CRITICAL SPARES REVIEW / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Which shortage could keep critical equipment out of service?

The management decision

Start with the equipment the business can least afford to lose. Verify availability and delivery times for its critical spares before deciding whether to increase stock.

A storeroom can hold plenty of stock and still be missing one part with a long delivery time. Buying more of everything ties up budget and can leave obsolete stock. A critical spares review links purchasing priorities to the consequences of a shortage, the time to obtain a part and the stock your site can actually use. The result can support a more focused budget discussion as well as a more useful stock list.

Worked example

A part takes ten weeks to arrive and available stock covers six weeks at expected usage. That leaves four weeks of possible exposure before the next delivery, subject to actual demand and reservations.

Example figure	What it represents
10 wk	Wait for delivery
6 wk	Time stock may last
4 wk	Time without stock

What changes the answer

If the supplier confirms a six-week lead time, the assumed gap closes. Verify that the stock on the shelf is available to this asset and has not been reserved elsewhere.

Critical spares review

What to commission

Review parts for one critical asset group against available stock, reservations and supplier lead times.

We compare parts records with stock and availability, identify missing or uncertain information and consider where repairs or alternatives change the picture. We note which assumptions the buyer or supplier should verify.

How to judge the result

Every priority item has a reason, a verified figure or supplier question, and an owner for the buying decision.

Compare the cost of carrying an additional part with the exposure if stock runs out. Check repair options, reservations and obsolescence before setting an order quantity.

Decision worksheet

Project detail	Starting point for your team
Decision owner	Maintenance planner and spares buyer. Name the person who will approve the next step.
Records to gather	Important equipment and its spare parts, stock quantities and available supplier delivery times.
Agreed output	A ranked spare-parts register with reasons for each priority and supplier questions.
Decision date	Record the deadline, any unresolved assumption and who will confirm it.

Discuss this case

Tell us which equipment you could least afford to have out of service and which parts are difficult to obtain. Mention any supplier deadline or budget review. A narrow example, such as the spares for one line, is enough to explore a sensible first scope.

Email info@oxetc.co.uk and mention ENG-16. All figures in the worked example are illustrative.