IBM Software Support Quick Reference
Ten Steps to Getting Support for WebSphere Software
(Updated 2002/10/28)

The official Software Support "Handbook" ➔ http://techsupport.services.ibm.com/guides/handbook.html

This material came from the following article ➔ http://ibm.com/websphere/developer/support/appserver_support.html
To get the most current information, you may check that URL.

As of Nov 1st, 2002 the new phone number for IBM Software Support is: 1-800-IBM-Serv (1-800-426-7378)

Note:
This article applies to many IBM software products. However, some examples are based on WebSphere Application Server.

If you're new to a product, you may have difficulty finding all of the information you need. And if you come across a problem, where do you go for help? Whether you are a new user looking for introductory information, or an experienced user looking for a workaround for a specific defect, you can benefit immediately from IBM's extensive Web-based support. It enables you to download fixpacks, search on keywords, look up FAQs and Hints and Tips, and so forth. You should always use it before contacting IBM Support directly.

Here are the steps you can take to get help with WebSphere problems:

1. **Define the problem.** Make sure that you can recreate the problem, and document the steps you took and the symptoms you observed. The more specific you can be, the faster your problem can be solved.

2. **Determine if this is an existing problem.** Your problem may already be documented somewhere. Take advantage of IBM's Web-based eSupport and Service resources to quickly find answers to your technical questions. You can easily access this extensive Web-based support through the IBM software eSupport portal and search by product category or by product name. For example, if you are experiencing problems specific to WebSphere Application Server, select 'WebSphere Application Server' from the product list; this brings you to the WebSphere Application Server Support page.

   You can access the following eSupport and Service resources to search for the answer you are looking for:

   o **Release notes**. The problem may already be documented in the release notes and the readme packaged with the product.
   o **Software prerequisites**. Verify the required product levels.
   o **Hardware requirements**. Verify the required hardware.
   o **Fixpacks or e-fixes**. The workaround may be as simple as applying a fixpack or e-fix.
   o **FAQs**. Common questions, along with their workarounds/solutions.
   o **Hints and Tips**. Brief information on installation, configuration, troubleshooting, and usage.
   o **Technotes**. Documentation of reported customer problems and the currently available solution to those problems.
   o **Support Bulletin**. Customer solutions are provided in this e-newsletter.
   o **WebSphere Developer Domain**. A community Web site for developers using IBM WebSphere products. The site provides tutorials, articles, whitepapers, and tips on using the various products. Search this site for relevant papers.
   o **Version 4.0 InfoCenter** and **Version 3.5 InfoCenter**. Fast, centralized access to WebSphere product information.

At this point, if you haven't found the appropriate workaround, contact IBM Support directly. The steps below outline how to do this:

3. **Enroll in the IBM Passport Advantage program if you are not already enrolled.** In most cases, you must have an active IBM Passport Advantage contract in order to submit problems to IBM Support. The IBM Passport

Advantage is a new software support strategy where software subscription (upgrade protection) and remote technical software support are included as part of the license acquisition for distributed software products. Remote technical software support allows you to obtain assistance for product-specific, task-oriented questions regarding the installation and operation of currently supported IBM software products.

- As soon as you purchase WebSphere Application Server, enroll online immediately to become a Passport Advantage customer; enrollment Forms should be completed by both new customers enrolling in Passport Advantage, and current customers enrolling new sites under their existing Passport Advantage agreement. Once you submit your enrollment, your Passport Advantage 'support contract' becomes effective.

- Learn more about the Passport Advantage Program by viewing the Online Tutorial. Also check out the Passport Advantage FAQs.

- If you require further assistance, phone 1-800-978-2246 or contact your IBM Representative.

4. **Review your problem description.** It is very important that you are as specific as possible in explaining a problem or question to our software specialists.

5. **Gather background information.** The software specialist needs to have all of the relevant information about the problem to be able to help you efficiently. For example, know answers to questions such as:

- What levels of software were you running when the problem occurred?
- Has the problem happened before, or is this an isolated problem?
- What steps led to the failure?
- Can the problem be recreated? If so, what steps are required?
- Have any changes been made to the system (hardware, NetWare or software)?
- Were any messages or other diagnostic information produced? If yes, what were they?

6. **Determine the business impact.** You need to assign a severity level to the problem when you report it, so you must understand the business impact of the problem you are reporting. A description of the severity levels is in the following table:

Severity 1	Critical business impact; you are unable to use the program resulting in a critical impact on operations. This condition requires an immediate solution.
Severity 2	Significant business impact; the program is usable but is severely limited.
Severity 3	Some business impact; the program is usable with less significant features (not critical to operations) unavailable.
Severity 4	Minimal business impact; the problem causes little impact on operations or that a reasonable circumvention to the problem has been implemented.

7. **Submit your request to IBM Software Support:**

- You can submit your request for assistance by using Web problem submission tool(s) -- for example, go to this Problem Submission page -- or by calling IBM directly (refer to the IBM contacts page for country phone numbers). These requests are logged into the IBM problem management system.

