

SEO audit checklist

21 audit checks. All checks start Untested. Record observations before prescribing changes.

Site / sample: _____ Auditor / date: _____

Sequence: define scope, compare baseline, inspect pages, reproduce causes, prioritize findings, then retest.

Manual results: Untested, Pass, Fail, Blocked or Not applicable. Notes are optional.

AUDIT-SAMPLE Choose important pages for the SEO audit

Open your website navigation and the published-page list in your website editor. Include the homepage, important services or products, category pages, articles and the main contact or purchase path where these exist. Small sites can check every important page. Add pages with reported traffic losses and recent changes. Compare a problem page with another using the same template, meaning the shared layout or publishing rule. This helps distinguish a local editing error from a repeated defect. A sample does not cover every URL.

Expected: The selected pages cover the audit scope, and any omissions are understood.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-BASELINE Compare search clicks and impressions

Open Search Console > Performance > Search results. Compare equal-length periods with the same search type and filters. For seasonal businesses, also compare the relevant season when history allows. Clicks count clicks from Google Search to your site; impressions count appearances in results. Use Pages to find the URLs behind the change. Click an affected page, then open Queries to inspect its searches. Compare Devices and Countries if the decline may be limited to mobile or a market. Matching dates do not establish causation.

Expected: You can identify the dates, affected pages or searches, and what changed against the comparison period.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-QUERIES Check which page appears for each important query

In Search Console's Search results report, select a relevant query from Queries, then open Pages. Read the pages shown for that query and compare their purpose with the search. A search for a repair service needs different information from a search for instructions to repair something yourself. Compare the same query and page over equivalent dates. If a less suitable page receives impressions, inspect its title, main heading, content and incoming internal links alongside the intended page. Two pages appearing for one query is a clue to review their roles, not proof that they must be merged. Search Console omits some queries; absence does not establish zero demand.

Expected: Important query/page mismatches have been assessed and an appropriate next test or correction identified.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

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AUDIT-MEASUREMENT Test the analytics or lead event you rely on

Use this check only when existing analytics or recorded enquiries inform the audit. Confirm the report's website, dates and filters. Compare its trend with Search Console clicks; the systems measure different things and their totals need not match. Try the affected action in test mode or with approval for a live test. For existing GA4, ask the measurement owner to enable test-device debug mode and open Admin > Data display > DebugView. Compare expected and received events. Respect consent: denied analytics consent or privacy controls can suppress debug events. One test does not validate historical data or every consent state.

Expected: The test records the expected action correctly under the agreed conditions, without unexplained missing or duplicate events.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-ALERTS Check manual actions and security alerts

Open Search Console's Manual actions and Security issues reports separately. Read current findings, affected examples and recommended responses. A manual action is a reported policy action; a security issue may concern hacked content. A traffic drop establishes neither. Escalate unresolved findings to the site owner and relevant specialist. Follow the report's remediation and review process. Do not visit a suspected hacked page merely to inspect it, or clear the finding while review is pending. Clear reports do not establish complete security or quality.

Expected: Both reports have been checked and show no unresolved reported issues.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-INVENTORY Find important pages missing from Google's index

Open Search Console > Indexing > Pages. Review Why pages aren't indexed and compare examples with the pages you want people to find. Prioritize an excluded main service page over a deliberately duplicated filter address. Paste an unexplained URL into URL Inspection. Check its reason, last crawl and available canonical information. Indexed data describes Google's last observed version; Test live URL checks current access and indexability, not whether Google already indexed the change.

Expected: Important exceptions are explained with page-level evidence.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

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AUDIT-REPRODUCE Verify the suspected technical SEO blocker

Match the inspection to the warning. For missing pages, ask the developer to check the response status, the server's result code. For indexing exclusions, compare robots instructions and the preferred address. For missing text, compare the visible page with URL Inspection's rendered output. Compare a working page using the same layout. One wrong page setting needs a different correction from a shared template fault. Hand the exact difference to the technical owner.

