Switching Operator Incident Management Policy



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document details the Incident Management Policy in accordance with the requirements of Design Baseline 4 for the management of the Centralised Switching Service and the Switching Arrangements governed under the Retail Entergy Code (REC). It deals with the management of Incidents.

1.2 Background

The subject matter of this document is related to that of the Incident Management aspects of the Central Switching Service and the Switching Arrangements. In order to ensure an integrated solution to managing Incidents.

1.3 Scope

The Incident Management Policy details the full Incident Management lifecycle including management and declaration of Major Incidents, Problems and escalations.

1.4 General Provisions

Incidents may be raised only by the Switching Operator, Switching Data Service Providers or Market Participants in accordance with this Incident Management Policy.

Incidents raised and managed under this Incident Management Policy may relate to any Production Service in the Switching Arrangements as described in the REC and Market Participant Test Environments, where this relates to service availability only for test.

In the event that an incident party considers it necessary to raise an issue relating to the provision of Services but which it considers outside the scope of Live Services. The Party shall contact the Switching Service Desk directly and Switching Service Desk and Switching Operator shall agree between them responsibility for resolution of the issue, which shall be resolved by the responsible Party as soon as reasonably practicable.

Incidents shall be raised and recorded in the Switching Service Management System.

Each incident party shall provide the Switching Operator via the Switching Service Desk with, and shall subsequently provide any changes to, a list of Nominated Individuals from their organisation who are authorised to:

(a) contact the Switching Service Desk to raise and record in the Incident Management Log an Incident and communicate with the Switching Service Desk regarding the Incident; and/or

(b) perform the roles identified in the escalation process defined in this document.

Each incident party shall ensure that only its Nominated Individuals shall contact the Switching Service Desk to raise an Incident.

The Switching Service Desk shall ensure that only those Nominated Individuals shall raise an Incident.

The Switching Service Desk shall implement an authentication procedure for confirming that a communication is from an incident party's Nominated Individual, and such procedure shall be commensurate with the risk to the Services and Data that would arise were someone other than a Nominated Individual to raise an Incident or obtain information from the Switching Service Desk. Incident parties shall comply with this procedure.

The Switching Service Desk and each incident party shall each ensure that information regarding Incidents and Problems are recorded and kept up to date in the Switching Service Management System as follows:

(a) for Major Incidents, the incident party shall comply with this document;

(b) the Market Participants shall use the Switching Portal as the primary mechanism for logging Incidents relating to the Switching Arrangements;

(c) where the incident party is unable to use the Switching Portal, it shall provide information to the Switching Service Desk by email or by phone and the Switching Service Desk shall ensure that this information is entered into the Incident Management Log;

(d) when an Incident is submitted by email and the incident party does not provide the required information as detailed in this document, the Switching Service Desk shall log the Incident in the Switching Service Management System and shall request additional information via the Switching Portal;

(e) the Switching Service Desk shall enter information that the Switching Operator originates into the Incident Management Log;

(f) the resolver shall ensure all actions to resolve the Incident are recorded in the Incident Management Log; and

(g) In regard to items (a) - (f) above, the Switching Service Desk and Switching Operator and each incident party shall each ensure that information is as complete as is possible and is entered into the Incident Management Log as soon as is reasonably practicable.

1.5 CSS Interface Providers

CSS Interface Providers can be nominated to operate on behalf of a CSS User. In these cases, this document sets out the general provisions by which Incidents can be raised and managed. As a CSS Infrastructure Provider operates on behalf of the CSS User, it should consider the provisions in this document to directly flow down based on the requirements on the CSS User. The Switching Portal allows for the CSS Interface Providers to act on behalf of and carry out Service Management activities where they have been nominated to do so.

2 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

2.1 Pre-requisites to Raising an Incident

2.1.1 Switching Operator, Switching Data Service Providers

Prior to raising an Incident the Switching Operator, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers shall take all reasonable steps to ensure an Incident does not already exist for the issue.

