Toolbox Talk - Work Turnover and Shift Handoff

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

What and why

Work turnover transfers the current task status, restrictions and responsibilities to the person taking over. A task described as finished may still need a required check. The next person needs an accurate starting point and clear ownership of continuing duties.

Objective: Explain what is complete, what remains restricted and who accepts each continuing responsibility.

When and where

At shift change, relief breaks, changes of work group or any transfer of a task still in progress. In maintenance, service operations, laboratories, logistics and office work where another person inherits an unfinished task.

How to use it

- Prepare the current record: completed steps, unfinished checks, equipment or document status, restrictions, changes and contacts.
- Discuss critical details with the receiver and invite questions. Keep continuing protection and monitoring covered during the exchange.
- Reconcile the record with required evidence. Record who accepts responsibility and when, using the task's formal transfer process.

Verify It in the Field

Give a partner a paper handoff: preparation complete, inspection pending, release held. Ask them to state what can and cannot happen next.

Have the receiver identify the owner of the outstanding check and continuing restriction. Success means explicit ownership, not a nod.

For real work, reconcile selected recorded conditions with safe authorized checks. Record findings, acceptance time and unresolved limits.

Failure points and stop triggers

Incomplete work called complete; stale records; omitted restrictions; uncovered duties; assumed acceptance. Hold affected continuation or transfer for conflicting status, an unprepared receiver or uncovered required duty. Maintain protection and seek relief or escalation through the site process.

Toolbox talk questions

1. What is unfinished that could look complete?

2. Which protection must stay in place during handoff?

3. Who accepts each outstanding responsibility?

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. 52–53. 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/work-turnover-shift-handoff

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