A CHECKLIST FOR CHECKLISTS

(1) Development

- Do you have clear, concise objectives for your checklist?

Is each item:

- A critical safety step and in great danger of being missed?
- Not adequately checked by other mechanisms?
- Actionable, with a specific response required for each item?
- Designed to be read aloud as a verbal check?

Have you considered:

- Adding items that will improve communication among team members?
- Involving all members of the team in the checklist creation process?

(2) Drafting

- Does the Checklist:
  - Use natural breaks in workflow (pause points)?
  - Use simple sentence structure and basic language?
  - Have a title that reflects its objectives?
  - Have a simple, uncluttered, and logical format?
  - Fit on one page?
  - Minimize the use of color?

Is the font:

- Sans serif?
- Upper and lower case?
- Large enough to be read easily?
- Dark on a light background?
- Are there fewer than 10 items per pause point?
- Is the date of creation (or revision) clearly marked?

(3) Validation

- Does the checklist:
  - Fit the flow of work?
  - Detect errors at a time when they can still be corrected?

Have you:

- Tested/trialed the checklist with front line users (either in a real or simulated situation)?
- Modified the checklist in response to repeated trials?

Does the checklist:

- Can the checklist be completed in a reasonably brief period of time?

Have you made plans for future review and revision of the checklist?

Source: Gawande, A. (2009), The checklist manifesto: how to get things right.