Policy ID: OIT-23-03.1
Title: IT Incident Management Policy and Procedures
Affected Agencies: Office of Information Technology with outcomes impacting All County Agencies and Departments
Facilitating Department: Office of Information Technology

Chief Information Officer signature:
Date signed and effective: 10/1/2023

1. Overview

The Office of Information Technology has adopted an Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) approach that focuses on implementing and managing IT services that meet the needs of Galveston County. In order to implement and effectively manage service delivery, an ITSM utilizes the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework. The Incident Management process is designed to manage and assist in restoring service to our customers as quickly as possible. Incidents, which are defined as something being broken, not in working order or in need of repair, is addressed via business impact and urgency, allowing staff to focus efforts on the situations that matter most. Staff must keep in mind that incidents impact business operations above all else and take priority over most other initiatives throughout the organization.

Incident Management will work in coordination with Problem and Change Management to ensure that incidents are handled in the best way possible.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define standards, procedures, and restrictions for the implementation and management of the ITSM Incident Management approach for Galveston County.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy and subsequent processes is limited to the “Incident” request type within the County’s ITSM software platform, ServiceDesk Plus.

4. Policy

All Galveston County Office of Information Technology staff will enter and document every and all user requests for assistance related to incidents. Staff will follow the procedures contained within this document to work and resolve these requests in a timely manner. Incidents are expected to be resolved within the given Service Level Agreement (SLA). See *Figure 1.2 Priority Definitions and SLAs* for current SLAs and definitions.

The OIT Service Desk serves as the primary point of contact for all customers. Multiple methods are available for logging and tracking incident requests. The Service Desk is operational from 8-5 Monday-Friday, except for holidays. Emergency after-hours assistance is available by contacting the Service Desk via phone only.

- Self-service: https://servicedesk.galvestoncountytx.gov/
- Email: tickets@galvestoncountytx.gov
- Phone: 409-765-2685
- In-person: 722 Moody Ave., 2nd or 6th floor

Incidents will be entered on behalf of the customer via self-service or email or input by staff who receive requests via telephone, in-person, or individual email so that no incident being addressed by an IT staff member is without a recorded request.

It is the responsibility of the Service Desk Coordinator or designee, when others are filling the Service Desk Coordinator role, to properly designate requests as an incident or service in ServiceDesk Plus by utilizing the appropriate template. All OIT employees should review each request they receive to be sure it is properly designated as an incident or service. This policy applies to incident requests only.

5. Procedures

5.1 Request Entry

Currently, there are four ways in which an individual can request assistance from OIT:

- Via the self-service portal website, https://servicedesk.galvestoncountytx.gov/
  - A customer, a representative from the OIT Service Desk, or another technician within the department creates the request within ServiceDesk Plus
    OR
    The customer submits an email to tickets@galvestoncountytx.gov. The email is automatically imported into ServiceDesk Plus and a request is generated.
- Via email – ServiceDesk Plus automatically converts emails sent to tickets@galvestoncountytx.gov to a request
- Via telephone – A representative from OIT captures all required information and creates a request within ServiceDesk Plus.

The customer receives an automated email when the ticket is created within ServiceDesk Plus.

5.2 Incident Categorization and Prioritization

All incidents are to be categorized, assigned a priority and routed to the proper group and/or technician for resolution.

5.2.1 Incident Prioritization

When an incident is created, the ticket must be prioritized by the OIT Service Desk into one of four priorities (1 – High, 2 – Medium, 3 – Normal, 4 – Low). See Figures *1.1 Priority Matrix* and *1.2 Priority Definitions and SLAs* for the information demonstrating how the selection of Impact and Urgency determines Priority. If customers enter their requests through ServiceDesk Plus directly, they will select the Impact and Urgency. OIT staff, when entering on behalf of the customer, will enter Impact and Urgency. Exceptions to Priority may be given to individuals marked with VIP status. See *Appendix A* for a list of roles associated with VIP status.

