

# Local SEO Checklist (2026)

A 40-Point Guide for Small Businesses

Local SEO

Reviews

Citations

On-Page

Authority

Check off each item. Score yourself at the end.  
1 point per item • 40 points total

**How to use this checklist** Work through each section top to bottom. Check off items as you complete them. Give yourself 1 point per item and score yourself at the end. Prioritize any unchecked items in your next marketing sprint. Share this PDF with your team or use it in a client SEO audit.

## Google Business Profile Optimization

12 ITEMS

### Claim & verify your Google Business Profile

- 1 Go to [business.google.com](https://business.google.com) and complete the verification process so Google knows the listing is yours.

### Choose the most accurate primary category

- 2 Pick the category that best describes what your business does — this is one of the biggest ranking factors.

### Add all relevant secondary categories

- 3 If your business offers multiple services (e.g., plumber + drain cleaning), add those as secondary categories.

### Fill out your business description completely

- 4 Write a clear 2–3 sentence description using your city and main service naturally — keep it factual, not salesy.

### Add your correct NAP (Name, Address, Phone)

- 5 Make sure your business name, address, and phone number exactly match what's on your website.

### Set accurate business hours (including holidays)

- 6 Update your hours seasonally and mark any special holiday hours so customers always see correct info.

### Upload at least 10 high-quality photos

- 7 Add photos of your storefront, interior, team, and work — listings with photos get more clicks and direction requests.

### Add your full list of products or services

- 8 Use the Services or Products tab to list what you offer — this helps Google match your listing to more searches.

### Enable and respond to Google Q&A

- 9 Seed common questions yourself (and answer them) before customers ask — this shows up in your profile publicly.

### Post to Google Business Profile weekly

- 10 Share offers, updates, or tips using the Posts feature — active profiles rank better and look more credible.

### Add your website URL and booking link

- 11 Link directly to your website and, if applicable, your online booking page so customers can act immediately.

### Turn on messaging if you can respond quickly

- 12 Enabling the chat feature can increase enquiries — but only turn it on if you can reply within a few hours.

## Local Citations & Listings

8 ITEMS

### List your business on Yelp, Bing Places, and Apple Maps

- 13 These three platforms are the most important citation sources outside of Google — claim and complete each one.

### Submit to industry-specific directories

- 14 Restaurants: OpenTable/Zomato. Trades: HomeStars/Houzz. Medical: RateMDs/Healthgrades. Pick 2–3 relevant ones.

### Ensure NAP is identical across all listings

- 15 Even small differences (St. vs Street, Suite vs Ste.) can confuse Google — keep everything perfectly consistent.

### Fix or remove duplicate listings

- 16 Search your business name on Google and claim or delete any old/duplicate profiles that might dilute your presence.

### Add your business to the Better Business Bureau

- 17 A BBB listing is a trusted citation that also builds credibility with potential customers browsing for reviews.

### List on your local Chamber of Commerce directory

- 18 Local chamber directories carry strong geographic authority signals — these are often free to join or inexpensive.

### Submit to data aggregators (Foursquare, Data Axle)

- 19 These services push your info to dozens of smaller directories automatically — tools like BrightLocal can help.

### Check that your website URL is included in every listing

- 20 Every directory profile should link back to your website — these are valuable local backlinks for SEO.

## On-Page Local SEO Signals

10 ITEMS

### Include your city/region in your homepage title tag

- 21 Your title tag should read something like: [Service] in [City] | [Business Name] — this is a top ranking signal.

### Add a location-specific H1 heading on your homepage

- 22 Your main heading (H1) should clearly mention your service and city — e.g., 'Plumber in Halifax, NS'.

### Create a dedicated Contact page with full NAP

- 23 Your name, address, and phone number should appear as plain text on your contact page (not just in an image).

### Embed a Google Map on your contact page

- 24 Embedding a Google Map of your location sends a local relevance signal and makes it easy for visitors to find you.

### Add LocalBusiness schema markup to your website

- 25 Schema markup is hidden code that tells Google exactly what your business is — use Google's structured data tools.

### Create location-specific service pages

- 26 If you serve multiple cities, build a separate page for each (e.g., /plumber-moncton, /plumber-fredericton).

### Mention nearby neighbourhoods and landmarks naturally

- 27 Weaving in local references (neighbourhood names, nearby landmarks) helps confirm your geographic relevance to Google.

### Optimize your meta descriptions for local search

- 28 Write a 150-character summary that mentions your city and service — it shows in search results and affects click-through.

### Make sure your site loads fast on mobile

- 29 Over 60% of local searches happen on phones — test your speed at PageSpeed Insights and fix any critical issues.

### Add alt text to images that includes local keywords

- 30 When naming or describing images, include your service and city naturally (e.g., 'licensed electrician in Saint John').

## Reviews & Reputation

6 ITEMS

### Ask every happy customer for a Google review

- 31 The simplest way: after a great job, text or email a direct link to your Google review page and ask politely.

### Respond to every review — positive and negative

- 32 Responding shows Google (and customers) you're active and engaged — a single response template per type saves time.

### Aim for a steady stream of reviews, not a burst

- 33 Getting 20 reviews in one week then nothing for a year looks suspicious — consistency matters more than volume.

### Include your city and service in your review responses

- 34 When responding, naturally mention your service and location: 'Thanks for choosing us for your plumbing in Moncton!'

### Address negative reviews calmly and professionally

- 35 Respond within 24–48 hours, acknowledge the concern, and offer to resolve it offline — how you handle this matters.

### Diversify reviews across platforms (Google, Yelp, Facebook)

- 36 While Google reviews matter most, having reviews on 2–3 platforms strengthens your overall online reputation.

## Local Authority Signals

4 ITEMS

### Earn a backlink from at least one local news site or blog

- 37 Getting mentioned by a local publication (even a small one) sends a strong geographic authority signal to Google.

### Sponsor or participate in a local event or community org

- 38 Sponsorships often include a website link from a local organization — great for authority and community visibility.

### Build a local resource page or city-specific blog content

- 39 Publishing content like 'Best time to repipe a home in [City]' attracts local links and positions you as a local expert.

### Get listed on local government or association websites

- 40 Contractor registers, business improvement associations, and professional licensing boards often have public directories.

## Your Score

Give yourself 1 point for every item you check off. Total = 40 points.

35 – 40

**Excellent**

Strong local SEO foundation. Keep maintaining and improving.

25 – 34

**Good**

Solid base, but real improvement opportunities still exist.

15 – 24

**Weak**

Your local SEO presence needs significant attention.

0 – 14

**Critical**

Major visibility gaps — start at item #1 and work forward.

Not where you want to be? Pick the lowest-hanging fruit first.

[keenan.digital](#) → [Free audit to find your biggest quick wins](#)

MY SCORE:

\_\_\_\_\_ / 40

### Want a done-for-you local SEO audit?

We'll review your Google Business Profile, citations, on-page setup, and reviews — then give you a prioritized action plan. No commitment, no fluff.

[keenan.digital](#)

[Free Audit](#) →