Daily Operations Checklists

CPH OPERATING PARTNERS

carsperhour.com

Free to use, print, and adapt for your car wash.

How to Use These Checklists

1. Print the checklists on letter paper and put them on a clipboard at the office, or load them into your checklist app.
2. Replace every [bracketed] item with your own equipment, chemicals, station names, people, and times.
3. Cross out any line that does not fit your format (express, flex, full service, or self serve) and add lines for equipment unique to your site.
4. Walk each checklist on the property with every leader the first time.
5. Have whoever runs a checklist initial and time it. Keep completed sheets and review them weekly.
6. Always follow your equipment manufacturer's and chemical supplier's instructions. Where they differ, theirs win.

Placeholders to replace

[Your Wash]	Your car wash or site name
[Manager]	The person issues get escalated to
[45–60 minutes]	How early opening starts
[5-minute]	Length of the pre-shift huddle
[90 days]	How long completed sheets are kept
[$ limit]	Your cash drop or spending limit
[3]	Your count or threshold for that line
[day of week]	The day weekly checks happen
[freeze protection procedure]	Your cold-weather procedure
[maintenance lead or vendor]	Who handles repairs
[one quarter]	Your review interval
[seconds]	Your timing standard for that line

These two pages are not part of the checklists. The checklists start on the next page. Free resource from CPH Operating Partners, carsperhour.com.

Daily Operations Checklists

Free SOP from CPH Operating Partners. Bracketed items like [Your Wash] and [Manager] are placeholders: replace them with your own site details, equipment, and chemical names before use. Always follow your equipment manufacturer's and chemical supplier's instructions; where they differ from this pack, theirs win.

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1. Overview

A site runs the same way every day only when the same things get checked every day. These checklists turn a good manager's habits into a written standard anyone on the leadership team can run.

- **Who runs them:** the manager or shift leader on duty. Every checklist is signed with initials and time.
- **When:** opening before the first car, mid-shift at least once per shift and after any rush, closing after the last car, weekly equipment on a set day, and a site walk at least once per shift.
- **Where they live:** printed on a clipboard at the office or stored in your shared checklist app. Completed sheets are kept for at least [90 days].
- **Rule of thumb:** a box is only checked if it was actually looked at. If something fails, write it down, fix it or escalate it, and note what was done.

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2. Opening Checklist

Complete before the first customer enters the tunnel. Start [45–60 minutes] before opening.

Arrival and Security

☐ Walk the exterior before entering: check for damage, break-ins, or anything left overnight

☐ Disarm the alarm and note any alarm events from overnight

☐ Turn on lights, signs, and the open/closed sign last

☐ Review the closing notes and the communication log from the prior shift

Cash and Point of Sale

- ☐ Count the starting cash drawer(s) and record it on the cash log
- ☐ Power on and log in to all pay stations and POS terminals
- ☐ Run a test transaction at each pay station, including a card and a membership read
- ☐ Confirm the receipt paper is stocked at every terminal
- ☐ Confirm the gate, tag reader, or plate reader is working

Equipment Start-Up

- ☐ Check air pressure at the compressor and drain the moisture from the tank
- ☐ Check hydraulic levels and look for leaks under each unit
- ☐ Start the pumps and check every pump station for leaks, noises, and normal pressure
- ☐ Check the water softener and the reverse osmosis system are online
- ☐ Run the conveyor or rollover empty and listen for unusual noise
- ☐ Inspect brushes and cloth for tears, debris, or buildup
- ☐ Check every chemical level and that each drum or tank is connected and labeled
- ☐ Confirm the dryers start and every nozzle is clear
- ☐ Check emergency stops are clear and working

Test Wash

- ☐ Run a test vehicle through the top package
- ☐ Check the vehicle on exit: clean, rinsed, dry, and no damage
- ☐ Fix any issue before opening, or escalate to [Manager] if it cannot be fixed

Lot, Vacuums, and Customer Areas

- ☐ Walk the lot for trash, hazards, and debris in the entrance and exit lanes
- ☐ Check the vacuums power on and hoses and nozzles are intact
- ☐ Stock towels, mat clips, and vacuum area supplies
- ☐ Check the restrooms and lobby are clean and stocked
- ☐ Empty trash cans and replace liners
- ☐ Confirm all signage, menus, and pricing displays are correct and readable

Team Readiness

- ☐ Confirm the schedule: every station covered, call-outs handled
- ☐ Check every team member is in uniform and wearing the required safety gear
- ☐ Hold a [5-minute] pre-shift huddle: the day's goal, the membership focus, and any safety or equipment notes

Opened by: _____ **Time:** _____ **Issues noted:** _____

3. Mid-Shift Checklist

Complete at least once per shift, after every rush, and at every shift change.

Customer Experience

- ☐ Watch [3] vehicles exit: check for clean, rinsed, and dry, with no missed spots
- ☐ Check the line length at the pay station and open another lane if needed
- ☐ Listen to [3] greetings and membership offers at the pay station and coach on the spot
- ☐ Check online reviews and messages since opening and respond or escalate as needed

Equipment and Chemicals

- ☐ Check chemical levels and swap any drum below [one quarter] full
- ☐ Look and listen for leaks, unusual noises, or warning lights
- ☐ Clear debris from the tunnel entrance, the conveyor, and the drains
- ☐ Check that the dryers and the final rinse are working on every vehicle

Lot and Vacuums

- ☐ Walk the vacuum area: trash, towels, and hoses
- ☐ Empty full trash cans and vacuum canisters
- ☐ Clear any hazards: spills, hoses on the ground, or ice in winter

Team and Cash

- ☐ Confirm breaks are scheduled and taken on time without leaving a station uncovered
- ☐ Adjust staffing to the car count: send someone home or call someone in according to your labor plan
- ☐ Complete a cash drop if the drawer is over [$ limit], with two people present when possible
- ☐ Record membership sales so far against today's goal

Shift Handoff

- ☐ Walk the incoming leader through open issues, equipment notes, and staffing
- ☐ Update the communication log

Checked by: _____ Time: _____ Car count: _____ Memberships sold: _____

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4. Closing Checklist

Complete after the last vehicle exits the tunnel. Do not leave until every item is checked or written up.

