

Plant pre-start checklist

One operator's pre-start check of one item of mobile or fixed plant (for example an excavator, loader, telehandler, forklift, crane, mobile elevating work platform, compressor or generator) before it is used on one day or shift. It records what you looked at, what you found and what was decided. It is **not** a statutory examination or a thorough examination by a competent person, not an inspection that a rule may require at set intervals, and not a service or maintenance record, and a completed form does not show that you meet a legal requirement. Which inspections and examinations are required, how often, and which licence, ticket or certificate an operator needs differ by plant type and by jurisdiction; this form does not say what they are. The 26 checks are examples for typical mobile plant: delete what does not apply, add what the manufacturer's instructions list, and keep the wording the same from day to day. **If a defect affects safe control, do not operate the plant.** If in doubt, do not operate and ask.

1 Plant and operator

Plant ID and type		Make, model and serial number	Date and shift
Operator	Hours meter or odometer	Site and task	

2 Operator competence confirmation

The operator confirms (tick each)	
☐ I hold the licence, ticket, certificate or authorisation that my employer or the site requires for this type of plant, and it is current ☐ I have been shown this make and model and its attachment, and I have the operating instructions	
Where the evidence is held (card seen, training file, system)	Checked by (name and role)

This form does not say what licence or certificate any plant needs: that is set by the law where you work, the site and your employer. If you cannot tick both boxes, do not operate.

3 Pre-start checks: OK, Defect, N/A and note

Mark each check **OK**, **Defect** or **N/A** from what you see and try today. N/A only where the check does not apply to this plant or task: write why. For a Defect, write what and where in the note and enter it in section 5.

No.	Check (look, do not assume)	OK	Defect	N/A	Note (what, where, how bad; why N/A)
Walk-round, tyres or tracks and fluids					
1	Walk round the plant first: no leaks or drips, cracks, damage, or loose or missing parts; nothing on, under or around it.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Tyres or tracks and wheels: condition and pressure or tension; no cuts, bulges or missing wheel nuts; track guards and rollers in place.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Fluid levels as the manufacturer's instructions list (engine oil, coolant, fuel, hydraulic oil, brake fluid, battery or charge); no leaks.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Hydraulic hoses, pipes, fittings and rams: no leaks, rubbing, bulges, kinks or damage; hose guards and clips in place.	☐	☐	☐	
Guards, cab and operator protection					
5	Guards, covers, panels and engine doors fitted and secure; moving parts, hot surfaces and pinch points covered.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Cab or operator station: undamaged, clean, nothing loose; steps, handholds and access secure and not slippery; protective structure or canopy undamaged where fitted.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Seat and seat belt or restraint: seat adjusts and locks; belt latches and releases; no cuts or damage; it will be worn.	☐	☐	☐	
Controls, brakes, steering and safety devices					
8	Controls, pedals, levers and displays: move freely, return to neutral, are marked; no warning light or fault code after start-up.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Emergency stop, and any isolator, interlock or seat switch, works as the manufacturer's instructions say (test where safe).	☐	☐	☐	
10	Service brake and parking brake hold when tested; the plant does not creep.	☐	☐	☐	
11	Steering: smooth and responsive, no excess play, stiffness or noise.	☐	☐	☐	
12	Overload, tilt or rated-capacity alarms, limit switches and other safety devices fitted: working, not bypassed or disconnected.	☐	☐	☐	
13	Function test with the area clear: run each control through its range; no abnormal noise, vibration or smell; no new leaks.	☐	☐	☐	

No.	Check (look, do not assume)	OK	Defect	N/A	Note (what, where, how bad; why N/A)
Lights, horn, alarms, mirrors and cameras					
14	Lights, beacon and indicators work; lenses clean and unbroken.	☐	☐	☐	
15	Horn works and can be heard over the noise of the site.	☐	☐	☐	
16	Reversing alarm and any other audible or visual warning devices work.	☐	☐	☐	
17	Mirrors, cameras and screens clean, undamaged and adjusted; windows and wipers clear. The view from the seat is enough, or a spotter is arranged (check 25).	☐	☐	☐	
Attachments, load information and emergency kit					
18	Attachment (bucket, forks, platform, hook or other tool) fitted and undamaged; quick hitch fully engaged with its safety lock or pin fitted.	☐	☐	☐	
19	Lifting points, chains, hooks, forks and other load-handling accessories to be used today: no visible damage or wear.	☐	☐	☐	
20	Load chart, rated-capacity or capacity plate present, readable, and right for the attachment fitted (where it matters for the task).	☐	☐	☐	
21	Manufacturer's operating instructions are with the plant; any inspection or certification mark your procedure asks for is present.	☐	☐	☐	
22	Fire extinguisher present, mounted and charged (gauge or seal intact, tag in date).	☐	☐	☐	
23	First aid kit and a spill kit are with the plant or at the work area and stocked.	☐	☐	☐	
Exclusion zones and spotters					
24	Exclusion zone set for the task (swing or travel path, loading area, overhead lines and services), with barriers or signs where needed.	☐	☐	☐	
25	Spotter or signaller named and briefed, and signals agreed, where the view is limited or people or other plant are close.	☐	☐	☐	
26	Ground, slope and travel route suitable today; people on foot kept clear; nobody carried unless the plant is designed to carry people.	☐	☐	☐	

4 Defect decision: operate, operate with restriction, do not operate and tag out

Rule: if any defect affects safe control of the plant, the decision is **do not operate and tag out**. Examples, not a complete list: brakes, steering, controls, emergency stop or other safety device, operator restraint, guards, load-holding or lifting parts, a hose or leak that could fail, an attachment not locked, the operator's view or the warning devices. **Operate with restriction** is for a defect that does not touch safe control, with the restriction written out and agreed by a named person. If you cannot tell, treat it as affecting safe control.

Decision for this plant today (tick one)		
☐ Operate: no defect found ☐ Operate with restriction ☐ Do not operate and tag out		
Restriction in force (write it out)	Agreed by (name and role)	Restriction ends (date, time)
Tag fitted (tag number, where)	Plant isolated, key removed or held by	Defect reported to (name, date, time)

5 Defects reported: action, owner and due date

No.	Check	Defect found (what and where)	Decision (R restrict, D do not operate)	Action to put it right	Owner	Due	Closed (date, initials)
Ex.	18	Example: hitch safety pin missing	D	Example: fit a new pin, supervisor releases	Example: fitter	today	

Report every defect to the person who owns the plant or its maintenance, the same day. Close a line only when the fix is checked. A defect that stays open and is not restricted should not stay on a plant that is in use.

6 Handover between operators

Time	Hours meter or odometer	Outgoing operator (name)	Incoming operator (name)	New defects or changes since the pre-start (write none if none)	Incoming operator did own walk-round and function test (initials)

A new operator reads this form first, and repeats the checks that matter for the plant before taking it over. Parked plant: attachment lowered, parking brake on, controls neutral, key removed, unless your procedure says otherwise.

7 Sign-off

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Operator (the checks were done as written)			
Supervisor or plant owner (defects seen)			
Where this form is kept, and for how long		Next required inspection or examination of this plant (your own schedule)	