# 10 stock count lifehacks: faster and cleaner counting

The quality of a stock count depends less on expensive scanners than on simple habits. Here are 10 tricks for warehouses and offices: read them to the team before the count and bring in one or two at your very next count.

## Before the count

- **1. The sealed carton rule.** A carton with intact factory packing is recorded by the quantity on its label; an opened carton is counted piece by piece. Open every tenth sealed carton at random to check.
- **2. A "0" tag on empty places.** Before the count, put a "0 — empty" tag on empty bins and shelves. The counter writes 0 on the sheet, and an empty place can no longer be confused with a forgotten one.
- **3. The 50 most valuable lines.** Export the 50 items with the highest value from the books and count them first, in the morning. If a difference appears, there is still time to recount it the same day.

**Tip:** the day before the count, hold a "tidy-up hour": close opened cartons, split mixed pallets, move third-party goods to a separate area. These are the jobs that eat most of the time on count day.

## During the count

- **4. The snake route.** A rack is counted left to right and top to bottom, the next aisle in the opposite direction. The route is drawn on the zone map, so counters never jump from place to place.
- **5. The layer formula.** Goods on a pallet are written as "layers × cartons per layer + loose", for example 5 × 8 + 3 = 43. The formula stays on the sheet, and the checker can verify it at a glance.
- **6. Two-colour stickers.** A counted place gets a green sticker, a doubtful one a yellow sticker. A zone is not closed while a single yellow sticker remains.
- **7. Problems go on camera.** Damaged, unlabelled or third-party goods are photographed on a phone together with the location code. Photos go into the zone's folder, and the photo number is written on the count sheet.

## Control and fixed assets

- **8. A 10% check count.** The team leader picks roughly one place in ten in each zone, and a different pair counts them again. If the results do not match, the whole zone is rechecked.
- **9. A zone closes only after its differences are reviewed.** The zone result is compared with the books the same day, and large differences are recounted before goods start moving. The next day this is much harder.
- **10. A list on the office door.** After a fixed asset count, hang a list of each room's assets with their tag numbers on the inside of the door. The next check runs quickly from the list, and anything moved shows up at once.

**Tip:** the team leader, not the counters, chooses the places for the check count, and the list is not announced in advance.

## A five-minute briefing before the count

- **Zone and route:** each pair points out its zone and the direction of the snake route on the map.
- **Unit of measure:** agree in advance which goods are written in pieces, cartons or kilograms; when in doubt, use the unit in the books.
- **Unknown goods:** goods without a label or not found in the list go on a separate line as "unknown" and are photographed.
- **Correction rule:** never write over a figure; strike it through, write the correct one beside it and sign.
- **Who decides:** when a question comes up, the counter does not decide alone but calls the team leader.

## What to avoid

- Walking round with the book list and ticking "there / not there": the eye looks for what is on the list and misses the extras.
- Asking the same pair to recount a difference: the mistake usually repeats.
- Leaving counted and uncounted goods mixed in one place.
- Closing a zone after goods have already started moving.

## How to introduce them

You do not need everything at once. Choose three tricks for the next count, for example 1, 5 and 6, and afterwards spend 15 minutes with the team on what worked and what did not. Add two more at the following count.

> These tricks are based on general practice. Adapt them to your type of warehouse and your organisation's accounting policy.

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