

Accountability Conversation Prep Sheet

Fill this out before the conversation. Not after. The preparation determines whether what follows is accountability or theater.

Companion to: *Fix the System*, Chapter 25. **Who uses it:** the maintenance manager, shift supervisor, reliability engineer — anyone about to have a standards conversation with a direct report. **When to use:** before any conversation about a missed standard, a pattern of underperformance, or a gap between expectation and execution.

Date: _____ **Manager:** _____ **Person:** _____

PART 1 — Define the Standard

Write the standard in one sentence. If you cannot write it in one sentence, it is not clear enough yet.

The standard: _____

How and when was this standard communicated to this person?

Could they recite it back to you if you asked? Yes, clearly Probably Uncertain No

If you answered Uncertain or No: **stop here.** The first conversation you need to have is about the standard, not the gap. This is not an accountability conversation yet.

PART 2 — The Three-Part Check

Answer each question honestly before moving forward.

Check 1: Was the standard clear?

Did this person receive the standard recently, specifically, and unambiguously?

Yes — communicated in writing and verbally within the last 30 days Partially — communicated but not recently reinforced No — not recently communicated

If No or Partial: The conversation priority shifts to clarifying the standard. Note what you will do differently going forward: _____

Check 2: Did they have what they needed?

For each resource category, mark whether it was available and sufficient.

Resource	Sufficient?	If No — What Was Missing?
Parts / materials at job start	Yes No Partial	

Time / schedule space to do the work	Yes	No	Partial	
Tools and equipment	Yes	No	Partial	
Clear authority to make necessary decisions	Yes	No	Partial	
Backup / coverage when pulled for other priorities	Yes	No	Partial	
Job plans and instructions	Yes	No	Partial	
Protection from non-emergency interruptions	Yes	No	Partial	

Resources I failed to provide or protect (be honest): _____

These are yours to own in the conversation — before asking them to own anything.

Check 3: Skill gap or will gap?

Skill gap: They would meet the standard if they knew how. Coaching is the right response. Consequence is not appropriate.

Will gap: They know what to do, have the resources, and are choosing not to. Consequence may be appropriate.

To distinguish: Has this person met this standard before? Yes, consistently Yes, inconsistently No, never reliably

When they miss the standard, is there a pattern in the circumstances? Yes — describe: _____ No — misses appear random

If they have met the standard before and the circumstances are consistent: likely **will gap**. If they have never met the standard or circumstances vary significantly: likely **skill gap** — investigate further before proceeding.

My assessment: Primarily skill gap Primarily will gap Mixed — document below: _____

PART 3 — Mine to Fix / Theirs to Own

Complete both columns before the conversation. Walk in having already owned your side.

Mine to Fix (system, resources, clarity — my responsibility)	Theirs to Own (execution gap — their responsibility)

What I will say I own, in the conversation: _____

What I will ask them to own, specifically: _____

PART 4 — The Ask

One clear behavioral change. Not "do better." A specific action the person can take differently.

What specifically do I need them to do differently? _____

By when? _____

How will I know it happened? (What will I observe?) _____

PART 5 — What I Will Do Differently

Accountability runs both ways. Name what you will change on your side.

PART 6 — Follow-Up

Date scheduled to revisit: _____

What I will look for between now and then: _____

If improvement — what I will say: _____

If no improvement — what changes: _____

Conversation Structure (quick reference)

1. State the standard and the gap — specifically. 2. Own what belongs to you (from Part 3, left column). Do not hedge. 3. Name what belongs to them (from Part 3, right column). Be specific and behavioral, not interpretive. 4. Ask for the one change (from Part 4). 5. State what you will do differently (from Part 5). 6. Set the follow-up date and what you are looking for.

Keep the conversation under 20 minutes. If it runs longer, you have probably moved from accountability into something else. Check whether you are still being specific.

From Fix the System by Ivan Getov. Companion to Chapter 25: Accountability Without Theatrics. getov.xyz/toolkit/fix-the-system/ch25/accountability-conversation-prep. Free. No email required.