

Release Quality Control Checklist

Purpose: Ensure every song released meets a consistent minimum professional standard—regardless of mood, momentum, or outside pressure.

Use this checklist **before every release**. If a section fails, the song does not ship.

1. Song Intent & Direction

- The purpose of the song is clear (story, message, mood)
- The song fits the artist's identity and long-term direction
- The beat supports the song's intent (not just "sounds hard")
- The song feels intentional from start to finish

Fail = unclear concept or identity mismatch

2. Writing & Performance Quality

- Lyrics are clear, focused, and on-topic
- No filler bars that weaken the song
- Delivery is confident and controlled
- Energy is consistent across verses and hooks
- Punch-ins are clean and not distracting

Fail = weak sections you're hoping listeners ignore

3. Beat Selection & Vocal Fit

- Beat matches personal sound standards
- Tempo and pocket support natural delivery

- No frequency clashes masking vocals
- Beat does not overpower performance

Fail = fighting the beat instead of riding it

4. Recording Quality Standards

- No clipping or distortion
- Minimal background noise
- Consistent mic distance throughout recording
- Vocal tone is consistent across sections
- Comp takes are clean and intentional

Fail = technical issues that can't be "mixed out"

5. Mixing Readiness Check (Not Perfection)

- Vocals sit clearly above the beat
- No harsh sibilance or painful frequencies
- No muddy low-mids clouding clarity
- Balance feels intentional, not accidental
- Song sounds controlled, not chaotic

Fail = relying on mastering to fix balance problems

6. Translation Test (Real-World Listening)

- Sounds clear on phone speakers
- Sounds balanced in headphones

- Sounds acceptable in a car
- No elements disappear across systems

Fail = only sounds good in one environment

7. Final Brand Check

- Song represents the artist publicly with confidence
- No embarrassment imagining this as a first impression
- Song strengthens the existing catalog
- Quality matches or exceeds previous releases

Fail = hesitation about standing on this release long-term

8. Release Decision

- All sections passed
- Fixes applied where needed
- Song approved for release

If **any section fails**, the release is delayed—not cancelled—until standards are met.

Reminder

Consistency builds trust. Trust builds replay value. Replay value builds careers.

Use this checklist to protect your catalog, your brand, and your future releases.