

Walter Watson Ltd

Leadership in Overhead Crane Services

Walter Watson, is Ireland's leading manufacturer of overhead cranes.



Founded in 1967, in Castlewellan, County Down, the company now operates from locations in Eire, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, servicing customers throughout Ireland, across the UK and further afield.

The companies interests span the steel, reinforcement, lifting and agricultural sectors with the manufacturing, supply, installation and service of overhead cranes forming an important part of the business.



Ireland's leading manufacturer of overhead cranes.

Combining their own systems with those of their partner, ABUS Cranes GmbH, they supply lifting equipment capable of handling up to 100 tonnes and spans of up to 35 metres.

Walter Watson's customers can be found in all engineering and manufacturing sectors including aeronautical, automotive, pharmaceutical, energy, concrete, steel, and machinery manufacturing.

To support their service operations, Walter Watson turned to CoreRFID's CheckedOK solution to help save costs and improve quality in inspection and testing services.

Two Sets of Safety Standards

Walter Watson serves customers such as ESB (the Irish Electrical Supply Board), Liebherr, Bombardier Aerospace, Northern Ireland Railways and Corus.

Working in the lifting industry, Walter Watson is, of course, conscious of the need to meet safety standards. However, as a company operating both sides of the border between Eire and Northern Ireland, it has to cope with the fact that different health and safety legislation applies in two of its principal markets. In the UK the Health & Safety Executive enforces regulations differently from the regulations applied by the Irish Health and Safety Authority. On top of this, the codes of practice promoted by the Lifting Equipment Engineers Association (LEEAA), a worldwide body, offer important guidance in both areas.

As a result when Walter Watson decided that they wanted to improve the efficiency of the inspection services used in relation to crane installation, maintenance and operations, they were keen to ensure that whatever system they selected it would conform to both UK LOLER and PUWER regulations as well as to HSA rules.

CoreRFID, a specialist in asset safety inspection systems, has had experience with both regulatory regimes and has clients in both Northern Ireland and Eire. They were able to demonstrate that their CheckedOK solution could meet the requirements right across Walter Watson's client base.

“Our CheckedOK system is delivering the benefits we hoped for. CoreRFID's installation and support services helped us to get up and running quickly in line with our original timetable.”

David Burtney, Service Manager, Walter Watson Ltd., Cranes Division

Training & Breakdowns

Walter Watson has introduced the CheckedOK inspection and certification system to help them improve the management of lifting inspection, maintenance and safety operations provided to their clients.

The system is used by many other crane operating and maintenance companies with over 100 sets of inspection questionnaires for lifting equipment included in the system as standard. So, it was possible to quickly adapt it to the specific needs of Walter Watson's operations and the range of cranes and lifting systems that they support.

As is often the case with CheckedOK, some features have particular benefit to the user's operations. For Walter Watson, value has come from the system's training dashboard, the breakdown parts feature and the use of the newly introduced Report Manager.

The company has also taken advantage of the fact that CheckedOK now runs on Android devices, allowing them to select a rugged, high performance but low cost device for use by their engineers.

Engineers' Inspection Application

The training dashboard is designed to ensure that engineers working with a particular item of equipment have received the training appropriate for that device and that their training is up to date. With a need to keep track of qualifications covering driving, fork lift truck handling, first aid, crane training and more, the ability of the system to allow Walter Watson to specify the training interval and start date for training sessions gives them better control. The system monitors 16 different categories of training.

Another part of the system that has allowed Walter Watson to improve its service to customers is the Breakdown feature. Mostly, CheckedOK is used in the context of planned inspections, scheduled to take place as part of the overall management of an asset. When responding to a breakdown, however, the work required will often be less predictable. This feature of CheckedOK allows the work carried out to be recorded, even where this has not been previously planned.

Report Manager helps CheckedOK users get the best from the data on inspections and assets accumulated by the system. With items quickly identified by RFID tags inspection data can be easily linked to the relevant asset and relevant reports created. In Walter Watson's case, users in different roles in the organisation needed different reports on a regular basis. Using the Report Manager, users can now batch a number of reports together and download them in a single zip file, making them easy to archive and easier to share with others by email for example.

Benefits

Walter Watson's inspection system provides:

- Rapid collection of inspection results and ordering of breakdown repair parts.
- Recording of training / certification needed and prompting for qualification renewals.
- Replacement of paper & pencil records.
- Conformance with Irish and UK safety codes of practice as appropriate.
- Easy visibility of reports and certificates to Walter Watson's clients using Report Manager.



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