

PRE-LITIGATION FORENSIC ENGINEER BRIEFING CHECKLIST

1. Purpose of Engagement

- Confirm litigation status (pre-litigation / anticipated / active)
 - Define the technical question to be answered
 - Avoid framing the mandate around a predetermined conclusion
 - Confirm potential expert witness role
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2. Scope Definition

- Identify systems, components, or incidents to be examined
 - Note exclusions or practical constraints
 - Define expected deliverables
 - Allow flexibility for the engineer to follow evidence beyond initial assumptions
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3. Factual Background

- Prepare a neutral timeline of events
 - Compile photographs, drawings, reports, and records
 - Identify all involved parties without assigning fault
 - Disclose prior maintenance issues, known deficiencies, or earlier complaints
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4. Evidence Preservation

- Identify existing physical evidence
- Confirm whether evidence has been altered, repaired, or discarded
- Establish custody and access
- Discuss potential destructive testing
- Confirm availability of key components before site inspection

5. Communication Protocols

- Identify primary point of contact
- Define expectations for interim updates
- Address handling of drafts and preliminary opinions
- Share any known opposing technical theories early

6. Timing and Budget

- Identify key litigation deadlines
- Confirm investigation phases
- Establish budget parameters
- Discuss scope-change triggers

7. Independence and Credibility

- Encourage objective documentation of all findings
- Avoid pressure for early or definitive conclusions
- Accept that opinions may evolve as investigation progresses