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The evidence they'll ask you for

Working notes on keeping it ready without anyone having to put it together.

Is the problem the system, or the proof?

A plant can have its procedures written, reviewed and audited, and still come out of an audit looking bad.

Because what gets audited is the proof. To the inspector, the auditor and the overseas customer, a safety talk that wasn't recorded didn't happen. PPE handed out without a signature wasn't handed out. An inspection that was done and jotted down in a notebook left in the pickup truck didn't happen either.

That isn't the auditor being unfair: there's no other way for them to know. But from the outside, doing things right and not being able to show it looks a lot like not having done them.

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The life cycle of a record that holds up

01 The work gets done: the talk, the inspection, the handover.

Who does it today · Nothing new

02 It’s recorded on the spot. A record filled in at day’s end is a memory, and the missing detail shows it.

Whoever did it · Actual time

03 It carries a date, an author and a place, and it can’t be edited after the fact.

The system · Proof, not a statement

04 It can be found without searching: by date, by area or by person.

Anyone with permission · Traceable

05 It’s shown without any prep. If something has to be put together first, one of the earlier steps failed.

The auditor, alone · Read access

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If it has to be prepared, it wasn’t evidence

It was a file. You see the difference the day they ask for it without notice.

The paperwork of people who aren’t on your payroll

On a site with several plants, what gets messy first: your own records, or those of third parties? Maintenance, installation, industrial cleaning and transport contractors. People who work inside, with the same risks, and who aren’t on the payroll.

Their documents can exist and still expire. A permit gets renewed, insurance lapses, training runs out, and nobody notices until it’s needed.

One question sorts this out: if someone walks into the plant today, can you see right then whether everything is up to date, or does it get checked later? Checking later means that while they were working, nobody knew.

You don’t need a new system to fix this. You need the contractor’s file to be where the gate is, not in a folder in the admin office.

Three gaps to check before the audit

Training without signatures. Is there a record of who attended? The training may have happened, photos and all; without a signed attendance sheet, as far as the auditor is concerned, there was no training.

PPE handed out without traceability. Can you say who got it, when and in what size? If there’s an accident, that’s one of the questions that will be asked.

Inspections that never leave the paper. Does the checklist stay in the plant office? If the evidence exists in a single physical place and never reaches any system, for all practical purposes it exists for one person.

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Three questions to know where you stand

Can you show last week's evidence right now, without asking anyone to put it together?

Does it live in the same place as your quality evidence, or does each plant have its own folder?

When an audit is coming, do you prepare anything special? How many hours does it take, and has anyone measured them?

With that number in hand it's easier to decide what to do, whatever you buy and whoever you buy it from. If you'd like, we can work it out together in a short meeting: write to us at vivogrc.com.