Expected: The suspected issue has been reproduced or ruled out by the relevant test; any finding identifies the mismatch.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-SITEMAP Check the sitemap against published search pages

Open Search Console's Sitemaps report and inspect the submitted sitemap, if one exists. A sitemap is a list of addresses you want search engines to discover. Compare a few important entries with their final published addresses and compare recently published search pages with the sitemap. Flag entries that point to removed content, redirect elsewhere or deliberately exclude indexing. If the sitemap cannot be read, give its reported error to the platform owner. Recommend changes to the system generating the file; manually editing an automatically rebuilt file may not last. Sitemaps do not guarantee indexing.

Expected: Inspected sitemap entries agree with intended preferred public pages, with no unresolved relevant errors.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-CANONICAL Compare declared and Google-selected canonical URLs

For an important URL with a duplicate-related exclusion, use URL Inspection's indexed information to compare the user-declared canonical with Google's selected canonical, when available. A canonical is the preferred address for substantially equivalent content. Open both pages and ask whether they really serve the same purpose. If Google selects a different address, ask the technical owner to compare page content, canonical declarations, redirects, internal links and sitemap entries. Do not use canonical tags to join unrelated pages or remove useful distinct content. The live test does not predict Google's final canonical choice. Google may select another canonical.

Expected: The intended preferred page is supported by the inspected signals, or a specific mismatch has a scoped technical investigation.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

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AUDIT-LINKPATH Find important pages without useful internal links

Start at the homepage, a category or a relevant guide and follow links to each priority page. Compare reachable pages with the editor's page list and sitemap. A published page without useful incoming links is often called an orphan page. Check link text and destination together. "Garden maintenance services" sets a clearer expectation than an unexplained "click here." For script-driven controls, ask the developer whether an ordinary crawlable link also exists. Recommend relevant paths without a fixed link count.

Expected: Important pages have useful incoming links and working destinations.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-BROKEN Check broken links and unexpected redirects

Follow important navigation, in-content and download links on the sampled pages. If a crawler has found broken links, open its source-page examples and repeat those clicks. Check the final page and address, not just whether something loads. A redirect sends the visitor to another address and can be valid after a real move. Ask a developer to inspect uncertain responses or redirect paths in the browser's Network panel. An internal link to an old address can usually be updated to the correct final destination. A removed page with no suitable replacement may correctly return not found; an unrelated homepage redirect is not an automatic repair.

Expected: Inspected links reach the intended resource, or any deliberate removal is handled accurately.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-INTENT Check whether the page answers its target search

Read the SEO title, main heading and opening. Identify the task: choose a product, compare options, understand a problem or request a service. Use Search Console queries as clues, then compare the promise with the actual offering. Find the information needed: service scope and coverage, important exclusions, product differences or ordered tutorial steps. Try the next action using test mode or approval for consequential submissions. Specify the missing answer rather than requesting "more content."

Expected: The page delivers its promised answer or action without an unresolved gap that prevents the visitor's task.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

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AUDIT-TITLES Find missing, duplicate or misleading SEO titles

Open the page's SEO title field in the website editor and check the published browser-tab title or title element. If a crawler lists missing or duplicate titles, inspect examples alongside their headings and content. Compare the wording with the main search topic and distinguish pages that serve different purposes. Flag generic labels, outdated dates, repeated keywords or a service or location the page does not support. A length warning is a cue to preview clarity, not an automatic failure. Google may use other page signals to display a different title link.

Expected: Sampled titles accurately distinguish their pages without an unresolved missing or misleading title.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-DESCRIPTIONS Check meta descriptions against the actual page

In the website editor's SEO settings or the published page source, inspect the meta description. Compare it with the page's main answer and next step. A useful description briefly explains what this particular page offers; copied company boilerplate does little to distinguish services or products. If clicks fell while comparable impressions remained steady, review the query, title and description together. A weak summary is one possible explanation, not a proven cause. Search snippets can come from the page itself, so a rewritten snippet does not automatically mean the meta description is defective. Description changes do not guarantee display or more clicks.

Expected: The description accurately summarizes the specific page, or an intentional omission is understood.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-HEADINGS Check the H1 and section headings

Read the main heading and the H2/H3 section headings in order. In the website editor or browser inspection, confirm that headings use heading elements rather than only large bold text. The H1 should identify the main page subject; lower-level headings should describe the sections beneath it. Compare the main topic with relevant search language and the actual content. A heading such as "Benefits" may need a more specific label when readers cannot tell what it refers to. One clear H1 is a practical convention, not a universal ranking requirement. Do not add repetitive keywords to every heading.

