the following steps:

- **Sends an outage notification to your organization.** If it is determined that Microsoft needs to resolve the incident, the impact of the incident is appropriately reviewed and assessed. Within the initial response goal described in the table above, the Office 365 incident management team sends a notification to the audience that you have designated. This outage notification covers details of the incident, its impact, and an expected time of resolution. Additional communications are sent every hour (or two hours for Severity A incidents) for the duration of the incident, as scheduled by the Microsoft incident management team, or whenever new and relevant information is available.

- **Resolves the incident.** The Office 365 support team continues to work on the incident until a resolution is in place or a work-around is established. The Office 365 support team may need to engage you over the phone, by email, or through a conference call or bridge call, to assist in troubleshooting or to validate that the service is back to normal operation. If a bridge call is required, Microsoft provides a phone number and participant code. After the resolution is validated, the Office 365 support team sends an outage resolution notification to your organization.

Onsite Assistance for Co-located Equipment

Co-located equipment is defined as assets (hardware or software) that your organization owns and manages and that are located within Microsoft managed facilities or at Microsoft leased spaces in third-party managed facilities.

Either you or your carrier is responsible for monitoring your co-located equipment and responding to events and incidents. Microsoft anticipates that from time to time an event will occur that requires physical access to your co-located hardware in order to make a repair that you cannot make remotely. In such an event that remote hands services or direct access is required, your authorized contact should

contact the Microsoft service desk at any time (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) to initiate the physical access process.

Some hardware issues can be addressed by remote hands work without the need to send someone onsite. For example, a Microsoft technician may be able to repair simple hardware issues that do not require system level access to a server such as installation or removal of a device in a rack, replacing a failed drive, installation or removal of a cable, connecting or disconnecting a device, or power cycling a device.

For issues that cannot be addressed remotely or with remote hands, you must submit a request to Microsoft for your vendor or carrier to gain access to the site. After the request is received, Microsoft requires no additional information. When your contact reports to the site within the specified window of time and presents a valid government issued ID to confirm identity, access to the site will be granted. You should address all follow-up requests for information regarding work completed directly to the carrier or vender who performed the work.

The process steps and the templates used to place a request for remote hands support or datacenter access are described with the *Customer Operations Handbook* for your Office 365 Dedicated release. The handbook is accessible via the Release Documentation and Training Materials page of the Extranet site for Office 365 Dedicated and ITAR-support plan customers.

Service Desk Alignment Process

The Office 365 teams work with your support organization to develop processes and procedures to support Office 365 services at your organization. The alignment process typically occurs in three phases, as described in the sections that follow.

Phase 1: Deployment

The first phase of service desk alignment begins by performing discovery and planning sessions that clearly define and establish the support objectives, goals, and deliverables for your organization. Participants in these sessions include the Microsoft Deployment Project Manager (DPM), Support Onboarding Program Manager, and your management personnel who have responsibility for your service desk infrastructure and incident management.

The deployment phase for your service desk alignment requires the following:

- Understanding your business needs.
- Discussion of service desk planning and input-based support requirements.
- Collecting and validating information from your organization that is required for support onboarding.
- Surveying the services and systems that you currently use for providing day-to-day user support and for handling incidents, problems, known errors, and processes for change management.
- Discussion of the incident management process and activities.
- Discussion of the change management process and activities. For more information, see the **Change Management** service description.
- Identifying training needs for your support team and service desk staff.
- Aligning your service desk to the Office 365 support service framework within the Service Ready deployment milestone.

The Office 365 support team and your organization must complete the following service desk activities prior to the start of your in-house service testing (pilot phase):

- Integrate your organization's data into the Office 365 support team's infrastructure.
- Provision and validate Office 365 support resources and tools.
- Educate and train your service desk personnel to the required level for Office 365.
- Implement service desk processes, procedures, services, resources, roles and responsibilities.
- Coach your service desk personnel through the steps for escalating a test break/fix incident to the Office 365 support team to validate their ability to escalate, de-escalate, and archive service requests.
- Declare the status of Service Ready for all deployed Office 365 services and support functionality.
- Develop a plan with key stakeholders that addresses your ongoing relationship with Microsoft and sets expectations.

To properly address these requirements and track project deliverables, weekly workstream meetings are scheduled between the Office 365 support team and your key support service stakeholders. These meetings help to manage expectations, maintain support for the project, and drive conditions of satisfaction. A project plan is developed and tracked throughout this process to ensure that clear timelines for each work item are completed before the pilot support phase.

The deployment phase is finalized by signing off on Service Ready acceptance and transitioning to the pilot phase, which is managed by the Microsoft Service Delivery Manager (SDM) and the Support Service Manager (SSM).

Phase 2: Pilot

The pilot phase occurs when your organization is deploying and testing Office 365 services with a subset of your end users. The length of the pilot depends on the number of services being deployed. During this phase, the Microsoft Support Service Manager and service delivery manager (SDM) work with your organization and initiate the support processes that have been developed.

This phase provides the time to solidify the support partnership and manage the following activities that come under the support framework:

- Incident detection, recording, and escalation.
- Incident classification and initial support.
- Incident investigation and diagnosis.
- Incident resolution and recovery.
- Incident closure.
- Incident monitoring and communication.
- Ownership of tasks that are a result of the operate phase.

Phase 3: Operate

The operate phase—also called Run State—starts when Office 365 is deployed and the Customer Validation of Service process begins. The operate phase activities continue for the term of your contract for the purchased Office 365 services.

It is during the operate phase that the SDM conducts monthly service reviews with your organization. These reviews include service-level performance and improvement plans, and management of technical and nontechnical escalations related to operation incidents.