



Building a Proactive Facilities Operation

A Checklist from Trent McJunkin, Facilities & Maintenance Manager, Oshkosh Defense

by ARC Facilities

Jul 21, 2026

Like many facilities leaders, Trent McJunkin didn't start his career with a plan to work in facilities management. His background began in industrial maintenance, where he gained hands-on experience with equipment, operations, and problem-solving before moving into leadership roles.

Today, as Facilities & Maintenance Manager at Oshkosh Defense, Trent oversees a complex manufacturing environment and has helped transform a former distribution center into a nearly one-million-square-foot facility supporting critical production needs.

Through his career, Trent has learned that successful facilities management is about much more than reacting to work orders. It requires preparation, accurate information, strong processes, and a team that understands how to identify and address issues before they become larger problems.

In this episode of [Facility Voices](#), Trent shared lessons learned from building a proactive facilities program from the ground up. His message is simple: the best facilities teams don't wait for problems to happen—they prepare for them long before they occur.

While technology plays an important role, Trent emphasized that proactive operations start with the fundamentals: strong documentation, regular inspections, trusted vendor partnerships, and giving technicians the information they need to make informed decisions in the field.

Use this checklist to evaluate your own facilities operation and identify opportunities to become more proactive.

Proactive Facilities Checklist

Capture critical information during projects

Construction and renovation projects create valuable opportunities to collect information that will benefit the facility for years.

- Collect as-built drawings and project documentation before contractors leave.
- Verify equipment details, locations, and operating information.
- Document shutoffs, valves, breakers, and other critical infrastructure.
- Ask questions during construction and renovations while project teams are still engaged.

Prepare for emergencies before they happen

A proactive facilities team understands its building before an emergency occurs.

- Confirm the location of water, gas, electrical, and mechanical shutoffs.
- Make sure teams know where critical utilities and equipment are located.
- Review emergency procedures regularly.
- Identify what information technicians would need during an unexpected event.

Verify your building documentation

Drawings don't always reflect current conditions. Physical verification is essential.

- Don't assume drawings perfectly represent the building today.
- Confirm the location of valves, breakers, and equipment.
- Update records as information is verified.
- Test critical components during preventive maintenance to ensure they work when needed.

Make building walks part of your routine

Some of the most valuable preventive maintenance comes from simply paying attention.

- Schedule regular inspections of mechanical rooms and key areas.
- Look for leaks, unusual noises, wear, damage, and other warning signs.
- Use technician experience and observations to identify issues early.
- Document findings and follow up on repairs.

Include stakeholders in facility decisions

Facilities projects affect the entire organization.

- Bring operations, engineering, safety, security, IT, HR, and other departments into projects early.
- Understand how facility decisions affect day-to-day operations.
- Align facility improvements with broader organizational goals.

Strengthen vendor partnerships

The best vendors become an extension of the facilities team.

- Work with vendors who understand your facility and expectations.
- Build relationships based on communication and trust.
- Encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Establish strong partnerships before urgent situations arise.

Recognize every team member's role

Every person who supports a facility contributes to the overall operation.

- Support custodial teams as skilled professionals.
- Recognize how building conditions affect safety, morale, and productivity.
- Provide team members with the tools and support they need to succeed.

Prioritize your most critical assets

Moving from reactive maintenance to proactive management takes time.

- Identify equipment that creates the greatest operational risk.
- Organize maintenance records and asset information.
- Build preventive maintenance programs around high-priority systems.
- Expand your efforts over time.

Give technicians reliable information in the field

Technicians work more effectively when they can quickly find accurate information.

- Provide current drawings, equipment records, and maintenance documentation.
- Reduce time spent searching through outdated files.
- Make building knowledge available where work happens.
- Help technicians solve problems with confidence.

Build a culture of strong leadership

Leadership is not about having all the answers—it's about building the right team.

- Hire talented people and trust their expertise.
- Remove obstacles that slow teams down.
- Encourage ownership and accountability.
- Focus on developing people, not just managing tasks.

Final Thought

Throughout Trent's career, one lesson continues to stand out: preparation beats reaction.

Whether it's verifying documentation, walking mechanical rooms, strengthening vendor relationships, or giving technicians better information, small improvements today can prevent larger disruptions tomorrow.

Facilities teams can't predict every issue but they can build operations that are ready when those issues arise. That's what separates a reactive maintenance approach from a proactive facilities operation.

Want to hear more from facilities leaders like Trent? Tune into [Facility Voices](#) for conversations with professionals sharing real-world lessons, strategies, and ideas from the front lines of facility management.

ARC Facilities helps organizations put many of these proactive practices into action by bringing critical building information, equipment details, documentation, and operational knowledge together in one place—helping facilities teams spend less time searching and more time solving problems.