



Attendance Verification

A White Paper by Elite-ID Electronic Systems

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The Author

Richard Holmes is the managing director of Elite-ID Electronic Systems which is a company that manufactures, sells and support electronic identification systems often used for attendance verification applications.

Since 1997 Richard Holmes has regularly met with, discussed and performed on-site visits where staff use Elite-ID Electronic Systems equipment

The information presented herein is the result of this industry participation.

About Elite-ID Electronic Systems

Since 1997 Elite-ID Electronic Systems have developed, manufactured, serviced and supported equipment commonly used for attendance verification. Elite-ID routinely deal with clients spread out across Australia and endeavour to provide equipment and systems to suit their current and future needs.

1. Introduction

This 'paper' has been written as a collection of information about Attendance Verification – systems, uses, applications and related information.

Attendance Verification is just that – proving that a member of staff attended a location.

Put simply, it is tracking of staff.

The benefit of this to companies include from the simple “getting what is paid for” all the way through to having information to defend against negligence and public liability litigation.

Understanding why companies implement attendance verification is important.

1.1. Historical Pathways

Companies implement attendance verification systems for a number of reasons.

1.1.1. Contract Requirements

This is the most immediately obvious reason why attendance verification is implemented.

Put simply, clients want to ensure that they are getting what they are paying for, their exposure to loss, to risk and litigation is minimised.

A contracting company can ensure that the labour they are providing is accurately targeted at their client.

In other words – they provide what they claim and no more.

1.1.2. Marketing and Commercial Advantage

If one response to a request for tender includes attendance verification equipment, reports and monitoring and other responses do not, which has the greater chance of success?

This in some cases can be of significant commercial advantage. We have seen this trend for many years.

1.1.3. Insurance

Insurance companies are not stupid. They want to minimise claims payments. If they can ensure that risk is minimised, it works to their advantage.

Conversely, if they can prove negligence they will not pay out on claims.

We have been told that use of an attendance verification system will not ensure that a company can obtain insurance but without a system it may become hardwired to obtain – in other words it is a help.

1.1.4. Plant And Equipment Maintenance

Some machinery and systems require regular attendance to ensure correct operation. If they malfunction there may be cost or other serious consequences.

Some of our clients have taken this very seriously. One client has a major risk of spontaneous combustion of raw materials and the Elite System is used to record that security staff check the areas.

Another client is very concerned about mining machinery being inspected for both sabotage damage as well as accidental and environmental damage that security staff monitor attendances.

1.1.5. The “ACCC”

The “Australian Consumer Competition Commission” have in the past fined companies for using their size or other factors as leverage for practices that act to the detriment of competitive practices.

What this has meant is that the ACCC may demand independent proof of work done for billable expenses.

For example, a company billing clients for work that cannot be substantiated may be heavily penalised.

Using attendance verification that meets the criteria of security and probity may provide the proof required.

1.1.6. Risk Management

This is a “fuzzy” term for using the attendance verification reports to ensure that labour is being provided and used to minimise risk to an organisation.

For security, it is ensuring that security staff attend and check so as to minimise risk of damage or loss. In a retail area it can also include the

use of security staff in “keeping the peace” and providing protection for the general public.

For cleaning, it is ensuring that the latent risks that may be alleviated by cleaning is reduced as much as possible.

For example; ensuring that surfaces are clean and free of anything (like chips, food and water) that may cause a person to slip and fall over.

Another example is the use of the Elite System to track customer service staff to ensure that they perform checks on a public venue as required by their OH&S guidelines and also by their insurers. This has been an area of exposure to the company that the Elite System is used to monitor.

1.1.7. Litigation

This is very common, particularly with cleaning – slip and trip injuries.

In the event of slip-and-trip injury, having evidence of the diligence of cleaning practices is extremely valuable. It can show that staff were in fact cleaning and patrolling as they should. In claims for hundreds of thousands of dollars this can make a huge difference.

Also, if a contractor is shown as being negligent it is possible that an insurance company may refuse to honour a claim as it would be in breach of the terms and conditions (requiring the contractor to minimise risk).

The situation is similar for security. In the event of a break-in a client will want a list of attendances at that property and this will usually be given to the police and insurer.

