

## CHECKLISTS: A SIMPLE WAY TO HELP REDUCE RISK

**BEFORE EVERY SINGLE FLIGHT**, a pilot should complete a pre-trip checklist. The pilot typically performs the same checks whether this is his or her first or 5,000th flight. The pre-flight checklist is necessary to help ensure that all processes and procedures are followed. *Would you like to board a flight where the pilot decided to skip the checklist?*

Even individuals who are highly skilled and experienced can miss a crucial step or an essential task. Checklists can help ensure that nothing is missed, and the work is properly completed.

Too often, however, we perform our jobs without a second thought because we “know” our jobs. We’re comfortable and we’re familiar. But sometimes we’re too comfortable and too familiar. That’s when we can forget critical steps and become blind to processes that ensure safe outcomes. Because of this, checklists are important to many jobs.

### WHEN CREATING A CHECKLIST, KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND:

- Properly designed checklists should be created collaboratively by management and frontline employees.
- Checklists should come from real-world experience. A checklist is typically not something you can get out of a textbook.
- Checklists sometimes result from lessons we learned the hard way. The benefit of a mistake or an error is that it can give us a chance to learn.
- Keep it simple and easy to understand. Your newest hire should be able to follow the checklist.
- Ensure your checklist red flags all the hazards associated with performing the task at hand. For example, it might include wearing the proper protective equipment or making sure that a machine is properly locked out and tagged out before you begin working on it.
- Keep the tasks in order from start to finish.
- Provide an app for employees to access checklists if you want to eliminate paper copies.

Dr. Atul Gawande, a surgeon and author of *The Checklist Manifesto*, recognized how useful checklists could be for patient care where many staff are involved in the process, each carrying out different tasks and with different responsibilities. Dr. Gawande introduced a simple checklist to several hospitals during a research study and patient deaths fell by 47%. The same principles apply in any high hazard business where employees perform repetitive tasks.

Gawande, A. (2010). *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*. Metropolitan Books.



**USING CHECKLISTS day in and day out can help protect you and the rest of your team.**

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