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FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Professional Client Cleanup Triage Checklist

A quick intake and risk-screening checklist for bookkeepers, tax preparers, and accountants reviewing messy client records.

Purpose: Use this before quoting or beginning cleanup work so scope, missing documents, risk areas, and client expectations are clearer.

Initial Scope Questions

Done	Review area	Notes
[ ]	Period needing cleanup	Confirm months/years, prior filings, and whether books must support tax returns, financing, audits, or internal management.
[ ]	Entity and tax profile	Confirm entity type, owners, employees, contractors, locations, sales tax, payroll, and industry-specific issues.
[ ]	Systems involved	Identify bank accounts, credit cards, loans, payment processors, POS systems, payroll providers, and bookkeeping software.
[ ]	Known pain points	Ask what is wrong: unreconciled accounts, duplicated income, missing receipts, negative balances, payroll issues, inventory, loans, or owner draws.

Document Request

- Bank and credit card statements for every account in scope.
- Loan statements, merchant processor reports, payroll reports, POS reports, and prior bookkeeping files.
- Prior tax returns, depreciation schedules, sales tax filings, payroll tax filings, and year-end wage/contractor forms.
- Access details or exported reports from bookkeeping software, payroll systems, and payment apps.

Risk Flags Before Quoting

- Client expects a fixed low price before the records are reviewed.
- Client cannot identify all bank accounts, loans, processors, or payroll systems used.
- Prior returns were filed from incomplete records or do not match current books.
- Payroll, sales tax, trust funds, commingled funds, or cash-heavy activity is involved.
- Client wants aggressive categorization without documentation or refuses to answer questions.

Quote Protection

Include	Recommended language area
[ ]	Scope by date range and account list
[ ]	Client document responsibilities
[ ]	Out-of-scope items and change-order trigger
[ ]	No guarantee of tax outcome or lender acceptance
[ ]	Pause rights if records are missing or inconsistent

Professional reminder: This checklist is a workflow aid, not a substitute for your professional judgment, engagement letter, licensing rules, or applicable standards.