

IBM Support Client Quick Reference Guide

IBM SUPPORT CLIENT QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

IBM's mission is to empower its clients' success through specialized product knowledge and world-class customer service for our software/hardware products. This commitment translates into accurate issue resolution and proactive problem prevention, ensuring businesses can thrive under the protection of IBM's expertise.

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Support Site Registration

Registering on the [IBM Support Site](#) grants users access to software downloads and various support services. If you're an existing user with an IBM customer number, IBMid, and previously registered for product support, you don't need to register again; simply proceed to the next section.

To get support for IBM Cloud®, use the [IBM Cloud Support Center](#). If you do need to create a support case, you can attach a specific Cloud resource for efficient routing to the appropriate support team. For details, see [Using the Support Center](#).

Registration process for support of IBM Software Products, IBM Appliances, IBM Power, IBM Storage and IBM Z:

Here's a list of commonly used abbreviations, which can be helpful when working with IBM support:

1. ICN- IBM Customer Number. You will need your ICN to download software for IBM Support services. If you do not know your ICN, please reach out to the [IBM eCustomer Team](#).
2. IBMid – Your IBMid is your single point of access to IBM registration-based services such as product downloads, support advisory subscriptions, and IBM Support services. If you have forgotten your IBMid, please contact your country's [IBMid help desk](#). If you have your IBMid, but have forgotten your password, you can reset it [here](#).

To perform the one-time registration for IBM support, click [here](#).

Be sure to register with the correct ICN associated with IBM software.
(If you do not know your ICN, please contact the [IBM eCustomer Team](#) for assistance.)

If you encounter any problems while registering, don't hesitate to reach out to the IBM Support team at mysphelp@us.ibm.com

Download Software/Fixes and Advisory Subscriptions

Here's a list of commonly used abbreviations, which can be helpful when working with IBM support:

1. PAO- Passport Advantage Online
2. ESS- Entitled Software Support

Process to download software/fixes and advisory subscriptions for IBM Software and IBM Appliances:

You can download your entitled software, patches and fixes via [Passport Advantage Online](#). Explore our [Passport Advantage Online how-to videos](#) to get the most from your entitled PAO experience.

Click [here](#) for Passport Advantage Support Contacts and hours.

Fixes can be downloaded on [Fix Central](#).

Process to download software and fixes for IBM Power and IBM Storage:

Access and manage IBM Power, IBM Storage hardware and software and IBM Z hardware products and services purchased through Digital Sellers, Business Partners or by yourself directly on [ESS](#).

Fixes can be downloaded on [Fix Central](#).

Process to download software and fixes for IBM Z:

Use [Shopz](#), to order z Systems software, manage software licenses, view software inventory and more.

To register for Shopz, follow the instructions [here](#).

Fixes can be downloaded on [Fix Central](#).

Container Software Library / Entitlement Registry

If you are blocked from accessing Container software due to a problem with your entitlement registry key in [MyIBM Container Software Library](#), please contact [IBM.com Order Support](#) (aka “oCare”)

Stay Informed of Critical IBM Updates

To receive critical IBM support notifications (e.g. new release announcements, end-of-support announcements, [security bulletins](#), etc.), you must subscribe to [My Notifications](#) for your products.

Use Digital Self-Help Channels

IBM Support offers self-service capabilities via digital means before initiating a case. Attempt resolving issues through cognitive support options for faster results.

- Search [IBM Knowledge base](#) for product documentation, best practices, fixes, known issues, security bulletins, technical support articles, and more.
- Ask you peers in the [IBM TechXchange Community](#)- connect, learn and share with over 100,000 users in the discussion forums.
- Use the “Chat with Support” option in the [IBM Support site](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.
- Use [IBM's Software Product Compatibility Reports](#) to check system compatibility and requirements for your software installation.

Open a Support Case

Open a support case for IBM Software, IBM Appliances, IBM Power, IBM Storage and IBM Z.

To open a support case:

- Create a case from the [IBM Support site](#).
If you need assistance accessing or creating a support case online, please contact the IBM Support Site Helpdesk via email to mysphelp@us.ibm.com.
- Call in via [phone](#)

Refer to the links below for Sterling Supply Chain Business Network support

- [SCBN Essentials](#)
- [SCBN Standard](#)
- [SCBN Premium](#)

Tips:

- Create a case via the [IBM Support Site](#) before calling [IBM Support](#) to expedite the case routing and assignment.
- Follow our create case templates to save your environment information for re-use in new cases.

