

Self-Checking: Confirm the Item, Action and Result

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | Reviewed October 9, 2026 | Discussion + field checks

Why this matters

A familiar task can still contain a wrong identifier, an interrupted step or an unexpected result. Before an authorized action, confirm the item, instruction and expected outcome. Afterward, check the result using the required safe method. Self-checking supports attention; reliable safeguards and the formal work process still protect the crew.

Objective: Use the applicable instruction to confirm the intended item, action and result, and hold the task when any of them is uncertain.

Key hazards or failure points

Look-alike items; acting from memory; distraction between identification and action; several actions performed without checking results; assuming silence or lack of an alarm means the step succeeded.

Practical controls

- Before the step, pause where it is safe to do so. Confirm your authorization, the current instruction and required prerequisites. If the task is already in progress, follow its safe-state procedure.
- Identify the intended item from the approved identifiers and work instruction. State the expected result and the response to a mismatch. Resolve unclear labels or conflicting information before acting.
- Perform only the authorized step using its procedure, then review the specified result. Retain required safeguards and independent checks. Self-checking does not replace another person's required verification.

Verify It in the Field

Before exposure, compare the visible identifier with the work instruction from a safe position. Do not touch a label, cross a boundary or manipulate equipment merely to demonstrate this lesson. Escalate any identity uncertainty.

Locate the required expected result, acceptance criterion and safe observation method in the applicable procedure or manufacturer instructions. Name the person authorized for any technical check. If these are missing, keep the affected action on hold.

Use an approved non-operating example to rehearse the check. During actual authorized work, record the observed result when required by the task process. After distraction or interruption, re-establish identity and step status using that process; never guess or repeat an uncertain action.

Stop and reassess

Hold for ambiguous identity, an unknown prerequisite, lost step status or a result outside the governing criteria. Follow the specified safe-state and notification response; do not experiment to obtain the expected indication. Correct the uncertainty and complete required verification before the site's authorized restart.

Ask the crew

1. How do we establish the correct item without exposure?
2. Where is the expected result defined for this step?
3. What will we do if an interruption leaves the status uncertain?

Use the task plan and required specialist decisions before exposure.

Sources: DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2, pp. 18–19; NIOSH Hierarchy of Controls.

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

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/self-checking-item-action-result

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