

Issue Escalation Flowchart Template

A simple decision tree for who handles a problem, and when it goes up the chain.

Step 1: What Kind Of Issue Is This?

- ☐ Routine / expected: handle at the front line, log it, move on
- ☐ Unusual but low-risk: front line handles it, notifies supervisor after
- ☐ Unusual and higher-risk (safety, financial, legal, customer-facing): escalate immediately
- ☐ Recurring pattern of the same issue: escalate for a process fix, not just a one-time resolution

Step 2: Who Owns It At Each Level?

LEVEL	WHO	RESPONSE TIME	EXAMPLE
Level 1	Front-line employee	Immediate	Routine question, minor delay
Level 2	Team lead / supervisor	Same day	Repeated complaint, moderate impact
Level 3	Manager / department head	Within 24 hours	Safety concern, significant impact
Level 4	Owner / leadership	Immediate	Legal risk, major loss, safety incident

Step 3: What Travels With The Escalation?

1. What happened, specifically
2. What's already been tried or done
3. What's needed from the next level (a decision, resources, approval)
4. Deadline or urgency

Step 4: Close The Loop

- ☐ Person who escalated gets told the outcome
- ☐ If it's a recurring issue, it gets logged for a process review