

TIPS FOR FUTURE PIT CHIEFS

1. Checklists. Use checklists. Laminate them if you want. Regular lists are good too. You can try and remember everything you're going to need to do but if you think that under enormous pressure and time crunch with people yelling at you and very little sleep you're going to be able to remember a multi-step complex process on a multi-thousand-dollar highly technical machine, you're wrong.

2. You should be able to find any tool you brought with you within 10 seconds flat. Memorize where everything is, where it's supposed to be, and make a list in your head of who's using which tool and when they used it last; if it's not where it's supposed to be, you can ask them where it is.

3. Be calming, but assertive. Have a clear vision of how you want the pit to work, and make sure that if it's not happening you let your team know what needs to be done. You are the manager; if something isn't done, or you can't find it, it is your fault. It may have been someone else who put the tool in the wrong place, but it's still your pit; the higher ranks won't care who put what where, only that you can't find it when you need it. On the other side of that coin, don't go on a power trip either. All yelling must be beneficial to the flow of the pit. If there are 12 people in the pit and you can't move, don't be afraid to yell something along the lines of "everyone not on pit crew get out of the pit". (Slightly more for FIRST than vex)

4. Collaborate with the heads of the other divisions; mainly the drive team. You will need to work off of what they tell you in the field: what works, what doesn't work, and what they think could be improved. Make sure that the drive team knows when they have to be in queue, so that they can give you an accurate time frame for when things need to be done. Don't let them take the robot away without making sure everything is secured that needs to be and the robot is, in fact, safe to run.(FIRST)

5. Battery and bumper changes are something that need to be down to a science; Bumpers need to be changeable by two people within five minutes; battery changes should take less time than this. Consider keeping a list or schedule for the batteries; knowing which battery has a better hold on charge can be important. The ability to reprogram the robot should also be a fairly practiced routine, or at least should be doable relatively quickly. (Mainly FIRST, but also partially applicable to vex)

6. Don't be afraid **to ask other teams for parts or tools**, generally they are very kind and like to offer a helping hand. Try to reciprocate this as much as possible; consider keeping a list of things you've lent to other teams and which teams have them.