Prior to the Switching Operator, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers raising an Incident regarding the provision Switching Arrangements, they shall take all reasonable steps to confirm that the issue relates to the Switching Arrangements. The definition of an Incident shall be raised where an issue occurs which is or has a reasonable likelihood of affecting the Switching Arrangements.

2.1.2 Incident parties

Before raising an Incident with the Switching Service Desk, the incident party shall take all reasonable steps to:

(a) confirm that the issue does not reside within the incident party's own systems and processes;

(b) follow the guidance set out in the self-help material made available by via the Switching Portal, including checking for Known Errors and the application of any workarounds specified; and

In the event that the activities have been completed and an Incident is to be raised with the Switching Service Desk, where it has access to the Switching Portal, the incident party shall check on the Switching Portal to establish whether an Incident has already been raised or a Service Alert issued for this issue and:

(a) in the event that the incident party can reasonably determine that an Incident or Service Alert for this issue exists, the incident party shall notify the Switching Service Desk who shall register the incident party as an affected party within the Incident Management Log; and

(b) in the event that the incident party cannot identify an existing Incident or Service Alert they shall progress to raise an Incident.

2.2 Required Information

When raising an Incident, the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers or incident party shall provide the following information:

(a) Contact name;

(b) Contact Organisation;

(c) Contact details;

(d) Organisation's Incident reference number (where available);

(e) Date and time of occurrence;

(g) Summary of Incident;

(h) Business impact; and

(i) Results of initial triage and diagnosis including references to existing Incidents, where appropriate, and details of investigations performed to satisfy pre-requisites set out in this Policy.

2.3 Incident Prioritisation and Priority

The Switching Service Desk shall assign an Incident Priority to an Incident raised by an incident party based on the information available at the time the Incident is recorded in the Incident Management Log.

The Switching Service Desk shall assign an Incident Priority to an Incident raised by the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers using information available to the time the Incident is recorded in the Incident Management Log.

The Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers shall progress the resolution of Incidents in priority order.

2.4 Prioritisation Matrix

The Switching Service Desk shall, acting reasonably, assign a Priority to an Incident, having regard to the table below. The table further details the Target Response Times and Target Resolution Time in accordance with the Retail Energy Code (REC) Switching Operator Service Definition.

Incident Priority	Description	Target Response Time	Target Resolution Time
1	A Priority 1 Incident is an Incident which, in the reasonable opinion of the Switching Operator is, is likely to: • prevent a large group of affected Market Participants from using the systems that make up the Switching Arrangements; • have a critical adverse impact on the activities of the affected Market Participants using live Switching Data Services; • cause significant financial loss or reputational damage / or disruption to the affected Market Participants; • cause significant reputational damage to the affected Market Participants; or • result in any material loss or corruption of data used by the Switching Arrangements.	30 Minutes	4 Hours
2	An Incident which in the reasonable opinion of the Switching Operator is, or is likely to: • have a non-critical adverse impact on the activities of affected Market Participants, but the Switching Arrangements are still working at reduced capacity.	1 Hour	24 Hours
3	An Incident which in the reasonable opinion of the Switching Operator is, or is likely to:	3 Working Hours	3 Working Days

	• have an adverse impact on the activities of an affected Market Participants but which can be reduced to a moderate adverse impact due to the availability of a workaround; and • have a moderate adverse impact on the activities of an affected Market Participant.		
4	An Incident which in the reasonable opinion of the Switching Operator is, or is likely to, have a minimal impact on the activities of an affected Market Participant.	1 Working Day	10 Working Days

If an incident party believes an Incident has been allocated an incorrect Incident Priority by the Switching Service Desk or has been subsequently updated to an incorrect Incident Priority, it may invoke the escalation process set out in this document

The Switching Operator or Switching Service Desk may change the Incident Priority of an Incident if more information becomes available. The Switching Service Desk shall provide to the incident party, details of why the Incident Priority have been changed. The Switching Service Desk shall update the Incident Management Log with the revised Incident Priority.

