Peer Checking

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

What and why

Peer checking pairs a performer with a prepared peer before and during a specific action. Each checks the item and instruction, they agree on the action, and the peer observes and raises a mismatch. A prepared second person can notice something the performer missed. This requires task understanding, a usable view, attention and freedom to speak up; being nearby is not enough.

Objective: Demonstrate separate self-checks, agreement and an effective pause response before a simulated action.

When and where

Use it where the task process requires it, or where a prepared peer can help catch a consequential selection or action error. Agree on the exact step before starting. At the same action point, where both people can safely identify the item and the peer can observe the step. An after-the-fact signature is not a peer check.

How to use it

- Assign a performer and prepared peer. Each checks the item and instruction before comparing conclusions. Retain the performer's self-check.
- Agree on the action, safe positions, readiness and stop signal. The peer observes the specified action and communicates any mismatch promptly.
- Confirm the action taken. Complete any separately required condition verification; peer checking does not replace independent verification or work authorization.

Verify It in the Field

Before real work, confirm both people can see, communicate and perform their assigned roles safely. Record the actual check as required by the task.

Practice with paper cards marked Order 31 and Order 13. Each person checks a mock instruction selecting Order 31, then agrees on the selection.

Announce a second round with a simulated wrong selection. The peer calls the agreed pause before selection is completed; the performer stops. Discuss any missed cue.

Failure points and stop triggers

Unprepared peer; blocked view; acting too soon; shared assumptions; reluctance to challenge; observation mistaken for condition verification. Hold if either person is unready, loses the view or communication, or identifies a mismatch. Follow the safe response; never reach into hazardous movement to stop someone.

Toolbox talk questions

1. Which exact action needs the peer's attention?

2. Can either person challenge without being rushed?

3. What condition still needs separate verification?

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. 41–43. 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/peer-checking-agree-action-before-it-happens

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