RISERROOM · FIELD CHECKLIST

Failed Final: The 10 Reasons Sprinkler Jobs Don't Pass Final Inspection

Before the list: who owns this stuff

Your foreman is probably not a checklist expert. He's your foreman because he's a great installer. Your project manager — he's great at checklists. So make the PM responsible for the items on this list, and make him responsible at the *beginning* of the job, because once the install starts, the PM starts thinking about his other jobs. Every failure below is an afterthought failure. Afterthoughts belong to the guy with the checklist, early.

☐ 1. Missing hydraulic calc plate and information sign

It's the paperwork item, and jobs fail on paperwork. But the real story is the plate itself — nothing makes you feel more like a caveman than trying to hand-engrave a calc plate in the field because the real one never got ordered. **Beat it:** plates and info signs are trim-out items, not closeout items, and the PM owns them from day one — ordered early, photographed before the final is scheduled.

☐ 2. Missing riser signage

Not just one sign. The riser room sign. The check valve sign. Main drain, inspector's test — all of it. It's the same signage on every building out there, and we somehow still forget it. **Beat it:** keep a stock of signs and chain on every truck. It costs hardly anything and it prevents the dumbest failure on this list. (The riser room sign is close to our hearts, for obvious reasons.)

☐ 3. Spare head box problems

Missing cabinet, missing heads, wrong heads, missing wrench — all of it traces back to the same thing: the spare head box feels like a pretty unnecessary item, nobody really thinks about it when bidding a project, and we all quietly assume those heads will likely never get used. So it becomes an afterthought, and afterthoughts get forgotten. **Beat it:** put it in *first*. When material arrives on the job, the head box goes in — stocked from the actual head schedule, with the wrench. Don't let it be the last thing, because the last thing doesn't happen.

☐ 4. Missing escutcheons

Heads trimmed out without them, or escutcheons that vanished between trim and final because ceilings, painters, and other trades happened. **Beat it:** escutcheons go on last and get checked on the pre-final walk — with spares in hand for the ones that disappeared.

☐ 5. Seismic bracing

"This isn't a seismic zone, is it?" Every inspector seems to be a specialist in one thing, and they have to call out that one thing every time — and seismic is a very common specialty. Stop hoping seismic isn't required and finding out at rough-in or final that it is. **Beat it:** settle the seismic question at design, put the bracing on the drawings and on your riser, and install it like the inspector's specialty is seismic — because it might be.

☐ 6. Missing hangers

Hangers missing where required, or removed and never replaced when duct, conduit, or ceiling work came through after you. **Beat it:** the pre-final walk includes eyes on hangers in every area another trade touched after your install.

☐ 7. Obstructions

Honest truth: most jobs don't follow every obstruction rule, and we get away with a lot of them. But inspectors catch a lot of them too. On TI's, blame the foreman — the space is what it is in front of him. On new builds, blame the designer. A fitter learns from his mistakes quickly because he hears about them. A designer so often never gets the feedback, so they never learn. **Beat it:** designers — go see your failed finals. Foremen — walk the finished space against the rules before the AHJ does, especially the stuff other trades hung after you.

☐ 8. Missing coverage

"No way that duct is 4 feet, right?" Under HVAC, garage doors, stairs, soffits, and in closets — notoriously missing coverage, job after job. Big equipment fools the eye on spacing, and the little rooms get forgotten entirely. **Beat it:** a coverage pass against the approved drawings on the pre-final walk, room by room — and measure the duct. It's 4 feet more often than you think.

☐ 9. Leaks on the hydrostatic test

Leaks happen. That's not the failure — the failure is waiting for the inspection to find out. **Beat it:** don't wait for the final to pump up the system. Get it under pressure early, walk your joints, and fix leaks on your schedule instead of in front of the inspector.

☐ 10. The fire alarm isn't passing — or isn't done

The one item on this list you don't control. Your final depends on flow and tamper switches reporting to an alarm system that has to be complete and passing — and if the alarm contractor isn't done, neither are you. **Beat it:** coordinate early and in writing, and confirm the alarm status before you schedule your final. Scheduling on hope is how this one gets you.

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