

Safety Checklists: Show the Evidence Before the Tick

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | Reviewed October 6, 2026 | Discussion + field checks

Why this matters

A checked box can mean that someone saw a working control, or that someone copied yesterday's answer. Make the difference visible. Use the checklist at the actual task and connect important answers to evidence.

Objective: Trace a critical checklist item from its criterion to a safe check and a clear result.

Key hazards or failure points

Wrong checklist or revision; pre-filled answers; unknown criteria; inspection outside the person's role; a defect recorded while equipment stays in use; N/A without a reason.

Practical controls

- Match the checklist to the exact equipment, task and current procedure. Keep the governing instructions available. A general form cannot supply every technical acceptance criterion.
- Assign checks to people with the required skill and authority. Decide how to distinguish verified, failed, not checked and not applicable. Explain every N/A rather than using it to avoid a difficult check.
- When a required item fails or remains unverified, protect people and hold affected use. Assign correction, reinspection and release. Do not close the item simply because a repair has been requested.

Verify It in the Field

Choose one important item and locate it in the field. Ask the checker to identify its source, acceptance criterion and safe method before checking. Match the actual item to the record.

Perform only the authorized check in its safe setup. Record the observed condition or result, checker and time. Never bypass protection or create live exposure to prove that a control works.

Follow one failed item through the process: removal from use or protection, assigned correction, required recheck and communication to users. Compare the physical status with the checklist. Resolve any disagreement before release.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected work for a failed or unchecked required item, unknown acceptance criterion, wrong instructions or a record that contradicts the field condition. Reassess when the equipment, task or conditions change. A signature does not resolve a missing check.

Ask the crew

1. Which checked box matters most for this task?
2. Can we show the evidence for it now?
3. What happens to a failed or unverified item?

Before the tick: identify the criterion, check safely and record the result.

Sources: OSHA hazard prevention/control and education/training recommended practices.

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

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.