

Remote device cleanup checklist

Because “we’ll tidy it later” turns into “why is Chrome using 12GB of RAM?” faster than you can say “VPN.”

You don’t need a weekend rebuild to fix remote machines — just a focused sweep and repeatable habits. Use this checklist to clean, harden, and keep devices humming from anywhere.

1. Inventory & access

- ☐ Device shows in your source of truth (user, OS, last check-in)
- ☐ Local admin removed from standard users
- ☐ Default/guest accounts disabled
- ☐ BitLocker/FileVault on with escrowed recovery keys
- ☐ Former users fully removed (local + cloud sessions revoked)

Tip: If it isn’t in inventory, it’s a liability, not a laptop.

2. OS & updates

- ☐ OS on a supported release with latest cumulative update
- ☐ Auto-updates enabled; maintenance window defined
- ☐ Startup items reviewed; only essentials enabled
- ☐ No pending disk errors; SMART/battery healthy (avoid disruptive checks; schedule if needed)
- ☐ EDR/AV installed and last scan succeeded

Tip: “Remind me tomorrow” is not a patch strategy.

3. Software hygiene

- ☐ Unused apps/bloatware uninstalled
- ☐ Avoidance of conflicting agents; if EDR + Defender, enabled coexistence/passive mode per vendor guidance
- ☐ Required runtimes updated (.NET/VC++/Java as needed)
- ☐ Browser extensions allowlisted; junk removed
- ☐ Licenses reclaimed from decommissioned apps

Tip: “Fewer agents, fewer headaches, faster boots.

4. Storage & browser cleanup

- ☐ Temp, cache, Downloads trimmed; Recycle Bin emptied
- ☐ Large files (ISOs/VMs) archived or deleted
- ☐ Cloud sync conflicts resolved; known folders redirected
- ☐ Saved passwords moved to company password manager; browser store cleared
- ☐ Enforced tracking controls via managed browser policy with allowlisted auth/SaaS exceptions

Tip: Browsers are mini operating systems — treat them like one.

5. Network & remote access

- ☐ Wi-Fi profiles pruned to approved networks
- ☐ Public sharing/SMB disabled on untrusted networks
- ☐ Always-on VPN or ZTNA client auto-connects
- ☐ DNS filtering/secure resolver enforced
- ☐ RDP disabled unless brokered/gatewayed; block 3389 on WAN

Tip: If it’ll join “FreeAirportWiFi,” it’ll join an evil twin too.

6. Backup & offboarding

- ☐ User data backed up and last job succeeded
- ☐ Spot-restore test passed for at least one file
- ☐ Sensitive data scan run; findings remediated
- ☐ Departed user tokens/sessions revoked everywhere
- ☐ Corporate devices wiped and reenrolled before reassignment

Tip: If you can’t restore it, you don’t have it — you have hope.

How’d you do?

- 26–30 checks: Fleet is clean, locked down, and gloriously boring.
- 18–25 checks: Solid shape with a few dust bunnies — schedule monthly sweeps.
- Fewer than 18: Prioritize and automate — manual cleanup won’t scale.

Strong remote hygiene starts with visibility, repeatable policy, and push-button remediation. [Demo PDQ Connect](#) and make remote cleanup a routine, not a rescue mission.