EcomLabs

CHECKLIST AND REVERSAL TEMPLATE

# Code freeze before Black Friday

The freeze dates, what gets frozen and what stays open, the template for each urgent fix with its reversal, and the checklist to take to your team. The dates are for Black Friday 2026.

| | |
|---|---|
| FOR | Shopify stores and teams that deploy themes, apps or checkout extensions |
| TESTED WITH | Guard script: Node 22.22.3 · Windows 11 (in the article) |
| UPDATED | November 12, 2026 |
| DOCS | help.shopify.com/en/manual/online-store/themes/managing-themes/publishing-themes |
| ARTICLE | ecomlabs.dev/g/freeze-en |
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BEFORE YOU START

## What this guide covers

A code freeze is an agreement: for a fixed period, nobody changes the store's code or configuration unless something blocks a sale or charges the wrong amount. Here are the dates for Black Friday 2026 (Friday, November 27), what gets frozen, the template for each exception and the reversal for each type of change. The full urgent-fix process is in the smoke test article.

STEP 01

## The dates

| DATE | REFERENCE | WHAT HAPPENS |
|---|---|---|
| Fri Nov 13 | BF-14 | The last large change ships, with a week of real traffic ahead |
| Fri Nov 20 | BF-7 | The freeze starts at the end of the working day |
| Fri Nov 27 | BF | Black Friday |
| Mon Nov 30 | BF+3 | Cyber Monday |
| Tue Dec 1 | BF+4 | The freeze ends; the backlog goes out one change at a time from Dec 2 |

Write date, time and time zone in the team calendar and in the agreement with every agency with access.

STEP 02

## What gets frozen and what stays open

| FROZEN | OPEN |
|---|---|
| Theme code and settings on the live theme (the theme editor too) | Product copy, prices, images and stock |
| Apps that touch the store or checkout: install, remove, configure | Collection order |
| Checkout extensions and Functions | Discounts created and tested before, switched on by schedule |
| Tracking scripts, pixels and tags | Watching: alerts and the smoke test stay on |
| Navigation, URLs and redirects | |

> **CAUTION**
> The freeze does not reach vendors: an app can change without you doing anything. Ask them beforehand whether they plan releases.

STEP 03

## The urgent-exception template

Urgent means it blocks a sale or charges the wrong amount. One ticket per exception, with these fields written before the two approvers sign:

- **Ticket:** `URG-number`.
- **What fails and with what input:** product, variant, quantity, discount code, device.
- **What the fix changes.**
- **Approval:** one business person and one technical person, with phone numbers.
- **Reversal:** the row from the table below, with the version or theme name.
- **Verification:** smoke test before and after, and the manual check from the report.

STEP 04

## The reversal for each type of change

| CHANGE | UNDONE BY | WATCH FOR |
|---|---|---|
| Theme | Publishing the backup theme; the live one moves to drafts | A store holds at most 20 themes |
| An app's embed | Turning the embed off in the theme editor | The app stays installed |
| Function or checkout extension | `shopify app release --version=VERSION` | Can take several minutes; names come from `versions list` |
| Discount | Deactivating it | Test with a cart |
| Script or pixel | Removing the snippet | Keep the previous code |

WHEN YOU FINISH

## Freeze checklist

- [ ] Both dates are written down and everyone with access has confirmed them.
- [ ] The last large change shipped with a week of real traffic.
- [ ] The list of what is frozen and what stays open is visible to the team.
- [ ] Apps you do not use are removed and access is reduced.
- [ ] Each exception carries a ticket, two approvals and its reversal row.
- [ ] Checkout alerts and the smoke test are active for the whole freeze.
- [ ] On Dec 1: you read the urgent-fix log and the smoke test is green before releasing the backlog.