

Checklist: compliance readiness

This checklist guides you in updating and strengthening your compliance procedures, even when operating with a lean team:

- Identify compliance requirements:** Understand the compliance requirements applicable to your operations. Not all requirements have the same risk or require the same amount of diligence – be sure you're identifying the top areas to focus your team that pose the most risk in your environment.
- Monitor compliance:** Establish a system for regular compliance monitoring and reporting that includes folks from all levels of your organization and all operational departments; be transparent about what needs improvement and how you're tackling it.
- Train your team:** Have team members each take ownership of a few key procedures and encourage them to come up with improvements that automate and save time.
- Automate what you can:** Use automation to manage rule-based compliance tasks, provide related information for troubleshooting, and generate audit trails.
- Assess risk regularly:** Regularly evaluate compliance risks and adjust your procedures as needed. Your business changes over time, so establish a cross functional group that meets at least twice a year to review compliance risks in your organization and provide recommendations for improvements.

- Seek legal advice:** Ensure you're interpreting and implementing compliance requirements correctly.
- Conduct regular compliance reviews and audits:** Prepare a schedule that ensures each area is covered at least once a year and get a cross functional team involved. Compliance is everyone's job and having different views makes it easier to identify the key risk areas to focus on.
- Implement a transparent system to identify and resolve errors:** People respond to what gets reported, especially errors. Only report on key items so that reports are easily readable and clearly highlight any issues.
- Foster a culture that values compliance:** Leadership sets the tone. Have your leaders explain why compliance is important and what it can cost when it fails. Hard costs, such as fines, are just part of the impact; be sure you also talk about loss of reputation and morale.
- Stay on top of regulatory changes:** Be sure your cross functional team has the information needed to understand how changes in regulation impact your business as it can help them to assess risks before they become a problem.