

AUTOMATION SUPPORT



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INTRODUCTION

At Interstates, we pride ourselves on providing first-class support to our customers. It starts with our dedicated support professionals who have deep expertise and training in the automation and control systems used by the industries we serve. Each client and call is handled with the utmost importance, beginning with a methodology that seeks to understand the problem at the time. Once the problem is understood, including upstream and downstream impacts, our team works on resolution as quickly as possible, knowing that any interruption impacts your customers and bottom line. Our team closes out any support activity only when we know the problem has been resolved to your expectations.



By engaging in a support agreement with Interstates, we are able to offer you guaranteed phone support available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. We offer live technicians that are based in the United States and are available between 8 AM and 5 PM CST Monday through Friday. Additionally, we do have staffing between midnight and 8AM Monday through Friday. Outside of these normal hours, we provide an on call system with response time within 30 minutes. Additionally, we utilize a cloud based system for tracking all client incidents, providing information for both our team and yours to analyze call volume, incident history and other metrics to review how our team can support your facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Business Hours | 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM CST excluding holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas)

After Hours | Calls taken between 5:00 PM and 8:00 AM Monday through Thursday and between 5:00 PM Friday and 8:00 AM Monday or during holiday listed above

Hourly Billing Rate | All incidents will be tracked for the hours a technician works on them and rounded to the nearest 15 minute increment. Clients will be billed for the total hours spent working on the incident at the hourly rate determined by the support contract level

Business Hours Minimum | Dependent upon support contract level, a one hour minimum may be charge for all incidents regardless of the total time spent to resolve the issue. If the total time exceeds one hour, the client will be billed at the total hours spent on the incident

After Hours Minimum | Dependent upon support contract level, a 4 hour minimum charge may be applied for any calls outside of normal business hours as defined above. This minimum would be regardless of hours spent on the incident unless they were to exceed 4 hours, then the total charge would be for actual time to resolve.

Guaranteed 24X7 Support | All clients electing any level support will be guaranteed access to our support team 24x7. In most cases this will be by connecting to a live support technician during business hours and receiving a call back within 30 minutes for any after hours calls. Clients with support contracts will be prioritized over non contracted clients both during and after business hours.

30-Minute Response Time | All calls from clients on a support contract will receive a response from our support team within 30 minutes of contacting our team. We will then work to resolve your issues as quickly as possible.

Prepaid Hours | Contracts that include prepaid support hours allow for budgeting of support costs over the life of the contract. These hours will be consumed accordingly to hours spent working on incidents and will be shown on monthly invoices as to how much has been consumed and is remaining.

Annual Site Visit | A support technician will come onsite for 2-3 days depending on site size to conduct preventive maintenance activities and work with local team to review system operation and performance.

SUPPORT CONTRACT LEVELS

BRONZE

Our introductory support package reduces the hourly support rate and removes any minimum charges when accessing support during business hours compared to no support contract. After-hours calls are offered with a reduced per-call rate and with a surcharge. It also includes a lane-specific support number, a feature that is included in all support packages. This package is designed for the needs of small clients with less complex systems that want the peace of mind of support from a trusted partner.

SILVER

Our silver level package builds on the bronze package by offering no per-call minimum during business hours and introducing prepaid support hours. After-hours calls are offered with a reduced per-call rate and with a surcharge. This package is tailored for mid-size medium-complexity clients that want to ensure they have resources available 24/7/365. This is the minimum recommended support level for any customer utilizing I-Control.

GOLD

Our top-of-the-line offering is an all-inclusive solution tailored to the needs of your site. It also adds in exclusive content such as quarterly control systems backups and quarterly system health checks.

SUPPORT COST COMPARISONS

SUPPORT LEVEL	NO SUPPORT CONTRACT	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Annual Support Fee*	\$0	\$6,000	\$10,800	Priced Per Site
Automation Support Labor Rate	\$264	\$205	\$192	Included
Business Hours Per Call Minimum	1 Hour	No Minimum	No Minimum	Included
After Hours Per Call Minimum	4 Hours	1 Hours	1 Hour	Included
After Hours Per Call Surcharge	\$130/Call	\$65/Call	\$65/Call	Included
Prepaid Hours**	No Included Hours	No Included Hours	25 Hours Included	Unlimited Hours

*This is priced per site. Ask about our multi-site discount.

