If you receive an error, “Cannot create a quiesced snapshot because the create snapshot operation exceeded the time limit for holding off I/O in the frozen virtual machine”, you can often fix it by making an adjustment to the VM Tools installation.

The basic idea is to modify the VM Tools installation and disable the “Volume Shadow Copy Service” section. This will also typically require a reboot of the VM.

Note: In at least one case, stopping the “VMware Tools Service” in the VM before the change and restarting it after worked well and did not require a reboot. (Claude – 5/9/2011)

Here are the steps in some detail.

Using vCenter, open a console session to the VM and login with an Admin level account. Start the VM Tools installation by using the vCenter Inventory menu, and then chose Virtual Machine, Guest and Install/Upgrade VMware Tools in sequence.
In the **Install/Upgrade Tools** dialog box, select **Interactive Tools Upgrade** and then click OK.

If prompted, Select to “Run setup.exe”.

If prompted with User Account Control (UAC), click on the “Yes” button.
On the Welcome window, click Next.

On the Program Maintenance window, ensure that Modify is selected, and then click Next.
On the **Custom Setup** window, expand the **VMware Device Drivers** section by clicking on the + to the left of it...

Scroll down to the **Volume Shadow Copy Service** entry, click on the little Disk icon to the left of it, and then select **This feature will not be available.**
There should now be a red X next to Volume Shadow Copy Service as shown here.

This is the only change that we need to make, so click on the Next button.

On the Ready to Modify the Program window, click the Modify button.

You should shortly afterwards see the Installation Wizard Completed window. Click the Finish button.

Restart the VM.
After the VM has finished restarting, you should now be able to successfully complete a quiesced snapshot.