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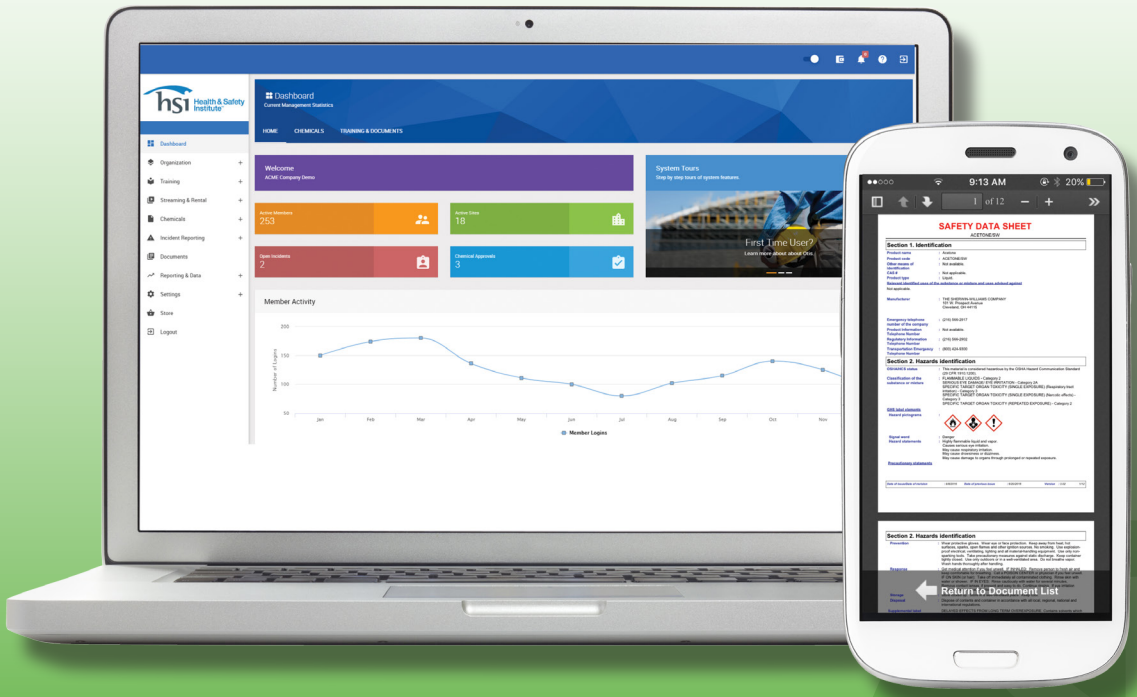
White Paper

Mobility for EHS Professionals

Getting it right in the field.



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Mobility for EHS Professionals

Get It right in the field.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) work doesn't always happen in the office; in many cases it happens in the field. So, how are smart EHS professionals keeping up with their dual obligations to keep workers safe on the job and their companies in compliance? Innovation in mobile applications is allowing health and safety personnel to take their jobs to the field, enabling on-site and on-demand identification of, and responsive action to, today's common EHS challenges. A combination of both technology and process solutions are needed to address these needs in the field.

Why Mobile?

Although the strategies, implementation and deployment of a company's health and safety program may come from the corporate office, the real moments of incident prevention and response happen on the job itself, wherever that work might take place. EHS professionals are the bridge between those worlds, spending time each day on the factory floor or out in the field, as well as behind a desk, so it's imperative that your EHS software application move with you.

Mobile EHS applications work wherever you and your team need them, by putting safety management into the hands of those users who might not typically utilize traditional safety management software applications. That can occur when it's not practical to use these applications when they are in the field, or because the complexity of desktop-only software makes its use a burden.

A robust connection between mobile and desktop functionality makes the organization's EHS group more efficient by cutting down on the time spent between field and office staff in communicating about the basic details of any safety issues.

Considerations for Your Mobile Strategy

Ideally, your EHS application strategy includes native mobile applications to provide the same user experience in and out of the field. This not only supports a simpler, familiar interface for you and other users, whether on desktops or smartphones and tablets, but also helps ensure data connectivity right out of the box. When your system includes a native mobile app component, you don't need to worry about the integrity of data input from the field getting from point A to point B as you would when using separate, and possibly conflicting, applications.

