

Use this checklist during code review or codebase audits to spot drift before it spreads. Check each item you find in your codebase, then score yourself at the bottom.



Colors

- Hardcoded hex values (`#3B82F6`) instead of tokens
- RGB/HSL values that don't match any defined color
- Slight variations of brand colors (`#3A81F5` vs `#3B82F6`)
- Opacity hacks instead of defined color scales
- Colors defined in component files, not imported from tokens



Typography

- Font sizes that don't match your type scale
- Hardcoded `font-family` declarations
- Line heights that drift from defined ratios
- Font weights outside your allowed set
- Letter-spacing tweaks on individual components



Spacing

- Arbitrary pixel values (`padding: 13px`) outside your scale
- Inconsistent spacing on similar components
- Magic numbers with no explanation (`margin-top: 37px`)
- Mixing units (px, rem, em) without a system
- Tailwind arbitrary values (`p-[13px]`) instead of scale classes



Components

- Inline styles overriding component defaults
- `!important` used to force style changes
- Wrapper divs adding custom spacing around components
- Copy-pasted component code instead of imports
- "One-off" components that duplicate existing patterns

Score Yourself

0-3

Healthy

4-8

Early Drift

9-15

Significant

16+

Critical

What Causes Drift?

**Deadlines**

"I'll fix it later"

**Discovery**

Can't find the token

**Convenience**

Hardcoding is faster

**Gaps**

System doesn't cover it

**Entropy**

Small drifts compound

Stop Drift Automatically

Buoy scans every PR for design drift and posts findings automatically.

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