Figure 1.1 Priority Matrix

	Urgency →			
Impact ↓	1 – Very High	2 - High	3 - Medium	4 - Low
1 – Affects County	Priority 1 High	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 4 Low
2 – Affects Building/Location	Priority 1 High	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 4 Low
3 – Affects Department	Priority 1 High	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 3 Normal	Priority 4 Low
4 – Affects Group	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 3 Normal	Priority 3 Normal	Priority 4 Low
5 – Affects One User	Priority 2 Medium	Priority 3 Normal	Priority 3 Normal	Priority 4 Low

Figure 1.2 Priority Definitions and SLAs

Priority	Priority Description	Response Time	Resolution Time
1 – High	Business critical systems are down or restricted, impacting productivity or customer services. Immediate action is required.	1 Hour	4 Hours
2 - Medium	Business critical systems are degraded or restricted, impacting productivity or customer experience. Severe impact to some users or services. Prompt action required.	4 Hours	8 Hours
3 - Normal	Business system degraded or restricted impacting productivity of a single customer or small subset. No severe impact to users or services. Action required.	8 Hours	3 Business Days
4 - Low	Productivity or customer experience is not directly and/or negatively impacted by the request or event. Limited level of impact. Action can be schedule for a later date.	3 Business Days	10 Business Days

5.2.2 Incident Categorization

All incidents will be categorized utilizing a Category, Sub Category and as needed, Item. This categorization is used not only for searching for incidents of similar types, but also for reporting and analysis. Categorization can be driven by pre-populated incident templates or manual selection by OIT Service Desk or another technician.

5.2.3 Incident Routing

Every incident will be assigned to a Group within the OIT. Within each group are a set or subset of staff representing a departmental division. It is the responsibility of each individual within that group to monitor the ServiceDesk Plus queue and assign the request to themselves. The SLA clock continues to run even during the time it takes to assign an incident directly to a technician. If a technician is absent, managers are staff are expected to view the queues of absent technicians and reassign accordingly.

5.3 Incident Tracking

An incident request can fall into six different statuses during its lifecycle. The statuses are below. These statuses also dictate when the SLA clock runs and stops.

- **Open** – A new request has been created and is awaiting work to begin. SLA clock running.
- **Work In Progress** – Request is currently underway and is being actively addressed by a technician. SLA clock running.
- **On Hold-Awaiting Customer\Vendor Response** – An incident is open but requires additional information or testing from the customer. This is also the status of the request while the technician is trying to make initial or follow-up contact with the customer. If the technician makes three attempts to work with the customer during initial contact, trying to resolve the request or confirming resolution, and those attempts go unanswered, the technician will then move the request to the Resolved status.

  This status also indicates it may be awaiting interaction from a third-party vendor. The request should be frequently updated with information from the vendor or with correspondence from the vendor. SLA clock stopped.
- **Resolved** – Technician believes request is resolved, but awaiting approval by customer. SLA clock stopped.
- **Canceled** – Request canceled, likely by customer or because there is a duplicate request for the same problem within the system. SLA clock stopped.
- **Closed** – Request is resolved and completed. SLA clock stopped.

OIT technicians are required to update the status of their assigned incidents throughout their entire lifecycle, a minimum of every other work day. “Work In Progress” should be the default status for a request after it has been assigned except while waiting for feedback from a customer or vendor. Setting a request to “On Hold” simply because a technician doesn’t have time or wants the SLA clock to stop running isn’t an appropriate use of putting a request on hold. If a technician doesn’t have time to address an issue, this concern should immediately be escalated to his/her direct manager.

As a general practice, OIT technicians will correspond with customers through the “reply” function in ServiceDesk Plus. If correspondence occurs via email outside of the ServiceDesk Plus system, technicians are responsible for copying and pasting the email correspondence into the request notes. If correspondence occurs via phone, technicians are responsible for placing conversation highlights into the request notes.

It is the responsibility of the Service Desk Coordinator to monitor the health of incidents inside the ServiceDesk Plus request queue. Health monitoring includes:

- Ensuring that requests are being picked up by the appropriate group technician with the defined SLA timeframe.
- Following up on requests with technicians and their managers when they have passed the defined SLA timeframe and/or have not been updated recently enough given the priority level of the incident.
- Escalating requests that are lingering to the assigned group manager.
- At a minimum, reviewing SLA-violated incident requests reports weekly and follow-up with technician and group manager for completion.

