

Plant Operator Pre-Start Inspection Checklist

Free printable guide for Kenya - general operator training and daily/pre-shift inspection aid

Use with the exact machine manufacturer's handbook and the site's approved procedure. This form is a general checklist, not a substitute for machine-specific limits, statutory examination, risk assessment or instructions from an authorised supervisor.

Machine and shift details

Date		Shift / time	
Site / location		Operator	
Machine type		Asset / fleet no.	
Registration / serial no.		Hour meter	
Previous shift handover reviewed?	YES / NO	Unresolved defect noted?	YES / NO

7-zone pre-start route

1	Handover & work area	Know the task, previous defects, people, traffic, ground, edges and services.
2	Ground & walk-around	Look beneath and around the machine for leaks, damage, loose parts and obstructions.
3	Tyres / tracks	Check the running gear for obvious unsafe damage or abnormal condition.
4	Attachment & hydraulics	Inspect attachment security, pins, locking devices, hoses, cylinders and visible leaks.
5	Engine & fluids	Check required fluids and visible engine-bay condition using the approved method.
6	Cab & safety	Check access, restraint, visibility, protective structure and required safety devices.
7	Start-up & function	Check gauges, warnings, horn, brakes, steering and controls in a clear area.

A. Handover, work area and surroundings

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Previous shift handover and unresolved defects reviewed.	☐	☐	☐	
Planned task, route, work limits and communication method understood.	☐	☐	☐	
People, traffic, swing/reversing/loading zones can be controlled.	☐	☐	☐	
Ground, slope, edges, excavations and access appear suitable for the task.	☐	☐	☐	
Overhead or underground services identified and controlled where relevant.	☐	☐	☐	
Lighting, rain, dust and visibility allow safe inspection and operation.	☐	☐	☐	
No unexplained fresh fluid, obstruction or hazard beneath/around the machine.	☐	☐	☐	

B. External walk-around and access

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
General machine condition shows no obvious unsafe structural damage.	☐	☐	☐	
Guards, covers and visible retaining parts appear present and secure.	☐	☐	☐	
Steps, handholds and access platforms are clean, secure and usable.	☐	☐	☐	
Windows, mirrors and fitted cameras are clean enough for safe visibility.	☐	☐	☐	
Required labels, identification and emergency equipment are present where applicable.	☐	☐	☐	

C. Tyres, wheels, tracks and undercarriage

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Tyres: no obvious unsafe cuts, bulges, severe wear or abnormal condition.	☐	☐	☐	
Wheels and visible fasteners: no obvious looseness, damage or missing parts.	☐	☐	☐	
Tracks: no obvious unsafe damage, displaced components or abnormal condition.	☐	☐	☐	
Undercarriage: no obvious damage or harmful packed material.	☐	☐	☐	
Use manufacturer-specified pressure, tension and acceptance limits where checks are required.	☐	☐	☐	

D. Attachment, pins and hydraulics

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Bucket, blade, forks or other attachment: suitable, secure and not obviously damaged.	☐	☐	☐	
Pins, retainers and locking devices appear correctly fitted and secure.	☐	☐	☐	
Quick-coupler / attachment locking system checked by the specified method where fitted.	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic hoses: no obvious cuts, bulges, severe rubbing, crushing or wet fittings.	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic cylinders and visible connections show no obvious damage or abnormal leakage.	☐	☐	☐	
No active hazardous hydraulic leak observed.	☐	☐	☐	

HYDRAULIC LEAK WARNING: Never use your bare hand to search for a pressurised hydraulic leak. Keep clear, shut down or isolate as instructed, and report the suspected defect.

E. Engine compartment and fluids

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Engine oil checked as required by the manufacturer's procedure.	☐	☐	☐	
Coolant checked by the approved safe method - never open a hot pressurised system.	☐	☐	☐	
Hydraulic fluid checked where the machine procedure requires it.	☐	☐	☐	
Fuel level/condition adequate and no obvious fuel leak observed.	☐	☐	☐	
Visible belts, hoses, wiring and engine-bay components show no obvious unsafe condition.	☐	☐	☐	
Engine area free of significant abnormal debris, contamination or fresh leakage.	☐	☐	☐	

F. Cab, access and safety systems

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Cab/operator station clean; no loose items interfering with pedals or controls.	☐	☐	☐	
Seat adjusted and seat belt/operator restraint present and serviceable.	☐	☐	☐	
ROPS/FOPS or other protective cab structure shows no obvious visible damage, where fitted.	☐	☐	☐	
Mirrors and cameras adjusted and usable; windows provide adequate visibility.	☐	☐	☐	
Wipers and washers operate where required for safe visibility.	☐	☐	☐	
Horn works.	☐	☐	☐	
Lights, beacon and reversing warning system work where fitted/required.	☐	☐	☐	
Fire extinguisher present and apparently serviceable where required.	☐	☐	☐	
Emergency-stop or isolation device checked by the approved procedure where fitted.	☐	☐	☐	

G. Start-up and functional checks

Inspection item	OK	DEFECT	N/A	Remarks
Controls are in the manufacturer's required safe position before start.	☐	☐	☐	
Gauges and indicators complete the normal start-up sequence.	☐	☐	☐	
No unfamiliar or unexplained warning remains active.	☐	☐	☐	
No abnormal noise, smell, smoke, vibration or unexpected movement.	☐	☐	☐	
Steering responds normally in the approved test area.	☐	☐	☐	
Service brake responds normally.	☐	☐	☐	
Parking brake responds normally.	☐	☐	☐	
Operating controls and attachments respond normally when tested slowly in a clear area.	☐	☐	☐	

When the machine should stay parked

Condition found	Operator action
Brakes or steering do not respond normally	Do not continue into work. Record and report the defect.
Attachment or locking device is insecure or cannot be confirmed	Keep the machine out of service until an authorised decision.
Significant structural or protective-structure damage is visible	Stop and report. Do not assume the damage is cosmetic.
Active hazardous fuel, coolant or hydraulic leak	Keep clear, isolate as instructed and report.
Tyre, track or undercarriage condition appears unsafe	Do not operate until assessed through the site's procedure.
Required restraint, warning device, emergency device or safety system fails	Do not improvise around the failure. Report it and follow site procedure.
Unfamiliar warning, abnormal smoke, vibration or movement	Stop the check and get the condition explained before work begins.

Final inspection decision

Machine status	Select
SAFE TO OPERATE - no unresolved safety defect found	☐
DEFECT REPORTED - authorised decision required before operation	☐
DO NOT OPERATE / KEEP ISOLATED - follow site procedure	☐

Defect description	
Reported to	
Time reported	
Operator name / signature	
Supervisor / authorised acknowledgement (where required)	

Training reminder: Do not tick from memory. Point to the component, explain what you are checking, and say what you would do if the check failed. Take enough time to complete the inspection properly; a rushed walk-around defeats the purpose of the checklist.

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