Change Management Process

Change Review Board

The Change Review Board reviews change requests and determines whether or not they should be implemented. The Board may also determine that certain aspects of the proposed plan be modified before the change is implemented. Prior to approving new changes for the next maintenance window, the Board will evaluate and review the impact of previous changes. If appropriate, lessons learned will be applied to the new requests being considered.

The Change Review Board will be comprised of members assigned by the MIS Director. Meetings will be held as needed with a minimum of one meeting per month. A 51% quorum will be needed for change request and move-to-production approvals.

Plan the Change

Determine the following information during the planning process:

- Who is responsible for the change?
- What effect the change will have?
- What specific test plans should be utilized to verify the accuracy of the change?
- When should the change occur? Consider the following factors:
  - When is the change least likely to interfere with operations?
  - Will appropriate support staff be available during that time?
  - Can the change be made within the standard maintenance window?
  - Will there be enough time to review and test the proposed change during the maintenance window?
  - If the change is not successful, what are the back-out procedures?
- Why is making the change important?
- How will the change be made?
- Will the change result in any additional security issues or increased risk to the system?
- What additional training and documentation should be provided to stakeholders, support staff and end users prior to the change implementation?

Test the Change

- If a test environment is available, the change should be tested, both pre-deployment and post-deployment.
- Detailed discussions and tabletop testing should *supplement* the testing done in a test environment. They may also be used as an alternative if test equipment is not available.
- During the testing process, look for unintended consequences that may result in stability and/or security issues.
- Package the results of the tests with the change request when it is submitted to the Change Review Board.
- If testing fails, resume development.
- If testing is successful, practice the back-out plan (you may need it the day the change is made to production).

Submit the Change Request

- Prepare the Change Request Form including detailed information regarding each of the questions asked above, the test plans, the test results and the back-out plan.
- Attend the next Change Review Board.
- Discuss your proposed change with the Board.
- The change review board should weigh the risks and benefits of making the change as well as the risks and benefits of not making the change.
- The change review board may alter the plan or send it back for revision, if they determine that certain aspects of the proposal are either unacceptable or need refinement.
- If request is denied, gather new informational requirements and return to the next meeting for further discussion.
- If request is approved, work with the Board to schedule an appropriate time for the change.
- Execute the appropriate communication plan.

Execute the Change

- Make sure that support staff is available and prepared to assist in the change process.
- Execute the appropriate communication plan.

- Provide documentation and instruction to stakeholders.
- Make the change.
- If implementation is completed successfully:
  - Verify that the change was successful and that the system is stable.
  - Notify stakeholders that the changes are complete.
  - Update the change log with any pertinent information regarding the change execution.

- If implementation of the change fails:
  - Perform the back-out procedures to restore the environment to the pre-change implementation phase.
  - Notify stakeholders of the failure of the process.
  - Update the change log with any pertinent information regarding the change execution.
  - Restart the change management process at the Planning Phase.

Keep a Record of the Change

Keeping a record of the change management process can help determine the history of an information resource, as well as providing proof that the change was approved.

- After the change has been implemented, record it in the change log.
- Describe how the change was tested after deployment to determine its success.
- Archive the change management documents that were completed during the process.
- If the change failed, document the results accordingly as well.

Emergency Repairs

Although each situation is unique and unscheduled changes will occur, it is imperative that ALL unscheduled changes (changes to restore an immediate outage in which there is not sufficient time for the Change Review Board to meet) be approved by the Director of MIS or his/her designee. In such situations, it is crucial that the communication plan be used as a guidance tool to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the changes being made. **It is important to obtain sufficient approval and to notify the appropriate staff of any change, whether planned or unplanned.**

Communication (Refer to Communication Plan)

Communication before, during and after the change is one of the most important parts of change management.

- Make sure that adequate advance notice is given, especially if a response is expected.
- Make sure that it is clear whom people should respond to, if they have comments or concerns.
- Some suggested communications are provided at each step of the change management process described below.
- Draft message and follow up.

Maintenance Window (Refer to Maintenance Window Document)

A maintenance window is a defined period of time when maintenance, such as patching software or upgrading hardware components, can be performed. Clearly defining a regular maintenance window can be advantageous as it provides a time when users should expect service disruptions.