

# An Approach to Establish Information Technology Infrastructure Changes Freeze

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8265490>

Published Date: 19-August-2023

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**Abstract:** In today's fast-paced business world, companies often undergo frequent changes to their Information Technology (IT) infrastructure to keep up with the evolving technology landscape. However, these changes can also introduce new risks and vulnerabilities, potentially leading to system downtime, data loss, and other consequences. To mitigate these risks, many organizations implement an infrastructure changes freeze during critical events. In this paper, we explore the benefits and drawbacks of establishing an infrastructure changes freeze, and provide recommendations for effective implementation.

This technical paper discusses the steps necessary to implement an IT infrastructure changes freeze. The paper outlines the key steps involved in implementing a freeze, including determining the freeze period, identifying critical systems, establishing freeze policies, communicating the freeze, explore the benefits and drawbacks, and monitoring the freeze process. By following these steps, organizations can ensure that critical systems remain stable during critical events and periods of high demand, while minimizing disruption to business operations.

**Keywords:** Information Technology, IT Change Management, Infrastructure, Changes, Freeze.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of technology has led to a concomitant increase in the complexity and interconnectivity of IT infrastructures. As such, any changes made to the infrastructure can have far-reaching and unpredictable consequences, potentially leading to system downtime, data loss, and other negative outcomes. To mitigate these risks, many organizations implement a change freeze strategy.

An IT infrastructure changes freeze is a period during which no changes can be made to the IT infrastructure of an organization. This is typically done to ensure that critical systems remain stable and operational during periods of critical events or other periods of major activity. However, such a freeze can also impact business operations and hinder innovation. This paper outlines the key steps involved in implementing a change freeze strategy along with the benefits and drawbacks of implementing a changes freeze.

## II. IT CHANGE FREEZE STRATEGY

The change freeze strategy will ensure that changes are managed consistently, with a balance between stability and flexibility following below steps:

### A. Determine the Freeze Period

The first step in implementing an IT infrastructure changes freeze is to determine the period during which the freeze will be in effect. This period should be carefully chosen to minimize disruption to business operations while still ensuring that critical systems remain stable. Typically, the freeze period will coincide with periods of high demand, such as the holiday season or other peak business periods.

### B. Identify Critical Systems

The next step is to identify the critical systems that must remain stable during the freeze period. These systems may include core business applications, financial systems, and other systems that are essential to business operations. Once these systems

have been identified, they should be segregated from non-critical systems and given priority for maintenance and support during the freeze period.

### ***C. Establish Freeze Policies***

The next step is to establish policies and procedures for the freeze period. These policies should define the scope of the freeze, including what changes are allowed and what changes are prohibited. They should also establish procedures for requesting exceptions to the freeze and for handling emergency situations that arise during the freeze period. Below is an example of freeze policy:

- High: The change freeze is mandatory for changes related to the below categories:
  - High Critical services
  - Corporate services
  - Data Center devices
  - Mobility applications
  - Workstation changes
- Medium: The change freeze will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for the below categories:
  - Medium Critical services
  - Devices hosted on Dhahran
- Low: The change freeze is not required for changes related to the below categories:
  - Non- Critical services/ Applications utilized by specific organizations
  - Remote areas devices

### ***D. Communicate the Freeze***

Once the freeze policies have been established, it is important to communicate them to all stakeholders within the organization. This may include IT staff, business users, and other stakeholders who may be affected by the freeze. Clear communication is essential to ensure that everyone understands the scope and impact of the freeze and can plan accordingly.

## **III. BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF IT CHANGES FREEZE**

The implementation of an infrastructure changes freeze is a complex process that requires careful consideration of the benefits and drawbacks as follow:

### ***A. Benefits***

#### ***1. Reduction of Risks***

- System Stability
- Security
- Compliance

#### ***2. Cost Savings***

- Reduced Downtime
- Lower Maintenance Costs

#### ***3. Improved Change Management***

- Better Planning
- Better Communication
- Better Documentation

## ***B. Drawbacks of a Changes Freeze***

### ***1. Business Disruption***

- Delayed Innovation
- Delayed Upgrades
- Delayed Fixes

### ***2. Reduced Agility***

- Inability to Quickly Respond to Competitive Pressures
- Inability to Take Advantage of New Opportunities

### ***3. Potential Employee Frustration***

- Limitations to Creativity
- Increased Boredom

While the freeze can reduce risks and costs, it can also disrupt business operations and hinder innovation. Thus, to achieve the benefits while minimizing the drawbacks, organizations should establish clear guidelines, communicate effectively, and remain flexible. This will create a stable and secure IT infrastructure that supports their business goals while minimizing risks.

## **IV. MONITORING PROCESS**

During the freeze period, it is important to monitor and enforce the freeze policies to ensure that no unauthorized changes are made to critical systems. This may involve regular audits of system logs and other monitoring tools to detect any unauthorized changes. It may also involve disciplinary action for employees who violate the freeze policies.

## **V. EVALUATE AND ADJUST**

After the freeze period has ended, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the freeze policies and procedures and make any necessary adjustments. This may involve reviewing system logs and incident reports to identify any issues that arose during the freeze period and updating the freeze policies and procedures accordingly.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Implementing an IT infrastructure changes freeze is an important step in ensuring that critical systems remain stable during periods of high demand. By following the steps outlined in this paper, organizations can establish effective freeze policies and procedures to minimize disruption to business operations while still ensuring the stability and security of critical systems.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] "Change Freeze Best Practices," by ITIL® from AXELOS: This guide provides recommendations for managing change freezes in IT service management (ITSM) environments, including how to plan and communicate a change freeze, how to prioritize changes that cannot be postponed, and how to manage emergency changes during a freeze period.
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- [3] "Change Freeze Policy Best Practices," by TechTarget: This article provides tips and best practices for creating a change freeze policy, including how to establish a change freeze schedule, how to define exceptions to the freeze, and how to manage changes that cannot be postponed during a freeze period.
- [4] "Managing Change Freezes: Lessons Learned," by InformationWeek: This article shares insights and best practices from IT leaders who have successfully managed change freezes, including how to balance the need for stability with the need for innovation and improvement, how to communicate the impact of the freeze to stakeholders, and how to manage the risks associated with delaying changes.