Expected: The heading structure communicates the main topic and logical sections.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

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AUDIT-OVERLAP Compare overlapping or duplicate content

Open candidate pages side by side. Compare their titles, main answers, examples, intended audience and next steps. Use Search Console's query and page filters to see how the pages appear for relevant searches. Similar words alone are not enough to establish an unnecessary duplicate. Choose a specific recommendation: keep distinct pages and clarify their roles; update an outdated page; investigate technical duplicates; or propose a merge when both pages serve the same task. Before a merge, check useful content, incoming links and the correct replacement. Keep implementation subject to review rather than automatically deleting short pages.

Expected: Candidate overlap has a justified recommendation based on page purpose and useful content.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-TEMPLATE Compare repeated problems across page templates

Compare several pages using the same layout, including a normal example. Inspect published titles, descriptions, headings, repeated copy and links against the website editor's fields. Ask which shared rule produces a repeated mistake. A missing service-name field may explain identical titles; one blank record needs a local edit. Bound the correction to the affected group and test another page type before a broad change. Completed diagnosis does not resolve identified website defects.

Expected: Repeated problems have inspected examples and a bounded affected group, or the sample shows no repeated defect.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-EXPERIENCE Compare mobile usability and page speed

Compare the main answer, headings, images and links on phone and desktop. Try menus, forms and primary buttons in test mode, or stop before an unintended submission. Look for cut-off text, obstructive overlays and unusable controls. A narrow desktop preview helps, but use a real phone where possible. Run the public URL in PageSpeed Insights and compare Mobile with Desktop. Separate real-user field data from the simulated laboratory run. Check whether field data covers this URL or the wider origin, meaning scheme, hostname and port. Investigate the named bottleneck rather than only the score. Missing field data is unknown, not a Core Web Vitals pass. Review completion does not resolve measured problems.

Expected: The review identifies affected tasks and measurement conditions, including tests with no observed obstacle.

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Optional note: _____

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AUDIT-PRIORITY Choose the most important confirmed SEO fixes

Start with active security issues, widespread loading failures and unintended exclusions on important public pages. Next consider broken visitor tasks, missing useful links and misleading content. Compare the affected pages and the risk of the change; a large tool count may describe harmless duplicate variants. Separate missing access from a confirmed website fault.

Expected: Each priority explains affected scope, evidence confidence and why the fix comes next.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-HANDOFF Give the editor or developer a specific fix

For each important finding, identify the URL, current result and intended result. Ask the editor to correct a named title, heading or missing answer. Ask the developer to inspect the exact response, directive, sitemap rule or template behind a technical mismatch. Include one reproducible example and the check that will demonstrate the correction; a formal report is optional.

Expected: The owner, next action and acceptance test are clear enough to reproduce the issue.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

AUDIT-CLOSE Retest the affected page after each fix

Repeat the same test on the published page: follow the repaired link, inspect the corrected title, retry the mobile control or check the changed indexing instruction. For a shared-template fix, include another affected page and a different template. Later Search Console updates may lag the live repair, so keep crawl, indexing and traffic observations separate from the implementation result.

Expected: The original mismatch is resolved, and any separate search follow-up is understood.

Status: _____ Checked: _____

Optional note: _____

Cause-based findings form

Use one finding per underlying cause. Copy this page when you need another finding.

Finding ID / related check ID

Affected URL or template

Observed issue

Why it matters

Priority: High / Medium / Low Confidence: Confirmed / Needs investigation

Recommended change

Owner / target date

Workflow: Open / In progress / Ready for retest / Closed / Blocked

Retest method

Retest date / result: Untested, Pass, Fail, Blocked or Not applicable

Optional supporting note

A correction awaiting verification stays Ready for retest. Close a finding only after its agreed retest supports closure. Use Blocked when access or another dependency prevents testing.

These are manual templates, not automatic website tests. They do not guarantee crawling, indexing, rankings or traffic.