**Prepaid hours can be adjusted to meet customer needs at a discounted hourly rate. Please inquire for more information.

SUPPORT FEATURE COMPARISONS

SUPPORT LEVEL	NO SUPPORT CONTRACT	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Guaranteed 24/7 Support Access	✗	✓	✓	✓
Industry Specific Dedicated Support Team (Feed, Flour, Process)	✗	✓	✓	✓
Expected 30 Minute or Less Response Time*	✗	✓	✓	✓
Discounted Prepaid Hours	✗	✗	✓	✓
Quarterly Control System Backups	✗	✗	✗	✓
Quarterly System Health Checks	✗	✗	✗	✓

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES WE OFFER

Interstates offers additional services to maximize uptime, improve production efficiency, and reduce operating costs. These services can be purchased individually or added to any of our support contracts.

+ Annual Site Visit

One of our knowledgeable support technicians will spend 3 days or more onsite, completing a checklist of proactive activities to help ensure uptime and also working with staff to better understand and fully utilize the control system.

+ I-Control Licensing

This is an annual fee which will give your site access to the latest updates and features of the I-Control software suite.

+ Hazard Monitoring Audits

We have a dedicated team of instrumentation techs that can complete a thorough analysis of your hazard monitoring equipment, assisting with configuration as well as testing and suggestions for improvement.

+ Embedded Resources

In a pinch and need additional onsite support? We can send either automation support (PLC, HMI) or an electrical and instrumentation technician (instruments, electrical work, etc.) onsite for an agreed upon period to help daily with location needs.

SUPPORT COSTS IN REAL LIFE

Let’s look at an example of the total costs when comparing a non contract site to a site electing for the varying levels of support

For this example, we will consider the following events happen during the course of a contract:

During normal business hours, the site calls for support 13 times during the year. The total time spent working on those calls is 19 hours. Additionally, the site calls 6 times during after hours or weekends with a total of 6 hours spent on calls. Below is a breakdown of what the actual annual cost to the site would be for each of the different support levels.

	NO CONTRACT	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Total Annual Cost	\$12,740	\$11,720	\$10,800	Site Specific
Remaining Prepaid Hours	0	0	0	Unlimited

Without a contract, the site would pay \$12,280 during the course of the year for the billable hours they incurred. However, this is not factoring in that there would be no guarantee on 24 hour availability of support nor would there be any response time guarantee available. If additional support were needed beyond the example above, the annual cost would continue to escalate due to the higher per hour cost as well as the hourly minimums that are enforced.

Moving into the Bronze level of support would cost less than having no contract in this example. You would also have guaranteed 24-hour support with 30 minute response times. Additionally, you would have a dedicated support phone number to use that would be prioritized over any non-contract clients. This gives you the peace of mind that you have support available when you need it.

This example is the “right size” approach for our Silver level. The 25 prepaid hours perfectly cover the usage over the contract and the site would incur no additional charges. This also allows the location to properly budget for support over the course of the year and annual premiums can even be billed in installments throughout the year. This is also giving all of the benefits of the Bronze level with prioritized access to support and quick response times.

Finally, we offer our Gold support level. This is an all inclusive package that will cover all of the site’s needs over the contract. This includes unlimited hours of support 365 days per year, quarterly system backups and quarterly system health checks. This includes review of PLC and system error logs to evaluate the health of your systems. We thoroughly encourage this level for larger, more complex sites or for sites that may encounter higher employee turnover. Additionally, if you are new to I-Control or running a new control system, adding Gold support gives you a fixed cost for a year of support with the comfort of knowing that all of your support needs will be addressed with no surprise costs.

SERVICENOW INCIDENT TRACKING SYSTEM

ServiceNow is a third party support tool utilized by the Interstates team to keep accurate records of all support needs for our clients. From a client perspective, this allows you to access all of the support concerns that our team has handled for your facility. We can set up users with access to a client portal for your site where you can view all of the support information and also submit a ticket for support for low priority needs. Additionally, we can configure individual users to be emailed with all ticket information for an individual, location, or organization. Internally, this allows us to easily track incidents and look at historical information for a site. Additionally, any repeat or follow up work for an incident can quickly be referenced by ticket number to reduce the amount of time it takes to explain a situation. This in turn saves you time and makes it easier for us to get to a solution quicker. ServiceNow is available to all clients that are utilizing any of our support levels.

