Place Keeping

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v2.0 | October 13, 2026 | 5–10 minutes plus field checks

What and why

Place-keeping records which procedure steps are complete and which remain. Use the approved marking method so an interruption or handoff does not leave people guessing. A cursor, bookmark or memory can hide a partly completed step. A clear record helps prevent omissions and unintended repetition, but the record must agree with the actual work.

Objective: Distinguish completed, incomplete and uncertain steps and establish a justified restart point.

When and where

As required during procedure use, especially in multi-step work and before resuming after interruption or handoff. Record completion at the prescribed point. On the authorized paper or electronic working record at the point of use. People taking over must be able to interpret the same status.

How to use it

- Know the approved marking rules and what makes a step complete, including any required result check. Do not invent symbols or mark exclusions without authority.
- Record completion only after the required action and checks. Keep partly completed or held work visible using the approved method.
- After interruption, reconcile the record with actual status through the task's safe process. Obtain help for disagreement before choosing the next action.

Verify It in the Field

For real work, compare a completion entry with its required evidence through an authorized safe check. Record procedure, step, finding, checker and time.

Paper practice: prepare three cards labeled A, B and C. The mock instruction requires placing all three in order before marking that step complete. Pause after placing A and B.

Hand the record to a partner. Success means recognizing the incomplete step and establishing its status before continuing; an unclear record means hold, not guess.

Failure points and stop triggers

Signing ahead; batch signoffs; unfinished substeps; competing copies; unclear marks; repeating an uncertain action. Hold for unknown step status, missing results, inconsistent records or changed instructions. Do not repeat, skip or backfill steps to make the record look complete. Obtain the required resolution and restart authority.

Toolbox talk questions

1. What makes this step complete?

2. How do we record a partly finished step?

3. How will we resolve a record that disagrees with actual work?

Use the separate supervisor field check and attendance sheet. Practice is not qualification or work authorization.

Source: DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2, printed pp. 29–30. References and task-specific limits on the webpage.

Next step: Apply this skill to one step on the free JHA/JSA field-verification worksheet.

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/procedure-place-keeping-safe-restart

Based on DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to authorship or copyright ownership of original U.S. Government work. Todd Jerome Jenkins adaptation; no government endorsement implied.