- Once logged, a unique problem management record (PMR) or Incident/Support Case is created. ***Make note of your PMR number, Incident number, or Support Case number and use it in any future communication on this issue.*** Your PMR, Incident, or Support Case is routed to a resolution team for handling. You may be transferred directly to the resolution team or your issue will be placed in a queue for call back. In either case, the next person you speak with will be a specialist in the appropriate resolution team.

- At the resolution team level, your call is researched, resolved, or escalated as appropriate.

8. **If it is a technical question (how-to, installation-related) that you want to ask IBM Software Support:**

   o Assistance will be given to you for WebSphere Application Server-specific, task-oriented questions regarding the installation and operation of the product. In the course of providing answers to your technical questions, IBM Support may refer you to product documentation or publications, or may provide a direct answer to assist you in the following areas:

     ▪ Installation
     ▪ Usage (how-to)
     ▪ Specific usage/installation questions for documented functions
     ▪ Product compatibility and interoperability questions
     ▪ Technical references to publications, i.e., Redbooks, manuals, etc.
     ▪ Assistance with interpretation of publications
     ▪ Providing available configuration samples
     ▪ Planning information for software fixes
     ▪ IBM database searches

   o The Software Maintenance or Support Line is not structured to address questions on performance, consulting issues, or extensive configuration questions. For further information about these services, contact your IBM Representative who can direct you to the appropriate person(s).

9. **If IBM Software Support determines that a software defect has been identified:**

   o An Authorized Program Analysis Report (APAR) will be created which describes the problem in detail, along with any necessary diagnostic documentation that you may be asked to provide. Because of the complexities of the environments supported, it may take weeks to debug, write, test, package, and distribute a fix.

   o For high impact problems, IBM Software Support will make every effort to develop a workaround that you can use until the APAR has been resolved and a Program Temporary Fix (PTF) has been created.

10. **If you are not satisfied with the support that you received, you can:**

    o **Escalate the PMR:**

      📁☞ Escalate through IBM Support:

        ▪ Regional Support Contacts - Americas:

            i. Call Support (1-800-237-5511) and ask for the Duty Programmer (24x7 availability). Then,
            ii. Call Support (1-800-237-5511) and ask for the Duty Manager (24x7). Then,
            iii. Call Support (1-800-237-5511) and ask for the second-line support manager for the product.
        ▪ Regional Support Contacts - EMEA:
            i. EMEA Software Support is handled at the local or country level. Reference the IBM Software Support Country Contact Web site for a list of phone numbers (24x7).

      📄☞ Open a formal Critical Situation to initiate the Complaint Management Process via the Complaint Management Tool (CMT). For efficiency, be sure to provide the associated PMR number (see step #7 above).

      📄☞ If IBM Support and the Complaint Management processes have been engaged and were unable to resolve the problem, contact your IBM Representative.

    o **Reopen A PMR/Incident/Support Case.** If the recommendations provided to you fail to satisfy the requirements, you may reopen the PMR/Incident/Support Case by calling your local support center and referencing the original PMR/Incident/Support Case number. (For IBM PMRs, this must be done within 28 days of original closing date.)

IBM Software Services for WebSphere

If you would like to deepen your WebSphere knowledge, expand your skills, and apply best practices, Software Services for WebSphere can provide the expert assistance you need. Software Services for WebSphere is a team of product specialists with access to developers and product support personnel in the IBM research and development labs. Their mission is to accelerate the use of WebSphere technologies by customers, IBM Global Services and Business Partners. As an integral part of all software sales, they provide worldwide support for WebSphere products through a set of services that make it easy to design, build, test and deploy applications for e-business. Together with the *WebSphere Training and Technical Enablement* team, they also help structure an education program that's right for you. They've done this before. They've faced the issues. Trust their experience and expertise to enable your success.

- To learn more about Software Services for WebSphere, please visit their Web site: ibm.com/websphere/developer/services.

- To learn more about the WebSphere education programs available to you, visit the WebSphere Training and Technical Enablement site: ibm.com/software/ad/aimclasses.

- To engage, please contact your IBM Sales Representative, or contact one of our Software Services Sales Representatives listed here: ibm.com/websphere/developer/services/contacts.html.

Relevant links

- IBM software eSupport portal. Takes you to the extensive Web-based support resources provided through IBM eSupport and Service.
- IBM Software Support Guide. Provides in-depth detail on accessing IBM Support.
- IBM Passport Advantage. Provides details on how you can enroll in IBM's Passport Advantage program to gain remote technical support.
- WebSphere Application Server Support. Provides links to WebSphere Application Server-related online support.
- WebSphere Developer Domain. A community Web site for developers using IBM WebSphere products. The site provides tutorials, articles, whitepapers, and tips on using the various products. Search this site for relevant papers.
- WebSphere Application Server 4.0 InfoCenter. Provides fast, centralized access to WebSphere 4.0 product information.
- WebSphere Application Server 3.5 InfoCenter. Provides fast, centralized access to WebSphere 3.5 product information.
- IBM Software Services for WebSphere. Learn more about the Software Services for WebSphere team.
- WebSphere Training and Technical Enablement. Offers details on the WebSphere education programs available to you.
- WebSphere Services. Learn more about the IBM Software Services group for WebSphere.
- IBM Contacts. Lists country phone numbers.

Software Services Sales Representatives. Lists contact information for our Software Services Sales Representatives.