

27 Keeping a logbook



Technique sheet

Problem-based learning resources

Introduction

A piece of machinery could be worked on by different engineers at different times. A logbook is used to record their work, and the date that it is completed, so that the people who come after, know what has been done.

You should also keep a personal logbook for yourself - what have you done and when? Perhaps note down what you learnt so that next time you do the same job you are not starting from nothing. The image shows a pilot's logbook recording all their flights and important details of each one.

What is a logbook for?

A logbook is a record of work done on a piece of equipment. Cars used to have logbooks that recorded their service history so that the engineers who worked on them know when parts had been replaced. Now most of this happens online but the idea is the same - to record work done. If you work on a piece of machinery, you will probably have to record the work and the date it was completed.

DATE	FREQ	TIME	STATION WORKED	RST	# QSO	COMMENTS	QSL
				S R	QTH	NAME	S R
11.22	7.112.2	2245 CST	KBØBIN	↑	579 1	MOM TOOK KEY - DAVE FIRST QSO	✓ ✓
11.24	7.143.1	0020 ^{CST} 0035 ^{CST}	KAØFVB	↑	549 2	FRIENDLY & ED ENCOURAGING	✓ ✓
11.25	6	0900 CST	WØXO	↑	599 3	PATIENT AND LONG SUFFERING CEDAR RAPIDS, IA LES JOHNSON	✓ ✓
11.26	3.679.1	2350 ^{CST} 0020	NIKHM	↑	549 4	GRN! SHARKY QSO... W. GREENWICH, RI	✓ ✓
11.28	3.714.1	0200 ^{CST} 0220	KAØFB?	↑	5	GRN; HAD TO QRT AMES, IA?	✓ ✓
11.29	7.126.1	1300 CST	WØUKX	↑	6		✓ ✓
1.20	7.120.4	0045 UTC	KC6SOC	↑	599 579 7	1ST QSO ON TS130S/OLYMPIA SAN JOSE, CA	✓ ✓
1.23	3.679.3	0730Z	K17UN	↑	8	LOST POWER, GENERATOR GLIDE, OR "STEVE"	✓ ✓
1.23	3.679.3		KB7WDP	↑	449 9	TOOK OVER QSO FROM MYRTLE CRK, OR TUCK	✓ ✓
1.24	7.116.0	0010- 0036 Z	KB91SU	↑	599 579 10	SLOW CW (GUD!) JAMESBORO, IN DAVE	✓ ✓
1.24	7.118.0	0030 0122 Z	KBØ4OK	↑	479 569 11	SET UP SHED ON LAWD-PADGE MANCHESTER, IA MOM	✓ ✓
1.25	7.14X.X	530- 540 PM PST	KD6TLF	↑	379 599 12	QSB	✓ ✓
1.25	7.145.9	620 637 PM PST	W7CQ	↑	479 599 13	FROM MOTORHOME LENGTH IS SEATTLE "TUSCON" AZ SAM	✓ ✓
1.26	7.115.1	410- 420P PST	KCTFWZ	↑	479 599 14	WE SIGN VERY WEAK 3-RATE TUNED TEMPE, AZ TERRY	✓ ✓
1.26	7.114.9	410- 420 PST	NG6HSU	↑	599 599 15	"RAIN" V HALF MOON BAY, CA	✓ ✓

Sometimes these records have to be validated by a senior member of staff who might use a special stamp or their signature to record their approval.

- Make sure you add any work you do in the logbook and keep it up to date – so the technician/engineer who comes after you knows what has been done and when.

What does a logbook look like?

Some pieces of machinery or systems come with a logbook designed by the equipment supplier. These can be paper-based, or a card left attached to the machine. Others are electronic versions. The form of the logbook is not important provided that it is clear, easy to access, and does not get lost in office moves or reorganisations! Some logbooks may contain sensitive information (e.g. passwords) so check with the client before taking away this information. If you think a workplace or situation is particularly chaotic you might want to ask if you can keep a photo of the completed log on your phone – just in case! Especially if you need to come back in a year's time or you have to report work done to your manager.

- Make sure you fill in the official logbook or card carefully – and keep your own record if you need to.

Do I need a logbook?

You are starting your career in engineering, and you will be learning all the time until you retire. This on-the-job learning will make you a better technician/engineer. A logbook is a useful way to record your

work and can help to optimise this important learning. Also, if something goes wrong you can look back and remind yourself of what was done – perhaps that component was not fitted properly or is there a fault somewhere else in the system? This means when you come to look again at the job you are not starting from scratch.

- Make sure you keep a personal logbook of your work – note down all the important details of the job done so that you will know more next time you have to do the same job.

What should go into my personal logbook?

Only record the important details. These might include the name and model number of any equipment fitted, the date it was installed and any notes that are specific to the particular job (e.g. this unit needed to be waterproof or work in high temperature environments). Your personal logbook is also a good place to jot down names, phone numbers and email addresses of people you have worked with (e.g. Jim is the stores person at the site and is very helpful if you need to borrow a stepladder or a power extension cord) in case you need to contact them again. Exactly what goes into your logbook is up to you but don't just rely on your memory for the key information!

- Make sure your logbook is up to date and contains the information you might need in the future. Paper is cheap – better to include too much than miss out essential information at the start. You can always reduce the amount you include as you become more experienced.



Who can see my logbook?

Some logbooks belong to the piece of equipment (e.g. the logbook in a car is linked to the relevant car and is passed on when the car is sold). However, your personal logbook belongs to you. You can choose to show it, or not, to anyone you wish. It is a private document. This means you can be honest and record details which are only relevant to you. Again, you will probably record more when you start your career and reduce the amount written as you get older and develop.

- Make sure you include everything relevant in your personal logbook and do not feel you have to share the information with others unless you choose to.



Check yourself

You should be able to answer these questions easily after reading this sheet.

1. What should a logbook contain and why is it useful?
2. Why is the date work was completed almost as important as a record of the work done?
3. Why should you never remove a logbook from the piece of equipment?



Taking it further

These activities will deepen your understanding of this topic.

1. Think of an activity you have engaged in recently. Prepare a logbook entry for this activity including:
 - what you did.
 - the context in which you worked (e.g. alone, part of a team, in a factory setting).
 - any technical details about the work (e.g. make and model of any equipment fitted).
 - any learning or qualifications you achieved.
 - any other thoughts which might be useful in the future (e.g. contact details).
2. Find a logbook or record card for an installation you have to work on. What information needs to be recorded and why? Do you need a special stamp or certificate to show the work has been completed?
3. Chat with an experienced engineer who works in the same field as you. Do they keep a logbook and what do they record in it? have they any advice for you?