Because they may not need the full functionality of the desktop application, mobile apps are often easier and faster to use. Mobile apps should be targeted to a particular use case so the user can quickly perform the job at hand. When you're on the manufacturing floor responding to a safety incident, you don't want a clunky user interface interfering with your ability to remediate the situation.

Before you implement a mobile EHS solution, always test the applications on multiple operating systems. If you employ a BYOD (bring your own device) strategy at your workplace, the mobile applications will have to run on Android, iOS and Windows operating systems.

A mobile app that provides offline capability is a must-have when workers are on job sites in remote locations without an internet or wireless connection. Some applications can run in offline mode and then sync up data when re-connected to a network. A good example is the connectivity challenge that can arise when conducting a chemical inventory in a manufacturing plant. It's not uncommon for such a facility to lack data connectively due to the environment of a workplace with concrete walls, or by a company policy that prohibits online connections on the manufacturing floor. With an app with offline mode, you can download your existing chemical list, conduct the inventory and then sync the physical inventory results with your real-time database once you are reconnected to the network.

Top EHS Applications for the Field

Chemical Management – Chemical management is one of the most important use cases for mobile applications. With mobile functionality, a variety of needs can be met including:

- *Chemical Inventory* – identify and inventory chemicals at any location and directly input your findings into a mobile application that syncs to your core chemical and safety data sheet (SDS) management system. This is much more efficient and accurate than a typical pencil-and-paper method which then must be transcribed into a separate database.

- *Chemical RTK/RTU* – by definition, chemical Right to Know (RTK) and Right to Understand (RTU) parameters and data must be available in the field because that's where the chemicals are. By combining deployment of your chemical management system to kiosks strategically placed throughout your facilities, as well as directly in the employee's hands via smartphones, you enhance your RTK coverage by increasing the availability and accessibility of hazardous chemical information.

- *Chemical Approval* – chemical approval can be a complex process that involves both corporate personnel as well as field employees. Additionally, at some point, the newly approved chemical physically comes on-site to a facility manned by a field employee. Therefore, having your chemical approval and workflow process available through a mobile app makes it easier to request, monitor and regulate the flow of chemicals into your facilities and job sites.

Incident Management – While incidents sometimes happen in an office environment, the majority occur in the field. The key to incident management and tracking is capturing the right information at the right time, which is as soon as possible after the incident occurs.

Mobile incident management puts a simple incident form into the hands of your employees so they can capture the key details of the occurrence, as well as capture photos of the injury or environment, giving your EHS management a complete view of the incident. Comprehensive detail capture is critical for correcting potential safety issues and a key component in assessing liability concerns.

Audits and Inspections – Like a chemical inventory, an audit or inspection by definition occurs in the field, and the deployment of EHS software to the job site can improve efficiency and accuracy.

- Audit checklists and inspection outlines can be created at the corporate office and then deployed to specific locations, so employees can open and complete them through a mobile device wherever they are.

- All captured survey results, inspection notes and other supporting data (photos, videos, etc.) are then synced to the master safety management database for easy recording and reporting.

Training – Training typically happens in an episodic, one-time manner through an online or in-person class. However, a smarter approach is to supplement your regular training with specific safety training that's immediately available in the field.

- This in-the-field training may include shorter, more specific topic-focused training that relates to a particular safety issue or situation applicable to that location or incident. For example, a 60-90 second video on a real-time safety issue like fire safety, lockout/tagout, CPR, first aid and hundreds of other relevant topics, all available for immediate access through a mobile app.

- Think of a mobile training solution as safety-knowledge-on-demand, where a worker can quickly access exactly what they need to know, when they need to know it.

To be a more efficient, effective EHS professional, consider incorporating mobile capabilities for your EHS applications. An easy-to-access, go-anywhere app helps you and your organization get it right in the field, with the right data in the right situation at the right time.

For more information on the mobile capabilites of SafeTec's SDS management solution, visit safetec.hsi.com.