



Managing safety inspections on Ireland's electricity network



ESB Networks manages the electricity network in the Republic of Ireland, which brings power to more than 2 million customers. Maintaining safety inspection and managing assets are important aspects of its business. To improve its processes, ESB chose CoreRFID's CheckedOK asset management system.

ESB Networks is responsible for almost 600,000km of power transmission and distribution cabling as well as the 600 transformers and substations. Its distinctive fleet of yellow vans contain all the equipment needed to repair and maintain the network infrastructure. This often involves lifting operations, climbing and working at height so ensuring safety and conforming to legislation is a priority but managing so many different assets with different inspection requirements was a challenge.

Automating processes, identifying assets

ESB originally used a manual system to manage inspections and create certificates. This progressed to a PC-based solution using Microsoft Access database, but data still had to be input manually so it was open to error and it was difficult to keep databases synchronised across different locations. Identifying assets was also time consuming. Items could be overlooked and, when equipment was moved from one vehicle to another, the history of individual items could be lost.

ESB Networks were keen to automate the process, identify assets more quickly and ensure inspections were carried out in line with appropriate standards. RFID offered a way to achieve this and, after exploring other solutions, the company selected the well-proven CheckedOK system.



The benefits

- Much improved accuracy over manual systems.
- Less effort for asset & safety inspection management.
- Up to date reporting and automated certificate production.
- Better accountability for assets and safety inspection.

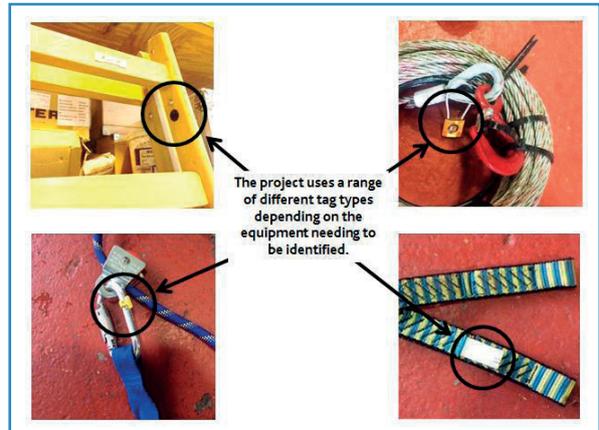


On-vehicle safety equipment inspection



ESB Networks staff use a wide range of lifting, climbing and working at height equipment to help them keep the distribution & transmission network running.

ESB Network's 2,500 vehicles each hold 100 to 120 assets. It has fitted electronic tags to over 140,000 assets. Tags carry a unique number so the asset can be identified to the CheckedOK system. With equipment ranging from climbing harnesses and karabiners to ladders and other large assets, different types of tags and different ways of fixing them were needed, such as screw/rivet, adhesive, zip tie and cable fix. CoreRFID advised on the right tagging approach for each item and trained staff involved in the tagging process.



Initially, ESB planned to use one tag per asset but realised that certain assets consisted of separately testable components, each requiring their own tag. ESB Networks engineers use iPhones with Bluetooth RFID readers to read the tags on the equipment. The CheckedOK software prompts them for the relevant inspection tests and collects data about the results which is sent to the central database. Because the system knows which tags should be found, any missing or duplicate items can be highlighted.



What the client says...

"Working with CoreRFID has given us a safety asset inspection system tailored to our business needs."

- James Treacy, Lifting Gear Supervisor, ESB Networks