PLAN THE WORK. KEEP THE RECORD.

# Data center decommissioning checklist

The hard part is often what surrounds the equipment: dependencies, access windows, lease obligations, and the last missing serial. Use this checklist to make those decisions before the removal date.

PROJECT / ORGANIZATION

OWNER / DATE

## Your review, in 5 parts.

1. Define what “finished” means
2. Obtain shutdown authorization
3. Map equipment and media to a destination
4. Test the physical removal plan
5. Close the physical and data work separately

### Use this with your team.

Check items as they are reviewed. Record evidence, owners, and open questions on each page. Confirm the project scope and applicable controls before work begins.

Planning resource—not a certification, contract, legal opinion, or device-specific sanitization instruction. Confirm requirements with your security, procurement, and facilities teams.

DATA CENTER DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

# 1. Define what “finished” means

Write the boundaries of the project before setting a removal date. A rack removal, a cage closure, and a full room handback are different scopes. The owner of each system should approve its retirement.

- [ ] List the racks, devices, cables, storage, UPS equipment, and fixtures in scope.
- [ ] Identify items that stay and mark them clearly.
- [ ] Review lease and colocation handback requirements.
- [ ] Assign owners for IT, security, facilities, procurement, and the building.
- [ ] Define the acceptance criteria for the final walkthrough.

Include the target date and the consequence of delay. Work backward from the building’s access and inspection windows.

**Evidence, owner & next action**

DATA CENTER DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

# 2. Obtain shutdown authorization

Physical removal follows an approved shutdown. Your infrastructure team should confirm migration, retention, backups, and application dependencies before equipment is released to a removal crew.

- [ ] Identify remaining network, storage, monitoring, and management dependencies.
- [ ] Verify the owners of shared systems and interconnections.
- [ ] Record shutdown approvals and the approved change window.
- [ ] Label live services and equipment outside the removal scope.
- [ ] Agree on stop-work and escalation procedures.

Electrical isolation and other specialist work belong to qualified personnel under the site's procedures. Do not treat de-racking as authorization to disconnect live infrastructure.

**Evidence, owner & next action**

DATA CENTER DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

# 3. Map equipment and media to a destination

Use rack positions and serial numbers to reconcile the inventory before and after removal. A chassis may contain many drives; track the media at the level your data policy requires.

- [ ] Record room, row, rack, rack unit, asset tag, and serial.
- [ ] Identify loose drives, tapes, removable media, and hidden storage.
- [ ] Assign reuse, sanitization, destruction, or recycling instructions.
- [ ] Separate batteries and other material needing special handling.
- [ ] Record unknown devices and conflicting ownership as exceptions.

Agree on how the processor will report embedded media and failed sanitization. Resolve gaps while the equipment is still easy to identify.

**Evidence, owner & next action**

DATA CENTER DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

# 4. Test the physical removal plan

Walk the route from the rack to the vehicle. Confirm freight-elevator dimensions and capacity, floor protection, loading-dock availability, and any limits on working hours or noise.

- [ ] Arrange badges, escorts, insurance documents, and parking permissions.
- [ ] Confirm packing, lifting equipment, labor, and vehicle responsibilities.
- [ ] Schedule dependencies between shutdown, electrical work, removal, and cleaning.
- [ ] Specify custody handovers and the person signing each record.
- [ ] Reserve time for exceptions and the final inspection.

Photograph the agreed starting condition where site policy allows. Keep customer information and security-sensitive details out of images shared outside the authorized project team.

**Evidence, owner & next action**

DATA CENTER DECOMMISSIONING CHECKLIST

# 5. Close the physical and data work separately

An empty room does not prove the media has been processed. Track physical handback and data/reporting closeout as distinct acceptance items.

- [ ] Complete the facilities walkthrough against the original scope.
- [ ] Reconcile removed assets to the signed collection inventory.
- [ ] Review sanitization or destruction results and resolve exceptions.
- [ ] Confirm recycling destinations and commercial settlements where applicable.
- [ ] Update ownership, maintenance, software, and financial records.
- [ ] Retain the closeout documents with the approved change record.

Share your planned scope through the quote form. Include the rack count, location, access window, and the building's handback requirements.

### Evidence, owner & next action

Online guide: ironbay-1eq.pages.dev/resources/data-center-checklist