SEO Birdy

Local SEO Checklist

All 40 steps to rank in your city, in the order that works, with a NAP record sheet, citation tracker and monthly routine.

FREE GUIDE · NOVEMBER 2026 · SEOBIRDY.COM



How to use this checklist

Work top to bottom. Each section depends on the one before it: a perfect website can't make up for the wrong Google Business Profile category, and reviews can't fix a listing with the wrong phone number. Tick each step when it's done and checked, not when it's started.

Business: _____ Date started: _____ Done by: _____

1. Google Business Profile (steps 1 to 10)

- [ ] **1. Claim and verify the profile.** Search Maps for your name and city, then claim it. Verified profiles are more likely to appear in results.
- [ ] **2. Use your real-world business name.** Exactly as on your signage. No keywords, cities or taglines.
- [ ] **3. Pick the most specific primary category.** Categories tell Google what your business is.
- [ ] **4. Add secondary categories only for what you are.** Services go in the services section.
- [ ] **5. Address or service areas set correctly.** Service-area businesses hide the address; up to 20 areas, within about two hours' drive.
- [ ] **6. Regular hours and holiday hours entered.** Set special hours before every public holiday.
- [ ] **7. Description says what you do and where.** Plain sentences, no links or promotions.
- [ ] **8. Services and products filled in.** One line per service, in customers' words.
- [ ] **9. Real photos uploaded.** Storefront or vehicles, team, finished work. Add new ones monthly.
- [ ] **10. Posting regularly.** Offers, tips, recent jobs.

> **Never** add a keyword or city to your business name unless it's part of your legal, real-world name. Google's guidelines don't permit it, and a suspended profile disappears from Maps.

2. Local keywords (steps 11 to 14)

- [ ] **11. Every service listed with the places you serve.** "Service + city" and "service near me".
- [ ] **12. Profile search terms checked.** Business Profile performance shows the terms people used to find you.

- [ ] **13. Search Console connected and queries reviewed.** Look for page-two terms you can push up.
- [ ] **14. One main keyword per page.** No two pages chasing the same search.

Service	Main keyword	Page URL

3. Website and on-page (steps 15 to 22)

- [ ] **15. Title tags name the service and city.** Under about 60 characters.
- [ ] **16. One page per core service.** Cost, timing, what's included, how to book.
- [ ] **17. City pages only where you have something real to say.** No copy-paste pages that only swap the city name.
- [ ] **18. NAP in the footer of every page.** Identical to your profile, phone number clickable.
- [ ] **19. Map embedded on the contact page.**
- [ ] **20. LocalBusiness schema added and tested.** Most specific type, name, address, phone, hours, URL.
- [ ] **21. Fast and usable on a phone.** Compressed images, no intrusive pop-ups, big buttons.
- [ ] **22. Key pages audited.** Title, description, headings, alt text, schema.

4. Reviews (steps 23 to 28)

- [ ] **23. Every customer asked, the same way.** Text or email after the job with your direct link.
- [ ] **24. Review link on invoices, receipts, QR code and email signature.**
- [ ] **25. Every review answered.** Short, personal, not promotional.
- [ ] **26. Negative reviews answered calmly.** Acknowledge, apologize where fair, take it offline.
- [ ] **27. No incentives, no filtering.** Google bans paid or incentivized reviews and review gating.
- [ ] **28. No fake or insider reviews.** The FTC's 2024 rule bans fake reviews and buying reviews.

5. Citations and listings (steps 29 to 33)

- [ ] **29. One true NAP written down** (sheet below).
- [ ] **30. Bing Places and Apple Business claimed.**
- [ ] **31. Core directories covered.** Yelp, Facebook, BBB, Nextdoor, chamber of commerce, one or two trade directories.
- [ ] **32. Old addresses and phone numbers searched and fixed.**
- [ ] **33. No paid bulk directory packages.**

Your one true NAP

Field	Exactly as it should appear everywhere
Business name	
Street address	
Suite / unit format	
City, state, ZIP	
Phone number	
Website URL	
Primary category	

Citation tracker

Listing	URL	NAP correct?	Date checked
Google Business Profile		Y / N	
Bing Places		Y / N	
Apple Business		Y / N	
Yelp		Y / N	
Facebook		Y / N	
Better Business Bureau		Y / N	
Chamber of commerce		Y / N	
Trade directory		Y / N	
		Y / N	

6. Local links (steps 34 to 36)

- [ ] **34. Existing relationships turned into links.** Suppliers, manufacturers, associations, partners.
- [ ] **35. One local sponsorship or event a quarter.** Youth sports, charity, school.
- [ ] **36. Pitched one useful story to local news.** Seasonal advice from your trade.

7. AI and voice search (steps 37 to 38)

- [ ] **37. FAQ on each service page.** Cost, timing, areas served, in plain sentences.
- [ ] **38. Checked what ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity say.** Who do they recommend for your service and city?

8. Tracking (steps 39 to 40)

- [ ] **39. Map rank tracked across a grid of your area.** Not just from your office.
- [ ] **40. Three numbers recorded every month.**

Month	Avg. map rank	Profile calls + directions	Website clicks (Search Console)

Your routine after setup

Every week	Every month	Every quarter
Reply to every new review	Check map rank across your area	Run this whole checklist again
Publish one profile post	Record calls, directions, clicks	Re-check categories and competitors
Ask every finished customer for a review	Check for profile edits you didn't make	Search old NAP and fix listings
Add new photos	Check Search Console clicks by page	Ask AI assistants who they recommend

Sources. Ranking factors (relevance, distance, prominence) and the rule that you can't pay for a better ranking: Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google". Name, address and category rules: "Guidelines for representing your business on Google". Service areas: "Manage your service areas". Review rules: Google Maps "Prohibited & restricted content" and the FTC's August 2024 final rule on fake reviews.



Free tools from SEO Birdy

Website SEO Audit, AI Visibility Audit and Fan-Out Map at seobirdy.com/tools. The full guide behind this checklist: www.seobirdy.com/blog/local-seo-checklist