

Policy Title Change Management Policy

Department Information Services

Chapter 5

Section 8

Policy 11

Effective Date Monday, April 5, 2021

POLICY STATEMENT

Ramsey County is committed to implementing technology changes via a process that minimizes risk to county services. Accordingly, this policy documents the broad rules that Ramsey County follows before making any changes to production technology services and infrastructure.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all technology changes that may be deployed to Ramsey County production technology services and infrastructure and to all individuals and vendors, paid or unpaid, who implement such changes on behalf of Ramsey County.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Types of Changes

There are four categories of changes: standard, planned, expedited, and emergency. All changes must be documented, but only planned and expedited changes require approval prior to implementation.

Standard Change: These changes may be implemented without approval because they have been deemed low risk, and they have been successful in the past. Standard changes must be documented on the change calendar and in the excel spreadsheet. Examples of this type of change are:

- Power up of new infrastructure or deployment of new services/applications that don't impact existing services
- Power down of decommissioned infrastructure that's already disconnected from the network.

All standard changes require:

- Three of the same successful changes that were completed via the Planned Change process.
- All Standard changes are to added to Change Calendar and categorized as a Standard Change. You do not need to fill out a RFC form, you simply add your Standard change directly onto the calendar.
- A documented plan of the sequence or steps for implementing and releasing the change into the live environment. This should be stored in an appropriate place e.g. wiki, shared drive, etc.
- An entry needs to be made in the "CM Standard Changes" Excel document with the change description.
- A rollback/mitigation plan in case of failure.

Planned Change: These changes must be planned and submitted for approval from the Change Advisory Board (CAB) using Ramsey County's Request for Change (RFC) form. The change request must include a time for this change to take place. The CAB will decide if the change is implemented at the suggested time. Detailed in the change request should be the documentation about what work is going to happen and the perceived benefit and impact to the users. These types of changes should always have a backout plan or mitigating action plan attached.

A Planned change can be repeated for subsequent locations/departments as long as the process is the same and rolled out on a schedule.

- Application-based security or business needs patches
- Change that results in an interruption to a service, or has a significant risk of an interruption to service
- Change that results in a business or operational practice change
- Changes in any system that affect disaster recovery or business continuity
- Introduction or discontinuance of a service

All planned changes require:

- A Request for change
- Functional Manager Approval
- Approval by the Change Advisory Board
 - An approved, documented plan of the sequence or steps for implementing and releasing the change into the live environment. This should be stored in the IT Change Management SP site.
 - Evidence demonstrating the fact that this change has been tested in a pre-production/staging environment first, if available
 - A rollback/mitigation plan in case of failure
 - A documented post-change test to confirm that the change has been successfully applied
- Communication plan as appropriate.

Expedited Change: This type of change is identical to a planned change but is more urgent. This is a one-time change. These changes cannot wait for the next CAB to convene, so they seek approval outside of the normally scheduled CAB.

All expedited changes require:

- A Request for Change, submitted and an email to Change Managers to alert of the request
- A practical cause for the reason for the Expedited request
- Functional Manager approval
- Approval by the CAB via email
- An approved, documented plan of the sequence or steps for implementing and releasing the change into the live environment. This should be stored in the IT Change Management SP site.
- A rollback/mitigation plan in case of failure
- A post-change test being documented to check that the change has been successfully applied
- Communication plan as appropriate.

Emergency Change: This is a change that a manager would verbally approve and would happen immediately. The person responding to the issue should make every reasonable effort to secure approval the relevant manager before implementing the change. In some exceptional circumstances, this may not be possible, and the authority will then fall on the person making the change. The change request form should still be submitted and the change discussed at the next CAB meeting.

Examples of this type of change are:

- Department or building is without service
- A severe degradation of service requiring immediate action
- A system/application/component failure causing a negative impact on business operations
- A response to a natural disaster
- A response to an emergency business need
- Server crashes

All emergency changes require an RFC, which may be entered afterward. Emergency changes are placed on the Change Calendar as such and reviewed at the following CAB meeting.

Change Advisory Board (CAB)

The primary purpose of the Change Advisory Board is responsible for final review; approval and authorizing a change. They have the authority to assess the risk level or impact level, request additional information before approving a change. For the CAB to be quorate, at least half its members should be in attendance.

CAB member representative areas include:

- Network
- Desktop
- System Administration
- Database Administration
- GIS
- Enterprise Content Management
- Security
- Application Management
- Architecture
- Service Desk

Change Windows

Planned and Standard changes are acceptable only during the posted maintenance windows or in timeframes specified/approved by the Change Review Board.

Change Freeze Periods

Non-essential change freeze periods may be imposed at certain times during the year. During this time, the only allowed changes are those that are essential to the continued operation of a service. Two to three days before Christmas Eve through the day following New Year's Day will have a Change Freeze. The exact dates will vary based on how the holidays align to the business calendar.

POLICIES

- Changes must be submitted by 8 AM on Friday morning to be voted on the following week at the CAB meeting.
- CAB meetings are Monday at 10 AM, unless there is a holiday, then the meeting will be Tuesday at 10 AM.
- If a Change Requestor needs to update their change pre-approval, they are able to go back to the RFC form and edit. If it's after 'pending triage' they need to ask a Change Manager to make their edits.

PROCESS

[View process](#) (PDF)

AUTHORITY

This policy and related standards and procedures were prepared under the authority of the County Manager, as delegated to the Ramsey County Chief Information Officer. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in loss of access privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are in the [Information Services Data Dictionary](#):

Change: the addition, modification or removal of a service or service component that has the potential to affect the stability of the infrastructure or disrupt the business of the county.

