Goods receiving and inwards inspection

Manual | 11 steps | 3 roles | Created Sep 2, 2026 | Updated Sep 2, 2026 | v1

How the warehouse checks, records, and either accepts or quarantines an incoming delivery.

TRIGGER

When a delivery arrives at the goods-in area.

11 STEPS

1. **Receiving Clerk matches the delivery paperwork to an open purchase order before unloading.**

   Before unloading, not after. An unexpected delivery accepted onto the floor is difficult to return and impossible to reconcile cleanly.

   Matches an open order: Go to step 2: Receiving Clerk inspects the outer packaging for damage while the driver is present and photographs anything visibly wrong.
   No matching order: Go to step 10: Warehouse Supervisor decides whether to accept the unexpected delivery, holding it separately until a Buyer confirms an order exists.

2. **Receiving Clerk inspects the outer packaging for damage while the driver is present and photographs anything visibly wrong.**

   While the driver is present. A damage claim raised after the vehicle has left is usually refused, and the photograph is the entire evidence base.

   No visible damage: Go to step 3: Receiving Clerk counts the received quantity against the delivery note and records the actual count.
   Damage found: Go to step 9: Receiving Clerk notes the damage on the delivery note before signing, retains the packaging, and notifies the Buyer with photographs.

3. **Receiving Clerk counts the received quantity against the delivery note and records the actual count.**

   Count, do not assume the note is correct. Recording the note's figure as the received figure defeats the purpose of the step.

4. **Receiving Clerk confirms the received quantity matches the ordered quantity.**

   Quantity matches: Go to step 5: Receiving Clerk checks the goods against the specification: part number, grade, batch or lot number, and expiry where applicable.
   Short or over shipped: Go to step 8: Receiving Clerk records the discrepancy on the delivery note, has the driver acknowledge it where possible, and notifies the Buyer.

5. **Receiving Clerk checks the goods against the specification: part number, grade, batch or lot number, and expiry where applicable.**

   Capture batch and lot numbers at receipt. If you need to trace an affected batch later, this is the only point at which capturing it is cheap.

6. **Receiving Clerk moves goods requiring inspection to quarantine and marks them as not yet released.**

Quarantine is a physical location, not a status in a system nobody checks. Uninspected stock put straight onto the pick face will be picked.

7 **Receiving Clerk books the goods into the system against the purchase order and files the paperwork with the recorded counts.**

Book in the same day. Physical stock that exists and system stock that does not is the root of most stock discrepancies.

Booked in: Ends the procedure

8 **Receiving Clerk records the discrepancy on the delivery note, has the driver acknowledge it where possible, and notifies the Buyer.**

Signing a delivery note clean and reporting a shortage later puts the burden of proof entirely on you.

Recorded and buyer notified: Go to step 5: Receiving Clerk checks the goods against the specification: part number, grade, batch or lot number, and expiry where applicable.

9 **Receiving Clerk notes the damage on the delivery note before signing, retains the packaging, and notifies the Buyer with photographs.**

Keep the packaging until the claim is resolved. Carriers routinely ask for it and disposing of it usually ends the claim.

Claim raised, goods usable: Go to step 3: Receiving Clerk counts the received quantity against the delivery note and records the actual count.
Goods rejected: Go to step 11: Buyer arranges return or replacement with the supplier and records the outcome against the purchase order.

10 **Warehouse Supervisor decides whether to accept the unexpected delivery, holding it separately until a Buyer confirms an order exists.**

Hold separately rather than refusing outright. Refusing a genuine delivery causes its own problems; mixing it into stock causes worse ones.

Order confirmed: Go to step 2: Receiving Clerk inspects the outer packaging for damage while the driver is present and photographs anything visibly wrong.
Not ours, refused: Ends the procedure

11 **Buyer arranges return or replacement with the supplier and records the outcome against the purchase order.**

Record it against the order, so supplier performance is visible over time rather than remembered anecdotally.

Resolved: Ends the procedure

ROLES INVOLVED

Receiving Clerk | Warehouse Supervisor | Buyer

REVIEW CADENCE

Annually, and after any stock discrepancy or supplier claim that this procedure should have prevented.

Name the person accountable for this procedure before you put it into use.

CHANGE THESE BEFORE YOU USE IT

- Name your actual quarantine location and how released stock is physically distinguished from held stock.
- List which items require inwards inspection rather than inspecting everything, or the step will be skipped under pressure.
- Set your tolerance for accepting a short shipment without a Buyer decision, in writing.
- If you handle temperature-controlled or hazardous goods, add the arrival checks those require. This template covers neither.
- If you are traceability-regulated, confirm the batch and lot capture in step 5 records everything your regime requires.

This is a free starting point from sendabrief.com, not compliance advice. It is written to be adapted.

Source: https://sendabrief.com/templates/goods-receiving-inspection