

Onsite accounting of operatives/visitors

Users	Site security
Location	Site entry/exit
Solutions	Many
User benefits	Low
Org. benefits	Medium
Implementation	Easy

Process description

When operatives arrive on site they are required to sign-in. There are various mechanisms currently in use; handwritten sign in accompanied by an identity card, swipe cards and barcodes. This process is repeated when they leave the site. Dependent on the method used there will either be a manual process carried out to identify who is on site at any one time or there will be a computer register created. If a visitor arrives on site, they will sign in manually, and be issued a temporary visitor's pass which will have to be surrendered when they sign out. If an operative is new to the site he/she will be treated as a visitor until they have been inducted and issued with some form of identity card.



Background

Although each site will have many operatives and visitors coming and going each day as long as there is only one entry/exit point for the site keeping these records is relatively simple.

Many sites still use a paper form to log individuals on site; however some sites are beginning to use swipe cards or barcodes for their operatives.

If paper records are used then over the course of a project, an extensive library of records can be created. This information is not easily searchable and is more subject to loss of information. If there is an emergency on site and a log of who is currently on site is needed this information cannot be provided instantly and requires a manual correlation of sign-in and sign-out data.

Using an electronic database makes the information is more readily accessible. However, information may still be duplicated as the information collected at sign-in and sign-out is often not reused for completion of timesheets.

Visitors are often treated differently to operatives and hence a parallel system is required.

Current issues

The following issues have been raised for this process:

- On large sites, it is sometimes difficult to track down a single operative or visitor.
- Information from sign-in and out is often not compared or used for completing timesheets for payment.
- Regular visitors have to go through the same sign-in process and re-enter their details each time they visit the site.
- Paper records are difficult to search and quickly collate a list of people on site at any one time.

Mobile solutions

The simplest solution is to issue operatives and regular visitors with swipe cards that can be used to enter and exit the site and the operatives can also use these to register information for inclusion on their time sheets.

In addition, one-off visitors can sign in using an input screen and this data can then be added to the record of visitors' database.

Alternatively if you have multiple entry points to site or your operatives work in multiple locations you could use a time and attendance system.

When you report for work you simply SMS a standard text message to a set number to say you have logged on to work e.g. "on". When you finish work you simply send a standard text message to say you have logged off e.g. "off".

This is recorded on a central database which shows at a glance who has reported in, who should have reported in and hasn't yet and who is off sick or on holiday.

Those people who are expected at work but have not signed on yet can then be alerted via SMS asking them to either report in for work or report in ill e.g. "ill".

When ID is still required in order to enter the site this ID can be put directly on the mobile phone as a barcode that then has to be swiped at an entry/exit gate. A unique barcode can even be issued directly to a visitor's phone when you know they will be visiting. This barcode can be set such that it is only valid for the date of the visit.

Once everyone's mobile phones are registered centrally these can then be used to check the operative's location. Although there are limitations on the accuracy of the location, this is often sufficient to prove the operative is on site and on larger sites it will help to narrow down their exact location.

Benefits of mobilisation

Once the data is collected electronically at source consolidating the records in order to determine who is on site at any given time can be carried out automatically at the touch of a button.

There is less potential for errors from transcription or re-keying errors.

The information can be used to create timesheets and hence enable more efficient and accurate payment to operatives and sub-contractors. This tracking can prove very valuable if there is a payment dispute.

Once operatives are issued with a smart-card this can be used to record and make available other types of information as well as their personal details e.g. training records, attendance at briefings and health records.

The time spent entering and leaving the site can be reduced substantially especially at either end of the day or at lunchtime when most of the operatives enter and leave the site.

Ease of implementation

Construction companies are already beginning to introduce mobile solutions with swipe cards becoming more commonly utilised.

The time and attendance system is already available and offers input through SMS on mobile phones. Since everyone now has a mobile phone and most are comfortable with sending SMS messages, acceptance of the system should be relatively quick.

More accurate location information could be resisted by the workforce as it may give the impression of big brother watching, however, if it is well introduced and the personal benefits highlighted (e.g. safety on site) then it may be more readily accepted.