2.5 Incident Assignment

The Switching Service Desk shall manage Incidents recorded in the Incident Management Log through the Incident lifecycle.

The Switching Service Desk shall assess the Incident and assign resolution activities to the appropriate resolvers as required, and the resolver may be the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Provider, Switching Data Service Provider or an incident party.

The resolver assigned to an Incident shall perform the appropriate steps to resolve the Incident and shall record information as set out in this document to record the actions taken to triage and resolve the Incident.

When assigning an Incident to an incident party where the Switching Service Desk requires the incident party to diagnose or confirm resolution of an Incident, the Switching Service Desk shall:

(a) engage with the incident party through a Nominated Individual;

(b) set the Incident status to pending; and

(c) assign the activity to the incident party, and the resolution time shall not include the period of time during which the Incident is assigned to the incident party.

The incident party shall, using a reasonable mechanism, confirm to the Switching Service Desk when all activities requested are complete, providing details of steps taken, which the Switching Service Desk shall ensure are included in the Incident Management Log. The Switching Service Desk shall then reassign the Incident or update the status in the Incident Management Log to resolved, as appropriate, based on the information received.

Where an Incident has been investigated but has subsequently been determined not to be an Incident:

(a) the Switching Service Desk shall contact the incident party that raised the Incident through a Nominated Individual and provide the relevant information

that the Switching Service Desk holds to enable the incident party to raise and manage the Incident within its own system; and

(b) the Switching Service Desk shall set the status of the Incident in the Incident Management Log to closed.

If an incident party identifies that an Incident has been assigned to it, but it should not be responsible for resolving it, the incident party shall advise the Switching Service Desk, providing supporting information, and the Switching Service Desk shall investigate and re-assign as appropriate.

2.6 Communications

Throughout the lifecycle of the Incident, the Switching Service Desk shall communicate updates to the incident party or other identified interested parties. These communications may be via email, phone call and/or via updates to the Incident Management Log.

2.7 Incident Escalation

The Switching Service Desk and incident party shall adopt the escalation process as defined in this section to ensure that Nominated Individuals and Switching Operator representatives with the necessary authority and the appropriate resources are applied to resolving the Incident.

The Switching Service Desk shall monitor Incidents throughout their lifecycle and automatic reminder notifications shall be sent to appropriate resolvers based on Incident Priority, Target Initial Response Time and Target Resolution Time.

The incident party that raised an Incident with the Switching Service Desk, an interested party, or an incident party to which the Incident has been subsequently reassigned by the Switching Service Desk, may request that the Incident is escalated.

Incidents may be escalated under the following circumstances:

(a) disagreement with categorisation;

(b) Target Initial Response Time has not been met;

(c) Target Resolution Time about to be exceeded;

(d) lack of appropriate response;

(e) dissatisfaction with the progress of an assigned activity;

(f) dissatisfaction with the progress of an Incident; or

(g) dissatisfaction with the resolution of an Incident.

The Switching Service Desk shall include full details of the escalation in the Incident Management Log.

2.8 Escalation Process

Escalated Incidents shall be progressed in accordance with the table below. All escalations shall follow the process and adhere to the sequential order.

Escalation Level	Role	Incident Party * Organisational equivalent is acceptable.
Level 1	Switching Service Desk	Individual nominated to act in the role of Service Desk Operator.
Level 2	Switching Service Desk Operations Manager	Individual nominated to act in the role of Service Desk Operations Manager.
Level 3	Switching Operator Service Manager	Individual nominated to act in the role of Switching Operator Service Manager.
Level 4	Switching Operator Operations Director	Individual nominated to act in the role of Switching Operator Operations Director.
Level 5	Chief Operating Officer	Individual nominated to act in the role of Chief Operating Officer.
Level 6	REC Panel	Individual nominated to act in the role of REC Panel.