Manage Your Support Case

Get timely resolution of your business problems by following IBM support case management process and best practices.

Case Severity Definitions

Severity 1 - Critical business impact- System or service is down.

Severity 2 - Significant business impact- This indicates the program is usable but is severely limited.

Severity 3 - Minor business impact- This indicates the program is usable with no significant business impact.

Severity 4 - Minimal business impact- Inquires, how-to-questions, or minor problems.

Response time objectives

Here's a list of commonly used abbreviations, which can be helpful when working with

IBM support:

1. RTO- Response Time Objectives
2. EOS- End of Service
3. PSIRT- The IBM Product Security Incident Response Team

IBM Support Response Time Objectives can be found at the following links:

- [IBM Software RTO](#)
- [IBM Appliances RTO](#)
- [IBM Storage RTO](#)
- [IBM Power RTO](#)
- [IBM Systems Storage and IBM Power RTO](#)
- [IBM Z RTO](#)

Severity 1 Impact Reduction

IBM reserves the right to communicate and downgrade case severity when functionality is restored, but noncritical issues exist from Severity 1 to an appropriate level, such as 2, 3, or 4. The goal of this policy is to inform users that support representatives might reduce severity during an investigation to assist users and organize critical issues. It is important to clearly communicate how your case impacts your business for IBM Support to triage your case and understand the urgency and severity of the issue.

Examples where support might downgrade the case severity:

- Unresponsive requests to work on your Severity 1 case.
- A workaround is in place and the critical business impact is mitigated.
- An APAR or known issue is provided and continued work is required, but the system is functional.

In these scenarios, a support representative might change the case severity. We understand that cases evolve over time and the issue severity might go up or down as problems are investigated. To further assist users, an [Escalate case button](#) is available in the IBM Support Portal. The Escalate case button allows users to escalate and issue after IBM provides an initial response to your case. Severity 2, 3, and 4 escalated cases are worked in their geographic time zone during business hours and Severity 1 issues are worked 24x7.

Support Language and Hours of Operation

IBM Support business hours reflect normal country business hours in your time zone, excluding national or statutory holidays. These business hours are based on the originating site ICN for your case.

Refer to the [Product Support Details](#) page for product-specific business hour variances (if any) and the language(s) supported for your product.

Severity 1 issues are responded to 24 x 7. All non-Severity 1 issues submitted after business hours will be responded to the next business day. To request after business hour support for Severity 1 issue, please open a case via the [IBM Support site](#), describing the problem, [business impact](#), and set your case severity to 1.

Basic Support Scope

Unless otherwise stated, IBM's Basic Support offerings will be valid until the end of service (EOS) dates and policy details. Refer to the [IBM Support Lifecycle](#) for EOS dates and policy details.

IBM Support offerings are not intended to provide end-user help desk support. IBM Support offerings supplement customer-based support staff skills by providing access to IBM Support's knowledge base(s) and technical support professionals.

IBM Appliances are sold as a software offering. Please refer to the [Appliances Support Handbook](#) for appliance-specific information such as country and regional warranties, shipping lead times and processes related to Service Parts.

Response Goals

IBM will use commercially reasonable efforts to respond to cases raised by authorized contacts within the criteria outlined in the [IBM Support Guide](#). Our initial response may result in resolution of your request, or assistance with the identification of what additional actions may be required to resolve the issue. Be sure you and your support professional agree on what the next action is and when the next checkpoint will be.

Product Security Incident Response

IBM is committed to responding to new threats and risks. The IBM Product Security Incident Response Team (PSIRT) manages the receipt, investigation and internal coordination of security vulnerability information related to IBM offerings.

To help protect our customers, IBM does not publicly disclose or confirm security vulnerabilities until IBM has conducted an analysis of the product and issued fixes and/or mitigations. IBM PSIRT coordinates with each individual IBM product and

solution team to investigate and if needed, identify the appropriate response plan. Please review the [IBM PSIRT process](#) for additional information.

