Sophisticated Technology Helps Simple Tasks

Sometimes the best use of high technology can be to solve a simple problem.

For Scafftag, a U.K. company that makes Safetrak, an electronic inspection management system, working with the capabilities of radio-frequency identification (RFID) has allowed them to develop cutting-edge solutions to seemingly low-tech problems.

Too much time, too much paper

Among the clients that use Safetrak is British Energy, which initially used the system as a pilot project for ladder safety, a seemingly simple task that was actually causing some logistic problems. With multiple ladders scattered around a work site, easily keeping track of which ladder was where and ensuring that each had been inspected and received any necessary attention was a time-consuming and paperwork-intensive task.

On-the-spot information

The new system uses individual RFID tags on each ladder. Using a pre-programmed TDS ReconTM rugged handheld computer equipped with RFID technology, the inspector merely identifies each ladder using its RFID tag and then enters maintenance or repair data from an on-the-spot inspection. After the site inspections are complete, the location and inspection data are downloaded to a PC, and a report showing all needed maintenance and repairs is developed.

As Andrew Devonport, spokesperson for Scafftag, sums it up, “This process saves so much time. All the repair crew has to do is go back and look at any defects that have been highlighted. It’s a very straight forward system.” British Energy has since expanded its use of Safetrak to include inspections of fire extinguishers, microwave ovens and other devices.

Reliable data in rugged environments

EDF Energy, an international electricity distribution and generation company, uses Safetrak to track maintenance inspections of electrical test equipment. Their system works similarly to British Energy’s – inspectors use RFID tags to identify individual pieces of equipment, enter inspection data and later download that data to create detailed maintenance and repair reports.

The difference to EDF’s situation is that many of the inspections are performed in challenging environments – the handheld computer is exposed to oil, gas, dirt and inclement weather. But the rugged Recon has military-level durability and is impervious to water and dust, allowing the inspection to take place in virtually any conditions.

Putting technology to the task

The bottom line for both customers is the same: Without innovations like RFID and rugged handheld mobile computers, mundane tasks like inventorying, maintenance and repair could be a lot more time and trouble than they need to be.

For more information about the Recon visit www.ultrarugged.com or www.handheldgroup.com

Challenge

Keeping track of worksite ladders or electrical test equipment was a time consuming and paperwork-intensive task that needed modernization.

Solution

A rugged handheld with RFID reader can read RFID tags on every piece of equipment even in challenging environments and create detailed maintenance and repair reports.

Result

The Safetrak system makes maintenance and repair a lot faster and easier as all work-site equipment is easily tracked and inspected according to the reports.

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Handheld and its partners deliver complete mobility solutions to businesses in industries such as logistics, forestry, public transportation, construction, military and security.

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