CALL IN PROCEDURES

For all clients enrolled in one of our support plans, you will receive a document similar to the one below that will give you the information to contact support. This information will work for both business hours and after hours support. The example below would be for one of our Process clients; your call in number may be different depending on how we would best classify your business. Utilizing our phone system and dedicated numbers allows us to easily route your call to our team members most familiar with your site or industry.

INTERSTATES SUPPORT OVERVIEW

CREATING A SUPPORT TICKET

CRITICAL ISSUES <i>Production Impacted or Stopped</i>	NON-CRITICAL ISSUES <i>No Production Impact</i>	
Response Time 24x7 Less than 30 minutes	Response Time 8:00am-5:00pm CST Depends on Urgency (High Priority 2hrs, Low Priority 2 days)	
Call +1.712.938.0050	Email client.support@interstates.com	Web Portal https://interstates.com/clientsupport-login
Details Calling puts you directly in touch with a support technician 24x7 who will create a ticket on your behalf and troubleshoot over the phone as much as possible.	Please Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your name - Phone number where you can be reached - Plant or Site Name - Key Details (urgency, plant area, device, motor, process, etc.) - Date and time of the issue (if known) 	
		Ideal Use Cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a new ticket - View ticket status - Add notes to a ticket - Reopen a ticket (within three days of resolution) - Review all closed tickets

GETTING ACCESS TO THE WEB PORTAL

To activate your web portal access, please send an email to client.support@interstates.com indicating that you would like to get set up.

TICKET MANAGEMENT -- LIFECYCLE & NOTIFICATIONS

You can expect to receive an email notification anytime...

- ✓ a new ticket is created
- ✓ a ticket is modified (a new note is added to the ticket)
- ✓ an analyst sends a follow-up communications
- ✓ a ticket is resolved

All notifications will come from client.support@interstates.com

You may reply directly to any email as long as you DO NOT CHANGE THE SUBJECT LINE. Any replies will be recorded as a note on the ticket.

When an analyst marks the ticket as "Resolved," you will receive an email with resolution notes and instructions on how to re-open the ticket. If you do not re-open the ticket, it will automatically close and be archived as read-only.

CONCLUSION

We thank you for looking at Interstates for your automation support needs. We would be more than happy to talk through the different support options and work with you to find a solution that best fits your business needs. Feel free to contact us with any further questions or if you would like to learn more about any of the other services that Interstates can provide. We look forward to working with you in the future!

Beyond your automation support needs, Interstates offers in-house solutions in the following areas.

CONSULTING SERVICES

You want to be confident that your facility is operating efficiently and safely — today and into the future. Though data may be plentiful, you need help making it actionable. Our problem-solving approach to collecting and analyzing plant data will help you identify areas of risks and determine the right decisions, solutions, and actions to best achieve your goals. You can count on our broad knowledge base and real-world experience to bring quality and reliability to every project.

CONTROL PANELS & POWER SKIDS

Increase your speed of delivery and ROI by leveraging our proven manufacturing solutions. Move significant labor away from jobsites and rely on our field-ready and fully tested control panels and power skids to increase the speed and quality of your projects. From modular e-houses to prefabbed components, our skilled teams will get your projects done faster and more safely.

ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION & ENGINEERING

Projects get easier when you use single-source electrical and engineering experts for design and construction. Our highly collaborative approach proactively identifies potential scheduling challenges, allowing extra time to present solutions that fit your budget — no scope creep. You can trust us to handle your most complex issues with safety, skill, and exceptional quality.

INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION & INTEGRATION

Automation is at the heart of your operations and impacts plant production, security, and expansion potential for your business. At Interstates, we can help guide you through automation, control hardware modernization, and digital transformation initiatives with solutions catered to your needs. As a certified systems integrator, we'll ensure all your control systems are the best fit for you.

MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT

You need a reliable partner with battle-tested technical expertise to reduce your downtime, expedite issue resolution, increase revenue, focus on safety, and support your growing operational needs. Whether it's maintenance or ongoing support — if there are problems you can't solve, you can rely on our trained professionals.

OPERATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Embrace the Art of Smart with comprehensive operational technology solutions for your plants that meet your needs, from virtualization to networking to cybersecurity. Through innovation and collaboration, our approach helps you move forward with security, compliance, and reliability — while still maintaining the control you need to keep your facility running efficiently.