Questions Handled by IBM Support

IBM's Basic Support offering technical question support allows you to obtain assistance for product specific, task-oriented short duration questions and problems regarding the installation and operation of currently supported products. We may refer you to product documentation or publications, or we may be able to provide a direct answer to assist you in short duration problems involving:

- Installation & Usage (how-to) for documented functions
- Product compatibility and interoperability questions
- Interpretation of publications
- Providing available configuration samples
- Planning information for software fixes

IBM Basic Support offerings are not structured to address everything. Examples of areas that are outside support scope coverage:

- Analyzing performance
- Answering extensive configuration questions
- Consulting
- Interpretation or triage of customer or third party generated defect scanning reports
- Recovering a database, or data recovery
- Writing, troubleshooting or customizing code

For IBM Software, most activities that fall outside basic support will require [Developer Support](#), [Advanced Support](#) or [IBM Services](#). Contact your IBM Account Manager for information on those services offered by IBM. Your current IBM Account Manager contact info is available in your account renewal records in [Passport Advantage Online](#) (PAO). Contact the [eCare](#) team if you need assistance with PAO to locate your account manager.

For IBM Infrastructure, activities that fall outside basic support will require [Premium Support](#), [Premium Services](#), or Expert Labs services. Contact your IBM Account Manager for information on those services offered by IBM.

Keep Your Team Informed of Case Activity

Provide your project/account team with visibility to your support cases by [adding team members to your case](#). Case team members will receive notifications when your case is updated.

Note: Case view is available to registered users only. You will not be able to add team members to your case until they have completed their registration with IBM support.

Access Cases Owned by Team Members

For visibility to all cases owned by your team members, submit your access request by following the instruction for “non-administrator” user in the [Getting Started Guide with the IBM Support Site](#).

Case Resolution Best Practice

Help our Support team better understand your problem and more effectively respond to your concerns, as well as help you make the best use of your time by following these best practices:

- Submit your case online and set the severity based on your judgement of the [business impact](#).
- Ensure the correct product is specified for your case to route to the correct team.
- Submit different issues in separate cases (one issue per case).
- Keep IBM Support informed of major upgrades/implementations of your system (where applicable)
- Provide timely feedback on recommendations provided by IBM or confirm issue resolution by closing your case. You may reopen the case online if the issue recurs.

For IBM Cloud service, please review [IBM Cloud Service Overview](#) for additional guidance.

Must Gather

It is the Customer's responsibility to provide IBM support information about their systems and details about the failing components for IBM to quickly and accurately resolve the problem. Must gather information includes (but is not limited to):

1. Situation Appraisal:
 - When did the issue start? (time/date)
 - What is happening? (describe issue, scope of impact)
 - Has anything changed? (any upgrade, configuration changes)
 - What has been done so far? (outline any steps taken towards resolution)
 - [How is this impacting your business?](#)
2. Clear steps to reproduce the issue if the problem can be recreated.
3. IBM Software (versions)
 - Version and patch levels (including database, drivers, operating system, etc.)
 - Apply trap or trace code, document timestamp of failure and supply trap/trace output
 - Formatting the output from the trap or trace (if needed)
 - Point to the location in your log files(s) if you identified log errors
4. IBM Appliance
 - Appliance machine type
 - 7-digit appliance serial number

IBM Infrastructure clients should consider activating IBM Call Home Connect (Call Home). Call Home constantly monitors the health and functioning of your asset. Two primary capabilities are provided:

1. System data, including the code levels and other core information, is transmitted to IBM at regular intervals for proactive use and analysis. This data does not contain any client-specific information. The data is displayed on Call Home Connect Cloud and is the basis for proactive suggestions.
2. Should a potential serviceable event occur, Call Home sends the situational data and supporting diagnostic information to IBM in real time to avoid a more serious event or outage. Each serviceable event is dynamically analyzed and—depending upon the asset's proactive data, previous serviceable events and severity of the current event—a new case (problem report) may be created. If a case is created, the IBM support team will review the diagnostic data uploaded with the serviceable event and the contact you as soon as possible to resolve the issue. With Call Home enabled, IBM Support can quickly identify problems and develop an action plan for resolution, giving you a more effective first support session and, ultimately, an overall reduction in time to resolution.

Exchanging Data with IBM

Information shared with IBM should be non-confidential in nature and should not contain personally identifiable markers. If you are a customer in the United States looking for tighter security with your support interactions with IBM, please visit the [US Secure Support](#) page for available secure support offerings.

Upload logs to your support case securely [here](#).