Shutting Down the Wash

- ☐ Turn off the entrance sign and close the entrance lane once the last car is in
- ☐ Rinse down the tunnel, the equipment, and the floor
- ☐ Clean the brushes and cloth according to the manufacturer's instructions
- ☐ Clear and clean every pit, trench, and drain

- ☐ Shut down the pumps, the dryers, and the conveyor in the proper order
- ☐ In freezing weather, follow your [freeze protection procedure] before leaving

Chemicals and Supplies

- ☐ Record chemical levels on the chemical log
- ☐ Note any chemical or supply that needs to be ordered
- ☐ Put away and secure all chemicals; check the safety data sheets binder is in place

Cash and Point of Sale

- ☐ Count and balance every drawer against the POS report
- ☐ Record overages or shortages on the cash log and explain any over [$ limit]
- ☐ Prepare the deposit and secure it in the safe
- ☐ Run the end-of-day report and record car count, revenue, and memberships sold

Lot, Vacuums, and Building

- ☐ Empty every vacuum canister and trash can
- ☐ Collect towels for laundry
- ☐ Clean and restock the restrooms and lobby
- ☐ Walk the lot one last time for trash and hazards

Lock-Up

- ☐ Confirm all team members have clocked out
- ☐ Turn off the lights and equipment that should be off overnight
- ☐ Lock every door, gate, and equipment room
- ☐ Set the alarm and confirm it is armed
- ☐ Write the closing notes for the opening leader: issues, repairs, and supplies needed

Closed by: _____ Time: _____ Deposit amount verified by: _____

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5. Weekly Equipment Checklist

Complete on [day of week] when car count is lowest. Log every finding and every repair. Lock out and tag out any equipment before working on it.

Conveyor or Rollover

- ☐ Inspect the chain, rollers, and correlator for wear or damage
- ☐ Lubricate according to the manufacturer's schedule
- ☐ Check the entrance and exit sensors and the anti-collision system

Brushes, Cloth, and Arms

- ☐ Inspect every brush and cloth for wear, tears, and missing material

- ☐ Check the arms and the pivot points for smooth movement
- ☐ Tighten loose hardware and record anything worn

Pumps, Nozzles, and Plumbing

- ☐ Check every pump for leaks and normal operating pressure
- ☐ Clean or replace clogged nozzles and check the spray patterns
- ☐ Inspect hoses and fittings for cracks or leaks
- ☐ Check the filters and clean or replace as needed

Chemicals and Water

- ☐ Check the chemical dilution and titration according to your supplier's instructions
- ☐ Check the softener salt and the water hardness
- ☐ Check the reverse osmosis system and the spot-free rinse
- ☐ Check the reclaim system, if you have one

Dryers and Air

- ☐ Inspect the dryer motors, housings, and intakes
- ☐ Clean the intake screens
- ☐ Check the compressor, the air lines, and the regulators

Pay Stations, Gates, and Vacuums

- ☐ Clean the pay station screens, card readers, and cameras
- ☐ Test the gate arms and the tag or plate readers
- ☐ Clean the vacuum filters and check the motors and the hoses

Safety

- ☐ Test every emergency stop
- ☐ Check the fire extinguishers, the first aid kit, and the eyewash station
- ☐ Check the safety signage and the floor markings
- ☐ Review any incidents or near misses from the week

Completed by: _____ **Date:** _____ **Repairs needed:** _____

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6. Site Walk Checklist

Walk the entire property the way a customer sees it, from the street to the exit. Complete at least once per shift and any time an owner or senior leader visits.

From the Street

- ☐ Signs are lit, clean, and readable from the road
- ☐ The entrance is clear and easy to find

☐ Landscaping is neat and the curb area is free of trash

Entrance and Pay Station

☐ The menu board is clean, correct, and easy to read

☐ The team member greets every customer within [seconds] using an approved greeting

☐ Membership offers are made to every non-member

☐ The pay station area is clean and organized

Tunnel

☐ The tunnel walls, the windows, and the floor are clean

☐ Lighting works and the safety signage is visible

☐ Equipment sounds and looks normal

☐ The loading area is guided correctly and safely

Exit and Vacuums

☐ Vehicles leave clean, rinsed, and dry

☐ The exit is clear and safe

☐ The vacuum area is clean, stocked, and working

☐ Trash cans are not overflowing

Team

☐ Every team member is in uniform, on station, and engaged

☐ The team is moving with urgency during busy periods

☐ Coach one team member on one thing before you leave the walk

Findings

☐ Every issue is written down with an owner and a fix-by time

☐ Anything that is a safety risk is fixed or blocked off immediately

Walked by: _____ Time: _____ Top issue found: _____

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7. Accountability

- Checklists are reviewed weekly by [Manager]. Missed or incomplete checklists are coached the same way as any other missed standard.
- Repeated equipment findings are escalated to [maintenance lead or vendor] with the dates they were found.
- Update this pack whenever equipment, chemicals, or procedures change, and retrain the leadership team on the changes.

Need help building checklists around your own site? CPH Operating Partners writes custom SOPs and trains your managers to run them. Learn more at carsperhour.com/services/car-wash-sop-development.