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Get-paid-on-the-spot checklist

Fifteen habits that close the gap between finishing the job and having the money in your account.

Use this before, during, and after every job. Most unpaid work is lost in the gap between "the work is done" and "the money is in the account." These habits shrink that gap.

Before the job

- [ ] Write the price down and get a "yes" in writing (a text message counts) before you start.
- [ ] For big jobs, collect a deposit up front. Many trades use 25–50% for materials-heavy work.
- [ ] Tell the customer how you take payment, and when, before you arrive.
- [ ] Have a way to take a card on your phone, plus a backup (bank transfer, payment app, or check).
- [ ] Keep a blank invoice template ready. The free invoice builder works on a phone.

When the work is done

- [ ] Walk the customer through the finished work while you are still there.
- [ ] Hand over or send the invoice before you leave, not that evening.
- [ ] Ask for payment in the room: "How would you like to pay today?"
- [ ] If a card declines, agree on a new method and a date before you go.
- [ ] Snap a photo of the finished work and save it with the invoice.

After the job

- [ ] Send a receipt the same day.
- [ ] Follow up on anything unpaid at 3 days, 7 days, and 14 days, with a friendly, specific reminder.
- [ ] Write down every payment you had to chase. Patterns tell you which customers need a deposit next time.
- [ ] Review your unpaid list every Friday. Check what late payers cost you with the late payments calculator.
- [ ] Decide your write-off rule ahead of time, so you are not deciding it while you're tired and angry.

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