

# Pre-Job Briefing: Rehearse the Critical Step

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## Why this matters

A briefing becomes useful when the crew can describe how the work will unfold. Focus on the step where sequence, timing or a handoff matters most. With hazardous action prevented, talk through who acts, what must be verified first and what happens if the expected condition is absent. Find the gap before the work reaches it.

Objective: Explain the critical step's sequence, assigned roles, required control evidence and response to an unexpected condition before the crew starts.

## Key hazards or failure points

Two people assuming the other owns a check; premature action; conflicting sequences; an omitted handoff; confusion over who can authorize the next step; briefing completion mistaken for work release.

## Practical controls

- Use the current task plan to select a consequential step for discussion. Identify its prerequisites and expected result. Keep every other required check and work instruction in force.
- Assign the performer, required checker, communicating roles and decision authority. Explain the sequence in the controlling procedure; do not create a shortcut during the briefing.
- Rehearse a foreseeable interruption or missing prerequisite verbally. Agree the site's pause, notification and restart process. Include affected crews and anyone taking over a role.

## Verify It in the Field

With equipment untouched and hazardous movement prevented, ask each role to state its action and what must happen first. Compare the answers with the current work instruction. Resolve a different sequence before exposure.

Ask the designated checker to identify the control's criterion, safe verification method and actual evidence. Record the finding and time. If the check is still pending, identify the hold point; describing a check does not complete it.

Use a safe discussion scenario: the required result is missing or the handoff is interrupted. Have the crew name who holds the step, who is contacted and how authorized restart occurs. Correct gaps and repeat the rehearsal without operating equipment.

## Stop and reassess

Hold the affected step for an unassigned responsibility, contradictory sequence, incomplete required check or unexpected result. Use the defined safe-state and notification procedure. A change in people, equipment or scope may require another briefing and checks. Resume only after the required resolution, authorization and shared understanding.

## Ask the crew

1. Who acts next, and what must be confirmed first?
2. Where could our handoff fail or become ambiguous?
3. What happens if the expected result is missing?

Use the task plan and required specialist decisions before exposure.

Sources: DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2, pp. 34-37; OSHA Hazard Prevention and Control.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: [toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/pre-job-briefing-critical-step-rehearsal](https://toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/pre-job-briefing-critical-step-rehearsal)

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