

Eliminating Emergency Orders A 4-Week Plan

Break the cycle of rush shipping and panic ordering

Article 3 of 22

9 min-minute read

\$25-75

Typical rush shipping
fee per order

80%

Of emergencies are
preventable

4 Weeks

To build a system
that catches problems

Emergency and rush orders are expensive—not just because of expedited shipping fees, but because of the staff time spent on urgent calls, the disruption to normal workflow, and the stress they add to your team. Most emergency orders are preventable with a structured approach.

1 Week 1: Document Every Emergency Order

For one full week, log every emergency or rush order. Record the item, the reason it became urgent (unexpected volume spike, missed reorder, supplier backorder, expired stock), and the extra cost incurred. At the end of the week, categorize the reasons. In most labs, 80% of emergency orders fall into two or three root causes.

QUICK TIP: Use the Emergency Order Log template to track every rush order.

2 Week 2: Set Reorder Points for Your Top 20 Items

For each of your 20 highest-volume reagents, calculate a reorder point: the inventory level at which you should place a new order. The formula is: $\text{Reorder Point} = (\text{Average Daily Usage} \times \text{Lead Time in Days}) + \text{Safety Stock}$. Start with a safety stock of three to five days of usage.

QUICK TIP: Write reorder points on shelf labels for instant visual checks.

3 Week 3: Assign Inventory Ownership

Assign a specific person per shift as the inventory owner. Their job is to check stock levels against reorder points at a set frequency—daily for high-volume items, weekly for slower movers. Give them 15 minutes per day and make it a documented responsibility.

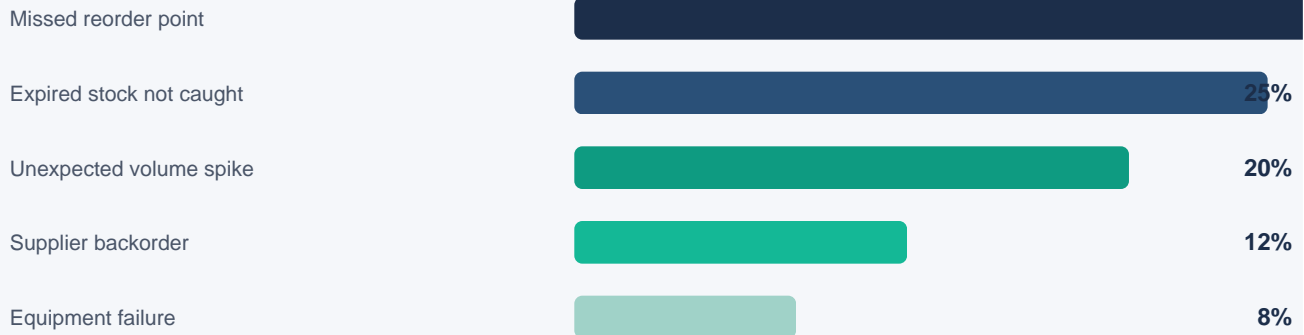
QUICK TIP: Make inventory checks a documented daily task, not an afterthought.

4 Week 4: Build a Standing Order Calendar

For predictable, steady-use items, set up standing orders with your supplier on a regular schedule—weekly or biweekly. This smooths out ordering, gives your supplier predictability, and reduces the chance of something slipping through the cracks. Review quantities monthly.

QUICK TIP: Standing orders for top 10 items eliminate most ordering gaps.

ROOT CAUSES OF EMERGENCY ORDERS



Typical root cause analysis from independent labs

BOTTOM LINE: The goal is not perfection in week four. It is building a system that catches problems before they become emergencies. Most labs see emergency orders drop by 70–80% within two months.

FREE TOOLS TO GET STARTED

Template	What It Does
Emergency Order Log	Track every rush order with root cause analysis
Reorder Point Calculator	Auto-calculate par levels and safety stock for top items

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