

Demolition: Verify Before Disturbing

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Why this matters

Removing a small part can change the support, services and exposures around it. Before demolition starts, match the planned phase to the actual survey information and verified protections.

Objective: Identify the evidence and release needed before disturbing the structure.

Key hazards or failure points

Unassessed stability; live services; unknown materials; unsupported floors; debris exposure; changed sequence; inadequate openings protection; premature entry.

Practical controls

- Confirm the required competent-person engineering survey and written evidence cover the structure and exposed adjacent structures. Obtain any additional engineering decisions needed for the method.
- Authorized personnel control utilities and protect required retained services. Responsible specialists resolve hazardous materials and exposure controls before disturbance.
- Use the planned sequence, required supports, protected access and debris restrictions. The competent person reviews changing conditions; crews do not improvise structural changes.

Verify It in the Field

Match survey and work-plan coverage to the exact area and phase. Ask the competent person what is excluded and what requires a new decision. A generic checklist does not replace survey evidence.

Confirm actual utility-control evidence with authorized personnel. Compare material assessments and approved controls with the layers affected. An empty building or unlit fixture does not prove services are safe.

From protected access, check required supports, boundaries, openings protection and debris arrangements against applicable criteria. Confirm the phase release and change triggers. Never load, strike or remove a member to test stability.

Stop and reassess

Stop affected work and withdraw from danger for unexpected movement, cracking, unknown services or materials, failed protection or a changed sequence. Keep others out and notify the competent person. Resume only after required correction, reinspection and authorized release.

Ask the crew

1. What survey evidence covers this phase?
2. Who verified the services and material controls?
3. What unexpected condition requires a new release?

Construction demolition readiness; not engineering design or a removal procedure.

Sources: OSHA 1926.850 and applicable 1926.859; actual survey and work plan.

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

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/demolition-prestart-control-verification