

Ballyclare Ltd



BALLYCLARE
SAFETY IN EVERY STITCH

Improving Safety in PPE Services

Ballyclare design, manufacture and distribute high-performance personal protective equipment (PPE) and workwear. Based in Stockport in the UK, the company has a history of developing and servicing specialist clothing for the emergency services and now supplies PPE to a number of other business sectors, including the military, rail, oil and gas, power and aviation.

Each of these fields needs high performance workwear able to cope with demanding work environments and able to provide staff with the protection needed for the work they carry out.

High specification manufacturing is a key feature of Ballyclare's products but, so is their after-sales service that ensures items continue to meet their safety specifications.

As well as manufacturing and distribution, Ballyclare also offer laundry services and a complete equipment managed service for their products



Ballyclare's PPE protects over 20,000 firefighters in the UK.

To support the managed service operations being delivered to fire services around the UK, Ballyclare chose CoreRFID's CheckedOK solution to help deliver the inspection services needed.

High Performance PPE & Workwear

Ballyclare's specialism in high performance PPE and workwear has been particularly attractive to fire services around the UK. Their range of products includes bespoke fire fighter suits, jackets and trousers, designed to be durable and comfortable while offering maximum protection and enabling good mobility when using firefighting equipment in a variety of rescue situations. With the changing nature of the work of the fire and rescue services, clothing has to be effective in both search and rescue scenarios and in traditional firefighting tasks.

Garments have to conform to a wide range of technical standards including water resistance and flame retarding as well as having to protect the wearer against chemicals and radiant heat.

When in use, garments may become damaged. Although designed to be resistant to the use they will get in fire and rescue scenarios, damage cannot be avoided. However, a damaged garment cannot offer its wearer the same protection as the undamaged item. Failing to identify a damaged item could result in injury or put a firefighter's life at risk.

For that reason, Ballyclare offer their clients a managed service that guarantee that guarantees that their workwear garments will be maintained, laundered and repaired as necessary throughout their service life. Through a 24/7 emergency hotline and local stockholding facilities, consumers can rest assured that they can quickly access replacement clothing (or repairs on their existing clothing) quickly.

"CoreRFID helped us to introduce the CheckedOK system alongside our existing applications. It uses our existing labelling systems and updates our management systems automatically."

John Leonard, IT Director, Ballyclare Ltd.



Inspection, Repair & Replacement

To assist with the inspection, repair, life-cycle management and replacement of garments, Ballyclare had already introduced a system of barcoding. Although CheckedOK is often used with RFID tags, it works equally well with barcode identification.

With the CheckedOK system Ballyclare realised that they could offer an improved service to their customers and save costs in recording the results of garment inspections.

As part of their managed service offering, Ballyclare agree an inspection regime with their clients to ensure that garments are checked at the right intervals and retired at the end of their design life. Since the system was first introduced over 450,000 inspections have been carried out by Ballyclare staff.

The CheckedOK mobile app runs on a handheld computer that can read the barcode on a garment. The app identifies the type of garment being examined and offers the inspector a series of checkpoints specific to that garment type. The results of the inspection are recorded and sent to a central database. The PPE inspection software system is designed so that most inspections can be recorded with a series of clicks rather than needing text to be typed in. This has proved popular with the inspecting staff as the system is easy and quick to use.

If a garment is seen to be damaged, details can be shared with Ballyclare's client. The handheld computer has a camera so that pictures of damage can be shared quickly, allowing Ballyclare and the client to agree quickly on the need for a replacement.



The CheckedOK mobile app works with clicks rather than text entry wherever possible to provide a rapid, easy to use way of recording inspection results.

PPE Inspection Software

Using the PPE inspection software data is collected on the equipment being monitored. As well as firefighter outfits, the system records information for items such as helmets, fire-hoods, gloves and boots. Information collected from inspections by the CoreRFID system is held on a cloud-based database. Updates are passed from the inspection system to Ballyclare's management systems at frequent intervals, ensuring that their management applications are kept up to date without the need to re-key data.

Information from the inspection system and from Ballyclare's own systems is shared with their clients using the Ballyclare ExtraServe online system

One feature of particular value to Ballyclare and their clients has been the use of the wearer allocation function. Using this it is possible for Ballyclare and their client to know not only exactly which items are available at which location, but also that a wearer's specific items are available as a complete set. As a result equipment shortfalls at a site can be quickly identified and rectified by the supply of new items that are tailored to the individual whose items need to be replaced.

Because Ballyclare offers local stock holding facilities, they are able to ensure safety clothing can be supplied quickly and where required they offer a rapid response service with a 24/7 emergency hotline. Speeding and simplifying the inspection process means that Ballyclare can replace items more swiftly, ensuring firefighters are always fully equipped.

Benefits

Ballyclare's PPE inspection system provides:

- Easy integration with existing labelling system
- Rapid recording of PPE inspection results with minimal effort for inspectors.
- Rapid feedback to clients and Ballyclare on items failing inspections.
- Sharing of photographs of damaged items.
- Reports easily visible to clients showing exactly the items available to each firefighter via Ballyclare's ExtraServe system.