WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Check Where Your Safeguards Can Fail

A map of existing safeguards, shared weaknesses, and a specific improvement to investigate.

20 minutes | Defense layers conversation

Use it in three moves

1. Name a specific unwanted event and the safeguards actually in use.
2. Look for gaps and dependencies across the layers.
3. Choose a condition to improve and a way to verify it with the people involved.

What unwanted event are we considering?

For urgent hazards, use the appropriate emergency or specialist process first.

Which safeguards currently stand in the way?

Describe actual practices, not policies assumed to happen.

Where can each safeguard fail?

Ask people doing the work what makes the gap possible.

Check Where Your Safeguards Can Fail

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Which layers depend on the same person or condition?

Several checks are not independent if they all fail for one reason.

What condition could be improved?

Avoid adding another reminder to the same overloaded person.

Who will verify the change, and when?

A proposed safeguard is not an effective safeguard until checked.

A question for me

Where have I treated someone's vigilance as our only safeguard?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What unwanted event are we considering?

An event booking reaches the day before arrival without confirmed room access.

Which safeguards currently stand in the way?

Booking confirmation; a venue contact; a week-before access check; a day-before reminder.

Where can each safeguard fail?

All reminders go to one coordinator, and the venue contact list is sometimes out of date.

Which layers depend on the same person or condition?

If the coordinator is away, three of the four checks may not happen.

What condition could be improved?

Use a shared booking record, a named backup, and an access check confirmed by the venue.

Who will verify the change, and when?

Event lead and venue contact will walk through the next booking together on Tuesday.

The thinking behind it

A person may be the last visible part of a failure while several earlier conditions remain unseen. Look at what the system asks them to catch.

James Reason's Swiss Cheese model illustrates how weaknesses across multiple defenses can align. This independent discussion aid applies the idea to everyday coordination. It does not replace a formal safety assessment or specialist review.

AHRQ · Swiss Cheese model

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne