

A starting-point records checklist

For kiln-based biochar producers

A starting point, not a complete list. Every standard adds requirements of its own, and some will ask for records that aren't on this page. This stops you losing evidence; it does not tell you that you qualify.

Write a Standard Operating Procedure. For every record on this page — who captures it, what exactly gets written down, when, where it goes, and how. That is what makes it come out the same whoever runs the burn that day.

Write everything against the burn. Give each burn a date and an ID — 2026-08-05-A is plenty. Tie the feedstock in and the char out to that same ID.

01 Feedstock

- ☐ **What it was** — material, species if woody, green or seasoned
- ☐ **Where it came from** — source, location, whose land
- ☐ **How much** — and whether you measured volume or weight
- ☐ **Fuel or power to move and process it** — loader, tractor, chipper or grinder, conveyor; hours run or fuel used
- ☐ **Date it arrived, and date it was burned** (*often not the same day*)
- ☐ **Anything on paper from the supplier** — invoice, hauling ticket, tipping receipt, agreement
- ☐ **What would have happened to it otherwise** — pile burn, left to rot, landfill, chipped
- ☐ **A photo of the pile before you touched it**

02 Kiln pyrolysis

- ☐ **Burn ID and date**
- ☐ **Which kiln** — type, size, which unit if you run more than one
- ☐ **Who ran it**
- ☐ **Which feedstock went into this burn**, and how much of it
- ☐ **Start and finish time**
- ☐ ♦ **Production temperature**, however you can capture it
- ☐ **How you quenched**, and roughly how much water
- ☐ **Fuel or power the kiln itself used** — blower, auger, quench pump, generator; hours run or fuel used
- ☐ **Anything odd** — rain, wind, incomplete burn, relight, early shutdown
- ☐ **Photos** — the charge, the burn, the quench, the yield

03 Biochar

- ☐ **How much came out of that burn** — the number, the unit you measured in, the burn ID
- ☐ ♦ **Bulk density**, whenever you can measure it — *what turns a volume into a mass*
- ☐ **How wet it was when you measured it** — *what turns a wet mass into a dry one*
- ☐ **Container or bag IDs**, and how much is in each
- ☐ ♦ **Sampling record** — which burn, which container, what date, who took it
- ☐ ♦ **Lab results** — organic carbon and H:C ratio
- ☐ ♦ **Retention samples**, and where they're kept
- ☐ **Fuel or power to move it on site** — kiln to storage, storage to truck; hours run or fuel used
- ☐ ♦ **Where it went, and how** — storage, then either applied on site (rate and area) or hauled away (carrier, date, who received it)

♦ **Moving target** — the metric, and how finely it is measured, differ by methodology. Recording more than you think you need keeps your options open.

WHICH RECORDS CARRY THE MOST WEIGHT

STRONGEST

Someone else
made it, for their
own reasons

Feedstock invoices · lab
results · sales invoices

STRONG

Made at the time,
and not yours
to change

Signed delivery receipts ·
phone photos with date
and location attached

WEAKER

Your own records,
written as it
happened

Burn logs · operator sheets
· photos with no date
or location

LAST RESORT

Someone's word,
written down
afterwards

A statement reconstructing
what happened

The higher up this list,
the less anyone has to
take your word for it.

Five questions for your own operation

A screen, not a verdict — most answers change your route, not whether you carry on

Answer these standing at your own kiln. Every one is a yes or a no, and every “no” has something to do about it — usually a different pathway rather than a dead end. Only one of the five has no way around it. None of them decides whether you qualify; that is what a methodology is for.

01 Can you prove when your first burn was?

Not remember — prove. A dated invoice, a photo with the date still on it, a receipt.

If no — argue a *new* project. New kiln, new feedstock, new investment, and the clock starts there instead. Losing the old date is not losing the project.

02 Can you measure the mass of feedstock you actually use?

Mass, per burn — not volume, not “a truckload.”

If no — get a scale on it, or build a volume-to-mass conversion you can show your working for. Until then you cannot defend what came out.

03 Can you commit to sampling on repeated days, and get the samples to a lab?

Homogenize the char, pull samples, log which burn they came from, ship them. It’s a routine, not a one-off.

If no — VM0044 under VCS has defaults for both the carbon values and the permanence values, with production temperature (measured, or defaulted if you don’t measure it) standing in for the lab result. If you stay on a path that needs sampling, name whoever owns it: this one fails quietly, from being nobody’s job.

04 Can you measure both the mass of char you make and its water content?

If you’re applying char where you make it, nobody else weighs it for you. Wet mass on its own isn’t a number.

If no — learn to. This is the one with no way around it: without mass and moisture there is no number to credit, on any pathway.

05 Can you hold retention samples?

Somewhere dry, labeled, tied to a burn.

If no — again VM0044 under VCS, which does not ask for them. If you stay where they are required, a dry shelf and a marker pen is the cheapest yes on this page.

The answers move between methodologies. How often you sample, whether a lab result is needed at all, how a start date is set — these differ by standard, and sometimes sharply. These questions tell you where you stand today, not which standard will take you.