



Date Discipline Checklist

A simple guide to help owners keep their books tied to the real timeline of the business.

Why This Matters

When the dates in the books don't match when things really happened, the financial story shifts. Revenue lands in the wrong period, expenses bunch together, and trends stop matching the operator's lived experience. This checklist helps keep the timeline grounded in real activity.

1. Revenue Timing

Use the date the work was completed or the service was delivered — not the date the deposit hit the bank.

- Invoices reflect the date the revenue was earned
- Deposits are matched back to the earning event
- Prepayments are recorded separately until earned

Goal: Revenue tells the story of when the business performed the work.

2. Expense Timing

Record expenses in the period the obligation was incurred — not the date someone entered the bill.

- Vendor bills reflect the date of the purchase or service
- Recurring expenses land in the correct month
- Late-entered bills are back-dated to the real activity

Goal: Expenses align with the period they belong to.

3. Reimbursements

Tie every reimbursement back to the original transaction date.

- Match the reimbursement to the date of the underlying activity
- Avoid posting reimbursements in a later month without context
- Keep receipts attached to both sides of the entry

Goal: Corrections stay connected to the activity they correct.

4. Deposits and Bank Activity

Bank dates are not economic dates.

- Match deposits to the earning event
- Match outgoing payments to the bill or expense date
- Avoid using bank dates as the primary source of timing

Goal: The bank feed supports the story — it doesn't define it.

5. Vendor and Contractor Activity

Keep vendor activity tied to when the work occurred.

- Service dates reflect the actual work performed
- Materials are dated when purchased
- Contractor invoices align with the job timeline

Goal: Vendor activity mirrors the real sequence of events.

How to Use This Checklist

Review these five areas monthly. Look for entries where the date reflects when someone entered the transaction rather than when the activity occurred. Rebuild the timeline where needed. Once the dates align with real events, the reports settle and the story becomes clear.