If, following a Level 5 escalation, a resolution cannot be satisfactorily agreed between the Switching Operator and the escalating organisation, the Incident may be escalated by any interested party to the PAB.

The Switching Operator and escalating incident party shall provide appropriate evidence to the PAB that it has been through all earlier escalation levels before escalating an Incident to the PAB.

2.9 Major Incidents and Major Security Incidents

All Priority 1/2 Incidents shall also be treated as Major Incidents. Major Security Incidents shall also be treated as Priority 1 Incidents.

Once an Incident has been reported to the Switching Service Desk, the Switching Service Desk shall perform initial triage on the Incident. The Major Incident management process and/or the Switching Operator security team shall be engaged to progress and resolve the Incident where triage confirms that the Switching Operator believes that the Incident should be treated as a Priority 1/2 Incident.

If an Incident is updated to become a Priority 1 Incident the provisions of this section will also apply.

The Switching Operator shall notify all incident parties that are likely to be affected by such Major Incident by a reasonable means.

On resolution of the Major Incident, the Switching Operator shall raise a Problem to confirm the Root Cause.

The Switching Operator shall make the details from the Problem available to interested parties.

Where a Major Incident has been investigated but then turns out to be an Incident which the Switching Operator is not responsible for resolving then the Switching Service Desk shall:

(a) contact the appropriate incident party through a Nominated Individual;

(b) assign the Incident to the incident party; and

(c) set the Incident status to pending.

Where a Major Incident has been investigated but turns out not to be an Incident:

(a) the Switching Service Desk shall contact the incident party that raised the Incident through a Nominated Individual and provide the details to enable the incident party to raise and manage the incident within their own system; and

(b) the Switching Service Desk shall set the status of the Incident to closed.

2.10 Major Incidents not Assigned to the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Providers or Switching Data Service Provider

In the event that a Major Incident is assigned to an incident party other than the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Provider or Switching Data Service Provider:

(a) the incident party may request that the Switching Service Desk provides reasonable assistance. When this is requested the Switching Service Desk

shall provide all reasonable assistance to the incident party responsible for resolving the Incident; and

(b) as part of such reasonable assistance, the Switching Service Desk may disseminate the information to incident parties if requested by the incident party, using the Switching Portal and other mechanisms as appropriate.

2.11 Incident Closure

The rules for the closure of Incidents are detailed below.

An Incident that the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Provider or Switching Data Service Provider is responsible for resolving shall be resolved by the Switching Operator, Switching Service Desk, Switching Service Provider or Switching Data Service Provider in accordance with the Target Resolution Times set out in the prioritisation matrix.

The Switching Service Desk and the resolver shall each record details of all steps they have each taken to resolve the Incident in the Incident Management Log.

The Switching Service Desk shall notify the incident party and/or other interested parties and the resolver via email and presentation on the Switching Portal when the Incident status to resolved.

If the Incident is resolved through the application of a workaround, the Switching Service Desk shall either raise a new Problem or the Incident shall be associated with an existing Problem where one exists.

If it does not consider that the Incident is resolved, the incident party, resolver or an interested party shall respond to the Switching Service Desk via the Switching Portal within 3 Working Days, unless a longer period has been agreed by the Switching Service Desk, such agreement to not be unreasonably withheld. In so doing, the relevant party shall provide supporting information as to why they consider the Incident not to be resolved. Then:

(a) If the Switching Service Desk receives, with supporting information, a response detailing that the Incident is not resolved, the Switching Service Desk will change the status from resolved and reassign the Incident for investigation; or

(b) If a response is not received from the incident party within the aforementioned timeframe the Service Desk shall close the Incident.

In the event that the incident party requires subject matter expert advice before confirming closure and the subject matter expert is unavailable, the incident party may contact the Switching Service Desk via email or phone call to request that the closure period be extended.

