

Corrective Action Record

Worksheet from subchapter 3.12 — The Helm and the Lens, Volume 1b

WHY THIS FORM HAS FOUR FIELDS AND NOT ONE

Most corrective action forms ask only what will be done. That single question can be answered inside any deadline, which is why it usually is: a short closure period does not accelerate the answer, it selects the answers that fit inside it. The other three fields exist to make that selection visible before it happens.

The record

Field	Entry
Nonconformity / finding reference	
Correction — what was done about the instance	
Cause — what, if changed, would prevent recurrence	
Action — what will be changed	
Rung (1-5, see overleaf)	
Who must act, and are they outside the department?	
Test that will show it held	
Date of decision	
Date of that test	

Field	Entry
Result of the test, entered on that date	

The robustness ladder

Record the rung honestly. Rungs one and two can be completed by a department on its own, which is exactly why a short deadline selects them. Rungs four and five require somebody outside the department, and therefore require the decision date and the implementation date to be separated.

Rung	What it means	Who has to act
1	Somebody is told	The department
2	It is written into a procedure or instruction	The department
3	An owner is named and a check is scheduled	The department, with a named person
4	The arrangement is changed — a contract, a schedule, a responsibility	Somebody outside the department
5	The physical situation is changed so the failure cannot occur	Somebody outside the department

Two rules that make the form work

Separate the date of decision from the date of implementation. A short window for deciding is reasonable; the same window applied to implementation disqualifies every rung above two, silently and without anybody choosing it.

Name the test before closing, not after. A corrective action is a hypothesis. Its effectiveness cannot be observed on the day it is implemented, which is why the date of the test can never be the date of the action.