Apply Software Fixes

Customers are also responsible for obtaining and applying fixes and support recommendations to their systems and testing the fixes to ensure success. Occasionally, removal of installed fixes may be necessary in the process of isolating problems. Sometimes fixing a problem will mean the installation of a later release of the software as some fixes cannot be retrofitted into earlier code

If you do not have the required skills or not positioned to complete the work necessary to resolve the problem for an IBM Software offering, please engage a services provider such as [IBM Expert Labs](#) or a business partner to assist for an additional fee. If you need assistance with code updates for IBM Infrastructure, consider adopting [IBM Global Total Microcode Support](#).

Please review [IBM Support General Guidelines](#) and Limitations for additional guidance.

Escalating a Case

If the criticality of the situation increases, you can request additional focus on your support issues in two ways

1. Escalate a case in the case management system.

Update the case document to change the [business impact](#) and raise the severity of the case.

For more information on severities see [Case severities definition](#).

If you still do not receive a response, escalate the case as described in [How to use the escalate button](#).

Contact a duty manager from the [Emergency Contacts](#)

2. Create a managed escalation

For more information, see [Requesting assistance with an unresolved issue](#).

Extending Support for a Product that has Reached End of Support

IBM understands you may need additional time when planning to move to a supported version or may need a higher level of support. IBM has the following support offerings to meet your needs. Please visit our [IBM Support Offerings](#) page for more information.

Please contact your IBM Account Manager, prior to the end of the existing support period for the product of interest. We want to work with you to ensure your critical business systems are supported by IBM's unique experience and abilities.

IBM Support Outage Information

This section provides an overview of how clients can **identify** potential service disruptions (outages) across three primary IBM product categories below. It also details procedures for **reporting** these incidents effectively.

Software as a Service (SaaS)

IBM Cloud (including Infrastructure as a Service – IaaS and Platform as a Service - PaaS)

Perpetual on-premises software installations

1. Identifying Potential Outages

1.1 SaaS Products

MultiCloud SaaS Platform (MCSP) Status page provides details about major events that affect services for IBM SaaS offerings like IBM Watson, IBM Watsonx.Gov and IBM Watson Orchestrate. The page displays current status, planned maintenance, announcements, history, and incident reports. Unauthenticated users can access only current status content, while authenticated users can view all content. The page also sends email notifications about newly published events. You can access the MCSP Status page at <https://console.test.saas.ibm.com/status/overview>

1.2 IBM Cloud Services

In the case of IBM Cloud, both IaaS and PaaS components come equipped with robust monitoring capabilities. Users can leverage the IBM Cloud Activity Tracker with Auditing service to monitor API calls and track changes within their environments. Additionally, IBM Cloud offers a comprehensive status history (<https://cloud.ibm.com/status>) tool that logs past incidents and planned maintenance activities.

1.3 On-Premises Solutions

Clients running perpetual licenses for IBM's on-premises software must implement proactive monitoring strategies using native tools or third-party solutions. Tools such as IBM Tivoli Monitoring or open-source alternatives like Nagios can alert administrators when predefined thresholds are breached, indicating possible system failures or performance degradation. Regular health checks and log reviews are essential practices to maintain optimal operations.

2. Reporting Outages

Once an outage has been identified, prompt and effective communication becomes crucial. Here's how clients can report incidents depending on their deployment type:

2.1 SaaS Products

Users encountering problems with SaaS offerings should first consult the relevant IBM

support documentation or community forums for troubleshooting steps. If the issue persists, contacting IBM through the official support channels, such as opening a ticket via the IBM Support Portal (<https://www.ibm.com/mysupport>) is recommended. When submitting tickets, providing detailed descriptions of symptoms, affected users, and environment configurations expedites resolution processes.

2.2 IBM Cloud Services

Reporting outages in IBM Cloud involves accessing the IBM Cloud console, navigating to 'Support' > 'Open a Case'. <https://cloud.ibm.com/unifiedsupport/supportcenter> Clients should describe the problem comprehensively, mentioning any error messages encountered and the scope of the impacted resources. Utilizing the IBM Cloud Activity Tracker logs during this process can significantly aid in diagnosing the issue.

2.3 On-Premises Solutions

For on-premises deployments, customers should open a ticket via the IBM Support Portal (<https://www.ibm.com/mysupport>) Typically, this would also include notifying the IBM account team. Detailed reports, including system snapshots, logs, and configuration files, facilitate quicker identification and rectification of issues.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the content of this document, please contact gtraylor@us.ibm.com.

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