Montgomery College
Office of
Information
Technology

IT Standard
**PRODUCTION CHANGE BLACKOUT
PERIODS**

Standard: IT14003
Original Effective Date: 10/01/2019
Last Revised:

Last Reviewed:
Next Scheduled Review Date: 10/01/2022
Version No.: 1.1
Administrative Owner: IT Client Services

PURPOSE

The OIT Change Blackout periods are scheduled to ensure IT services availability and reduced risk to those services by establishing a period of time during a business cycle where changes are minimized to any component related to a critical service. Benefits of the Change Blackout periods include the following:

- Maximize the availability and stability of Montgomery College's technology services during peak usage periods

- Provide for smooth academic term start-up and term end experiences for students, faculty, and staff

- Allow staff time and effort to be focused on service delivery (vs. "firefighting") at times of increased activity

SCOPE

Change Blackout periods apply to applications and services deemed critical for term start-up and ending. The following are considered critical application services for which production system changes should be minimized during a Change Blackout period:

- Banner
- MyMC

The following are considered critical infrastructure services for which production system changes should be minimized during a Change Blackout period:

- Wide Area Network
- Internet at any campus
- Domain Name System (DNS)
- Active Directory (AD)
- Active Directory Federation Services (ADFS) / Two-Factor Authentication

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Change Manager	Administers the change management process and is responsible for the day-to-day Change Management activities.

A. General

1. All individuals working on behalf of the College to provide and manage IT services have the responsibility to comply with existing Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, College Policies and Procedures, and IT Standards in order to protect College data and computer technology resources.

B. Change Blackout Schedule

Blackout dates are based on the Montgomery College academic calendar. The Change Blackout dates are scheduled as follows:

1. Start of Term - Begins on the Monday (or first business day) of the week three weeks prior to the first day of classes. Ends after the second day of classes. (Peak registration, return of faculty, start of classes.)

2. End of Term – Begins on the first day of final exams through the last day of grade posting. (Final exams, grade posting.)

The Change Manager will publish the Change Blackout dates for each academic year at the beginning of the MC fiscal year (July 1).

C. Patching Calendar

1. A projected patching schedule will be developed for each MC fiscal year. The schedule will be in compliance with, and will follow a timeline based on OIT's Server Patching Standard. It will also take into consideration this Blackout Periods Standard.

EXCEPTIONS

This standard is applicable as of its Effective Date. Security patches and critical updates may be applied, and emergency maintenance may be performed during a Change Blackout period. Refer to the OIT Server Patching Standard for additional guidance. Other exceptions to this standard will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the IT Standard Exception Request Form or as approved in writing by the Information Privacy & Security Director.

COMPLIANCE AND RECOURSE FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Montgomery College has established College Policies/Procedures, and OIT has established IT Standards and Processes and associated guiding documents to provide appropriate protection of technology resources, to assure protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information, and to promote privacy. Any faculty, staff, contractor, or vendor found to have violated any part of College Policies, Procedures or IT Standards or Processes may be subject to disciplinary action and/or legal action.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Acceptable Use Policy and the accompanying Procedure/Guidelines Statement
- Montgomery College Policy 66002, Confidential Data Management and Security
- IT Standard #11005, Server Patching
- IT Change Management Process Document
- Notice to Information Systems and Data Users

APPROVALS / REVISION HISTORY

DATE	VERSION / REVISION / NOTES	APPROVER
October 1. 2019	Original roll-out of this Production Change Blackout Periods document.	Patrick Feehan, Information Security and Privacy Director/ITPA
September 30, 2020	Decided upon and added review cycle dates. (Version 1.1)	Nell Feldman / Keith Wilson