- **Planned** - carefully thought out and planned; with an approved lead time. Lead time is based on risk, impact, and a scheduled implementation. Planned changes will be approved by the CAB and added to the Change Calendar.
- **Expedited** - vital and does not follow normal lead times and CAB approval process. Change is not needed to fix production but may be needed to avoid a production problem. This type of change should be made only when there is a potential impact by waiting the normal lead time. Expedited changes will require a consensus from the CAB (done electronically) and placed on the Change Calendar, after final approval is received from the Change Manager.
- **Emergency** - urgent and needed to fix a problem that is having a serious impact upon the business because a production system may or has come down. RFCs may be generated post facto and presented at the next CAB meeting. Emergencies are still placed on the Change Calendar, and the Change Manager is alerted of the change.
- **Standard** - changes are pre-approved by the CAB and reviewed periodically. Standard changes must be on the calendar and marked as approved, but do not require an RFC.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Designated support teams (Information Services and business)

Ramsey County has a distributed technology infrastructure support model. The following groups are responsible for managing system configurations in their designated domain of responsibility.

1. IS Infrastructure system administrators manage most of the Microsoft Windows Server and Microsoft O365 technologies.
2. IS infrastructure database administrators manage databases (SQL Server and/or Oracle).
3. IS infrastructure network administrators manage most of the Cisco network solutions.
4. IS desktop support technicians manage most of the desktop and peripheral devices.
5. Sheriff's Office, Office of Information & Technology, manages a variety of technologies server, desktop, peripherals, and networks.
6. Library Services, Office of Information & Technology, manages certain technology solutions.
7. Application support and capability teams maintain Ramsey County applications and services.
8. Vendors manage a variety of 3rd party-supported technologies, including servers, desktops, peripherals, and networks.

Each of the above-reference support teams will:

- Follow change management policy and process for any changes they're requesting or implementing.
- Follow change management policy and process to review any requested changes to services they manage.

LINKS AND RESOURCES

- <https://ramseyco.sharepoint.com/sites/RFC> - RFC, Change Calendar & Standard Change Document

RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Sponsor - TBD

- Approves the initial and all changes to the policy.
- Ensures requisite staffing levels.
- Approves metrics, key performance indicators, and service level objectives.

Practice Owner

- Establishes and enforces the policy.
- Ensures all relevant documentation is current.
- Recommends metrics, key performance indicators, and service level objectives.
- Determines and recommends changes to the policy.
- Approves changes to the process and/or procedures.
- Ensures proper training for execution.
- Ensures the alignment of the incident policies, process, procedures, and tools with IS' policies and priorities.

Change Manager (IS Liaisons)

- Schedules CAB meetings.

- Conducts CAB meetings.
- Reviews RFC and related documents.
- Tracks, manages attendance and votes for each change.
- Develops, implements, and maintains the Change Management process and procedural documentation.
- Manages internal communication for Change Management practice.
- Advises IS technical support staff of process errors and omissions and ensures proper change management training is provided via written documentation and training sessions.
- Recommends process and procedural improvements.

Change Requestor

- Follows Change Management Initiator Work Instructions.
- Submits the RFC according to documented policy, process and procedures.
- Attends the CAB meeting to represent the change and answers any questions.
- Informs the Service Desk of their change so the service desk has awareness.
- Edits their change if there is something incorrect or needing edits, pre approval.

CAB Member

- Reviews RFCs in advance of CAB meeting.
- Asks questions, raises concerns.
- Actively participates in the CAB meeting.
- Make recommendations to change requestor/implementor.
- Vote on change according to criteria outlined in procedures.
- Follows documented processes and procedures.
- Recommends process and procedural improvements.

Functional Group Supervisor

- Ensures Change policy, process, and procedures are adhered to by support group personnel.
- Ensures assigned technical personnel have the knowledge necessary to request for change and implement the change.
- Participates in the CAB meeting (as appropriate).
- Approves change for their department submitter.
- Recommends process and procedural improvements.

Problem Manager

- Participates in CAB meeting.

Incident Manager

- Participates in CAB meeting.

Capability Managers

- Participates in the CAB meeting
- Adheres to the change management policy process and procedures.

CONTACTS / SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

- Change Management Sponsor: Chetan Ganatra
- Change Management Process Manager: Bridget Edgar
- Change Management Process Manager: Kevin Kaszynski
- Change Management Process Manager: Selena Rosario
- Change Management Process Owner: Mike Piram

GLOSSARY

- **Change Advisory Board (CAB):** Delivers support to a change-management team by advising on requested changes, assisting in the assessment and prioritization of changes.
- **Change Process Manager:** Responsible for managing the lifecycle of all changes, with the primary responsibility of enabling beneficial changes to be made with minimal disruption to the business.
- **Change Process Owner:** Responsible for defining and supporting the overall process involved in change management. The activities include: Devising the process, in support with the change manager and CAB. Communicating the guidelines to appropriate stakeholders.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Brief description of change
June 30, 2022	Final review with CAB team members.

Date	Brief description of change
May 24, 2022	Edited CRB to CAB, then back to CAB again. Updated process flow maps.
March 26, 2021	Initial version.

APPROVAL

Chetan Ganatra, Ramsey County Chief Information Officer, Aug. 1, 2022

Revision History Date Monday, April 5, 2021

[◀ Wireless Access Device Security Standard](#)

[Back](#)

[Encryption at Rest ▶](#)