In the event that the Incident is the result of an intermittent issue the Switching Service Desk shall apply what it reasonably deems to be an appropriate closure period based on the frequency of the occurrences of the issue and shall close the

Incident after this period has elapsed without any further occurrences. The Switching Service Desk shall record this in the Incident Management Log.

After the Incident has been resolved, the Switching Service Desk may raise a Problem and link it to the Incident.

2.12 Re-opening Closed Incidents

The incident party that originally raised an Incident may only re-open it if it was closed with a workaround and one of the following circumstances occurs:

(a) the workaround fails; or

(b) the workaround deteriorates to a point that it affects normal business operations.

If a Problem associated with an Incident has been closed, it shall not be possible to re-open the Incident. In this case, the incident party shall raise a new Incident.

2.13 Re-occurring Incidents

If a previous Incident reoccurs after it has been closed in line with the procedures in this Incident Management Policy, the incident party shall raise a new Incident.

The Switching Service Desk and Switching Operator may identify re-occurring Incidents by performing trending, correlation, and incident matching. Confirmed re-occurrences may be progressed through Problem management.

An incident party may identify a re-occurring incident and may notify the Switching Service Desk. In so doing, the incident party shall provide all related Incident reference numbers to the DCC who may progress the issue through Problem management.

3 PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

3.1 Opening a Problem

The Switching Operator, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers shall propose and a Problem Record is raised to the Switching Operator through the Switching Service Management System in the following circumstances:

(a) when a Major Incident has been resolved;

(b) when an Incident is closed with a workaround applied; or

(c) when the Switching Operator, Switching Service Providers and Switching Data Service Providers has identified a re-occurring Incident.

The Switching Operator shall allocate a reasonable initial timescale for carrying out the Root Cause Analysis to enable the re-classification of the Problem as a Known Error.

3.2 Prioritisation and Timescale for Closure of Problems

The Switching Operator shall periodically issue and make available a report listing open Problems to Incident Parties and PAB.

The report shall set out for each open Problem:

(a) date opened;

(b) Problem classification;

(c) Problem status;

(d) the target closure date;

(e) the anticipated costs (in Switching Operators reasonable opinion) for the investigation and resolution of the Problem, where appropriate;

(f) the anticipated timescales for the closure of a Problem;

(g) the likely impact on the Switching Arrangements, and its effects on incident parties of closing a Problem and continuing with a workaround, highlighting instances where implementing a permanent solution may not be the recommended approach; and

(h) the reason for any target closure date change.

Following the issuing of such a report, the Switching Operator shall discuss with incident parties the prioritisation and preferred timescales for the progression of each Problem. Following discussion, and taking respondents' views into account, the Switching Operator shall determine the prioritisation and preferred timescales for the progression of each Problem.

If a Problem investigation or resolution requires a change to the Code, a Change Proposal shall be submitted by the Switching Operator.

3.3 Closing a Problem

The rules for closure of a Problem are detailed below.

Following the application of a permanent fix, the Switching Operator shall discuss the outcome with interested parties before closing the Problem.

Details of all steps taken to close the Problem shall be recorded in the Incident Management Log.

The Switching Operator shall only close a Problem once one of the following conditions has been met and the Switching Operator has discussed this with interested parties that:

(a) the permanent fix has been applied; or

(b) an enhanced and acceptable workaround is in place; or

(c) the Switching Operator will not continue investigations.

4 Glossary

Term	Definition
Switching SMS	Switching Service Management System. This includes the front-end Portal and the back end.
CSS Interface Provider	This is an adapter service to enable other CSS Users to connect to and interface with the Central Switching Service and is able to provide Managed Service where nominated to do so on behalf of a CSS User.
Incident Party	An incident party is identified as a CSS User that is affected by an issue or possible issue with the Switching Arrangements.
Switching Data Service Providers	This includes parties that a delivering Service under the REC as a part of the Switching Arrangements. This includes: ERDA GRDA EES GES Smart Metering DSP ETOS