SOFTWARE LICENSE COMPLIANCE
READINESS CHECKLIST

*To ensure compliance and smooth cooperation with auditors, companies must follow best practices when preparing for a software license audit. Here are key '**DO's**' to help you assess your readiness.*

- **Conduct Regular Internal Audits:** Proactively review software usage and compliance through internal audits to prevent issues during the external audit. All anomalies identified have been mitigated.

- **Maintain Organized Documentation:** Keep all licensing agreements, terms of usage policies, purchase orders, receipts, and renewal documents well-organized and easily accessible.

- **Use IT Asset Management (SAM + HAM) Tools:** Invest in ITAM tools to automatically track and manage software licenses, ensuring real-time compliance. All endpoint anomalies are identified have been mitigated.

- **Appoint a Single Point of Contact:** Designate a knowledgeable employee or team to manage communication with the auditors and streamline the process.

- **Cooperate with Auditors:** Be transparent and responsive. Provide documentation promptly and answer auditors' questions to ensure a smooth and professional audit process.

- **Review and Understand the Audit Scope:** Clarify with the auditor which software products and licenses are being audited to avoid providing unnecessary information.

- **Stakeholder Governance:** Educate staff on compliance policies and the importance of proper software usage to avoid accidental violations. Audit escalation committees are established attended by key decision makers.

- **Prepare and Communicate Internal Compliance Plan:** Have a plan in place to successfully complete the audit. Where required, address any identified compliance issues, such as buying additional licenses or removing unlicensed software.

- **Keep Track of License Renewals:** Stay on top of upcoming license renewals to avoid lapses in compliance or unintentional use of expired licenses. Shelfware licenses should be refunded or traded in for required licenses.

- **Ensure Accurate Reporting:** Double-check the accuracy of the data provided to the auditors, whether it's usage reports or inventory lists, and the format you share it complies with your privacy policies.

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*To ensure compliance and smooth cooperation with auditors, companies must follow best practices when preparing for a software license audit. Here are key '**DON'T's**' to help you assess your readiness.*

- **Don't Ignore the Audit Notification:** Failing to respond or ignoring an audit request can result in fines or legal consequences.
- **Don't Hide Information:** Trying to hide non-compliance or providing false information can escalate the situation, leading to more severe penalties.
- **Don't Wait Until the Last Minute:** Don't scramble to gather information right before the audit. Lack of preparation can lead to missed deadlines and non-compliance findings. If you need help, seek it out in a timely manner.
- **Don't Provide Unrequested Information:** Avoid offering information beyond the scope of the audit. Stick to what the auditor has asked for to avoid unnecessary scrutiny.
- **Don't Panic if Non-Compliance is Found:** If discrepancies are discovered, handle them calmly by negotiating settlements or purchasing the necessary licenses.
- **Don't Assume Auditors Will Find Everything:** Even if auditors miss something, it's your responsibility to maintain compliance, so always self-correct before an issue arises.
- **Don't Overestimate the Power of ITAM Tools:** SAM + HAM tools help, but don't solely rely on automation. Regular human oversight is critical for ensuring compliance accuracy.
- **Don't Forget to Document Compliance Efforts:** Failure to document actions taken to ensure compliance can weaken your case in the event of disputes with auditors.
- **Don't Neglect Older or Legacy Software:** Auditors may target legacy systems or older software still in use, so ensure that all software, not just the newest, is properly licensed.
- **Don't Delay Addressing Compliance Gaps:** If the audit reveals gaps in compliance, address them immediately to prevent further risks and penalties.

*By following these '**DO's**' and avoiding the '**DON'T's**', companies can navigate software license audits more effectively and minimize potential risks and penalties.*