



Logbook Do's & Don'ts

35 Rules for Good Log Entries

For many maintainers, the paperwork is just as critical as the wrench work—because when something goes wrong, it's the logbook that gets reviewed first. Missing or incomplete documentation can put your certificate, your shop, and your livelihood at risk. Here are 35 rules for clear, compliant log entries that stand up to scrutiny.

- 1 Make an entry:**
If we're going to do maintenance, then we're going to have to make an entry.
- 2 Follow a process:**
Streamlining your workflow will reduce duplicative work and reduce errors over time.
- 3 Is it legible?**
No Sanskrit or "doctor script", please. If you must, use ALL CAPS.
- 4 Is it professional?**
Use software or a template; use bullets where possible; bold topics; make it organized and look good.
- 5 Did you tell a story?**
We're storytellers at the end of the day: tell us what you did.
- 6 Avoid Encyclopedia Britannica-type entries:**
Be detailed but concise. Avoid writing the great American novel.
- 7 Did you refer to all applicable technical data?**
If you referenced published data, tell us.
- 8 Did you check for common spelling mistakes?**
i.e., "lubercation", "breaks", "seperate", etc.
- 9 Did you reference the right FARs?**
Common errors include "91.702" or "91.407"; look 'em up if you have to.
- 10 Did you reference all the applicable Part #s and Serial #s?**
Spark plugs, tires, and filters are the most common offenders.
- 11 Have you put the name of the person performing the work as per 43.9?**
(if not the same as the person approving the work).

What The FARs Really Require

Every return-to-service depends on accurate record keeping. FAR 43.9 and 43.11 specify the maintenance-record entries needed for non-inspection and inspection work, while 91.417 and 91.207 add even more details for aircraft under Part 91. And that's before you factor in STCs, ICAs, or other FAA-driven forms and requirements.

12 Have you checked for all unapproved parts?

Unapproved parts, such as auto parts, auto connectors, and auto batteries do not conform to aircrafts' type designs.

13 Installation vs. inspection of ELT:

A common error is referencing the install as per 91.207... Inspection is per 91.207(d)1-4; install is per the battery manufacturer.

14 Expiration date of the ELT battery?

Due dates are required as per 91.207(c)(2).

15 Are all 8130 or yellow tag entries complete and added to the entry?

List 8130 details in mx entries.

16 Have you ensured all times are accurate?

Shop changes, Hobbs/Tach swap outs, and Hobbs running on jacks are all common offenders to offset total times and TBOs. Watch out!

17 Have you checked all ICAs for compliance?

This is required.

18 Have all 337s been filed with the FAA?

Oftentimes aircraft records may not match OK City records; Box 8 should have a robust description of applicable work performed.

19 If undoing a major repair, did you fill out the 337? If it took a 337 to put it on... It will take a 337 to take it off.**20 Do all 337s have ICAs?**

There are instances where the ICA never gets completed. Ensure compliance.

21 For field approval items, have you checked to make sure no STC already exists?

Field approvals should not be used to skirt STCs as per FAR 91.403 (need STC owner approval).

22 Have you backed up your minor/major alteration decisions?

It's OK to lean minor – just back up your decision! Refer to Part 43 Appendix A and Part 1.1.

23 Did you research ALL applicable ADs?

Appliance ADs are often overlooked; make AD compliance easy with our software.

24 Backup AD compliance with an Entry:

All AD compliance needs to be backed up with an entry and confirmation of the work being done.

25 Don't reference the AD Sheet or put in the dreaded "all ADs complied with,"

Document all AD compliance in the maintenance record.

26 Have you signed off ADs properly?

Beware "CW", "PCW" and "NA"... ADs are maintenance and require robust entries as per 43.9 / 91.417(a)(2)(v).

27 Did you calculate next due hours?

Make it easy for the next person—so they don't have to do the math.

28 Did you delete any ADs that should be kept?

Beware deleting ADs as you won't remember why (omitting is a better practice).

Why Record Keeping is an "Earned" Skill

Good record keeping isn't something taught in most A&P schools—it's learned through mentorship and experience. Many of today's best maintainers trace their professionalism back to an older tech who took the time to show them how to write entries that were clean, complete, and compliant.

29 Have you cross-checked all applicable service bulletins and maintenance manuals?

Best practice is to refer to these to ensure compliance and safety when performing maintenance.

30 For missing records, have we complied with them at time of inspection?

We must comply with missing AD compliance no matter what the logs may say.

31 Initial any scratch-outs / cross-outs: i.e., "J.M 1/25"; Never amend or alter mx records that are not your own.

32 Have you double checked new service bulletins against old data?

New data may conflict with old data so always trust but verify.

33 Have you signed off the entry correctly as an IA?

Don't drop the "A&P" as that still is the certificate type; IA is simply an authorization.

34 If you can't print an entry, send another in the mail:

If you're doing remote mx work without computer access, send a (duplicate) "professional" entry to the owners' residence/office.

35 Manage expectations:

The best shops let aircraft owners know that we're going to spend the appropriate amount of time on aircraft records and research (including ADs).



The Reality In Today's Hangars

Given all the moving parts, it's no wonder that record keeping across General Aviation varies so widely. Most maintainers are working under enormous pressure—rising insurance, hangar, and parts costs; difficulty finding qualified A&Ps; and owners trying to stretch every dollar.

In that environment, it's remarkable that any paperwork gets done at all. But solid record keeping isn't just about compliance—it's a mark of professionalism and protection for both you and your customers.

Looking for a system that helps you manage compliance, maintenance, customers, and parts—all in one tool?

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