5.4 Incident Tasks
Many incidents can include tasks that require completion to clear an incident. Some of these tasks must be completed by others within the department. While the assigned technician to a task is responsible to complete the task, the responsibility to complete the overall incident resides with the incident technician. The incident technician should follow up with the task technician and escalate to the task technician manager when a task is not being completed in a timeframe that will allow the SLA to be achieved.

5.4 Incident First Call Resolution (FCR)
FCR is a metric which serves as a Key Performance Indicator for operational performance. Technicians will mark FCR for a request only when the customer's problem has been resolved by the technician during first, initial contact. Generally speaking, FCR is only applicable when the customer has contacted the OIT Service Desk or other technician via phone and the issue is resolved during that initial phone call. FCR can also be applied if the incident was resolved during the initial conversation and the request is being entered retroactively.

To apply FCR, during the request closure process, the technician should check the box next First Call Resolution (FCR) in the Close Request pop-up box.

5.5 Incident Escalation
Incident should only be escalated through verbal or written communications. Escalation does not change the priority of the incident.

5.6 Incident Closure
OIT Technicians are responsible for moving requests to a completion status as soon as the work is completed. Since the SLA timer continues to run while a request is under certain statuses, leaving a request open past its life will trigger SLA violations. The following are the three options for closing an incident.

5.6.1 Resolved

After the incident is set to Resolved, it is mandatory the incident technician contact the customer to confirm the issue is resolved before the incident can be permanently set to Closed.

The customer will also receive an automated email, indicating that the request has been resolved. The customer can then click on the link to manually close request, wait the three business days before automated closure, or reply to the request which will reopen the incident.

In all situations, unless the customer responds back to the request or the technician manually intervenes, a request will automatically close after three days in the Resolved status.

5.6.2 Canceled

If after receiving an incident it is determined the customer inquiry should become a Project, is a duplicate, or is later requested by the customer to cancel the incident, the incident is set to a Canceled status. Upon setting the Request Status to Canceled, the technician must enter a reason before cancellation is completed.

5.6.2 Closed

Requests are automatically moved to a Closed status after three business days of being in the Resolved status. In addition, before closure, all tasks within the request must be completed, all worklogs completed, and a closure code must be entered.

6. Worklog
During the course of working a request and prior to closing, a worklog must be entered by the technician to indicate how much time was spent on the request and what type of time is being logged. Worklogs are currently defined as the following:

- After Hours Support
- Meeting Time
- Onsite Support

- Remote or Phone Support
- Travel Time

Worklogs should be entered at increments of no less than 15 minutes.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All OIT staff are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the contents of this policy and procedures.

8. Definitions

Incident: Something that is broken, not in working order or in need of repair

Technician: Individual assigned to an incident request and is responsible for the lifecycle of the request, including the completion of tasks by other OIT staff

First Call Resolution (FCR): A problem that has been resolved by the technician during first, initial contact

9. Policy Compliance

9.1 Compliance

This policy will be monitored and enforced by the Chief Information Officer (CIO), Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO) and department managers. Violations will result in coaching and repeat offenses may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9.2 Exceptions

None.

Appendix A – VIP Status Job Positions

County Judge
County Commissioner Precinct 1
County Commissioner Precinct 2
County Commissioner Precinct 3
County Commissioner Precinct 4
County Treasurer
District Attorney
County Tax Assessor-Collector
Probate Court Judge
County Court 1
County Court 2
County Court 3
Justice of the Peace Precinct 1
Justice of the Peace Precinct 2
Justice of the Peace Precinct 3
Justice of the Peace Precinct 4
County Clerk
County Sheriff
District Clerk
10th District Judge
56th District Judge
122nd District Judge
212th District Judge
306th District Judge
405th District Judge
Constable Precinct 1
Constable Precinct 2
Constable Precinct 3
Constable Precinct 4
Chief of Staff
Chief Financial Officer
Chief Information Officer
County Purchasing Agent
Director of Human Resources
Director of Parks & Cultural Services
Veterans Service Officer
Director of Facilities
Director of Juvenile Justice
Director of Personal Bond/Collections
County Auditor
Director of Emergency Management
Road Administrator
County Engineer
Mosquito Control Manager
Director of Economic Development