The Handover Gate: Readiness Scorecard

Data Center Strategies: We Build Critical Operations

What this is

A readiness checklist for the signing moment: the day responsibility for a data center transfers from construction and commissioning to the operations team. Four gates: People, Procedures, Asset Information, Support & Warranty. Work through each gate before you sign. It is **not** a certification, not a substitute for commissioning evidence (L1–L5 / IST), and not a guarantee of anything. There is no single public operational-readiness standard, ASHRAE Guideline 1.6P for data-center commissioning was only at first public-review draft in October 2026, so this scorecard is Data Center Strategies' own method, labeled as such.

How to score it

Score every item **Red / Amber / Green**:

- **Green**: evidenced and verified. The document exists, is current, and has been checked against the plant as installed. The person is named, trained, and authorized.
- **Amber**: exists but unproven. The document is a draft, the record is unchecked, the drill has not been run, or the item depends on a single person.
- **Red**: missing, out of date, contradicted by the plant, or never tested.

A gate is Green only when every item in it is Green; Red when it holds any Red.

Do-not-sign guidance (guidance, not a certification):

- **Any Red in Gate 1 (People) or Gate 2 (Procedures): do not sign.** Do not take responsibility for a plant your team cannot yet operate or whose emergency responses are unproven.
- **A Red on check 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 is also a stop. Any other Red in Gate 3 (Asset Information) or Gate 4 (Support & Warranty): sign only with a dated, owned condition**, and schedule the warranty-expiry review before you sign.
- **All four gates Green: sign**, and keep this scorecard with the handover record.

Evidence not provided scores **Red**.

Gate 1: People

#	Check	R / A / G
1.1	Core operations team hired and in post before turnover	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.2	Core team present during commissioning (L4/L5)	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.3	Roles defined with a named person for each: duty manager, shift leads, technicians, on-call	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.4	Authorization matrix: who may do what, on which system, under which procedure, evidenced	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.5	Training records complete for every system, including liquid cooling where fitted	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.6	Shift pattern set: 24-hour rota, handover discipline, continuous shift report	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.7	Overtime and fatigue limits set: sustained overtime at or above 10% is a recorded risk	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
1.8	Escalation and notification matrix agreed	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G

Gate 2: Procedures

#	Check	R / A / G
2.1	SOP library covers routine operation of every critical system	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.2	MOP library covers work that can affect critical load, with back-out plan and abort authority	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.3	EOP library covers predicted failures: loss of power/cooling, UPS/generator transfer, chiller failure, coolant leak	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.4	Every procedure has document control: version, owner, review date, risk level, prerequisites	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.5	Every MOP/EOP step states the expected indication after each state change	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.6	Top-10 EOPs walked in the field after energization and drilled with the team	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.7	Incident-response and root-cause / lessons-learned process agreed and owned	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
2.8	Maintenance procedures and return-to-service verification defined	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G

Gate 3: Asset Information

#	Check	R / A / G
3.1	Practical Completion authorized, agreed snagging list, no open critical items	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.2	Commissioning records complete through L5 / IST, at design load	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.3	As-builts as installed, not as designed: single-lines, cooling, fire/life safety, security, cabling	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.4	Asset register complete and accurate, matched to the plant on site	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.5	O&M manuals complete and in hand before operations takes responsibility	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.6	Redundancy verified as built: no path in bypass, no breaker racked out, no untested common dependency	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.7	Liquid-cooling evidence: coolant spec lab-verified, degassing plan, passivation and pressure records	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
3.8	IT/firmware matrix, BMS/DCIM point lists, alarm and setpoint schedules in hand	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G

Gate 4: Support & Warranty

#	Check	R / A / G
4.1	Preventive-maintenance schedule in place, vendor PM coordination agreed	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.2	Spares holdings agreed and in place for critical items	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.3	Vendor contracts, SLAs, and field-service release controls agreed, including who owns a liquid-cooling leak	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.4	Warranty boundaries and expiry dates recorded for every critical system	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.5	10-month warranty review scheduled before the construction warranty expires	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.6	Seasonal-transition plan agreed (pre-season checks at real load)	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.7	Issue log: severity-classified, owned, independently verified closed	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G
4.8	Reporting cadence agreed: daily / weekly / monthly, plus monthly service review	☐ R ☐ A ☐ G

What to do with your score

Count the Reds per gate. Any Red in Gate 1 or 2 is a stop. A Red on check 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 is also a stop. Any other Red in Gate 3 or 4 is a dated, owned condition.

What this scorecard does not do

It does not award Tier or M&O certification (only Uptime Institute does). It does not re-perform commissioning. It does not replace the site's own permits, LOTO, or NFPA 70E practice. It does not guarantee uptime, PUE, or any outcome.

About. Scott Stillings, DataCenterStrategies.com: 20+ years in critical infrastructure operations; author of Where AI Lives (Inside Hyperscale series).