1.2. Common Applications

Companies require attendance verification for a number of reasons that usually fall into a number of categories.

1.2.1. Security

Security applications are similar to cleaning but the emphasis is usually on property protection.

For example – making sure that doors are closed, property secured, intruders detected, public safety ensured etc.

In 2006 new housing estates have experienced unprecedented levels of theft during construction. The Elite System is used on a number of estates to track security guards.

Security applications often include checking on essential services such as hose reels and fire fighting services. Sometimes other areas such as checks on “status” such as plant rooms is done so as to identify and prevent equipment failure.

Security in public areas such as shopping centres is a little different as it is directed toward “crowd control”. Also usually included is the identification of risks to the public such as discarded syringes, slip and trip injury risks and checking on risk locations (such as toilets, laneways, roof access).

Typical areas of interest are;

- External doors / exits / fire doors,
- Toilets,
- Services – such as fire hose cupboards, meter rooms, gas room, air conditioning plant room etc,
- Common areas where “incidents” may be likely,
- Car park “corners” and stairwells.

1.2.2. Cleaning

Cleaning applications of attendance verification are targeted at ensuring that cleaners attend all required areas as per contractual requirements.

More simply – that the work gets done and it can be proven.

There are well documented and well proven relationships between cleaning and risk to the public. When an area is not kept regularly cleaned it becomes a higher risk area. Accidents will happen!

For cleaning, what is done is to track cleaners when they attend specific locations. The locations are chosen to be at risk areas and to show that regular and diligent patrols of an area are being done.

Typical areas of interest include;

- Any area with a latent risk of slip and trip injury – example : ramps
- All entrances particularly where water or dust may enter,
- Long malls,
- Fresh food markets (dropped foods),
- Food courts,
- Toilets,
- Foot traffic restrictions (choke points) particularly when close to food outlets
- Car park “corners”

1.2.3. Contractors / Service & Maintenance

Applications other than for cleaning and security usually fall into monitoring service, monitoring labour of some kind and monitoring contractors.

Some applications such as monitoring pickups for critical services record when a pickup is done and will show when a pickup person is delayed.

Other applications include;

- Safety checks of spaces on a ship,
- Show a pickup or delivery has been done,
- Ensure an area is checked (inspected) – spontaneous combustion risk,
- Ensure equipment is attended and serviced (critical machinery),
- Meet contractual requirements (on-site service).

1.3. Current Trends

When Elite-ID started operation in 1997 the “traditional” equipment used was mainly iButton™ based. This had 95% of the market place.

Now, in 2006, the trends are toward;

- Proactivity – being notified of performance failure as it happens instead of much later. This is starting to be demanded from clients as of October 2006.
- Automation. From collection through to reporting
 - Automatic non-contact sensing of staff at a location
 - Automatic data extraction
 - Automatic data processing
 - Automatic data archival
 - Automatic notification of events, faults and issues,
- Internet capability
 - Transmission of data to off-site archive
 - Transmission of reports via eMail
 - Remote management and maintenance via www

2. Deriving and Keeping Value / Reducing Cost

Installing attendance verification equipment adds work and cost to your organisation. There is no doubt of this.

Worse, if you fail to use the equipment properly then it will show you that you have been negligent (even if you haven't – you won't be able to prove it).

In some ways, an attendance verification system is a “negative based” system highlighting problems.

To offset this you must derive value and use the system in such a way that it at least, does not become a burden.

In many cases the use of an attendance verification system is contractually required and hence it is critical that the system is used such that it supports and provides the information required. The value of the system comes from providing the information required.

3. Deciding On A System

Key decision points in selection of equipment must include the following;

Factors	Decision points
Initial Cost Of Equipment	This is the easiest and usually a decisive factor. You must include replacement cost as a result of loss or accidental destruction.
Cost Of Maintenance	Nearly every piece of equipment will require service at some time.
Cost Of Operation	How much impact will the system have on staff? How much effort must be expended to get the required results? Simply....Is it easy to use?
Business Benefit	Are the reports suitable for your application? Are they generated in a timely manner? Are there enough options? Can you derive enough benefit from its operation?
Data Collection Method	There are many; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IButton™ requiring touch • Radio for automated logging • GPS and Satellite for tracking • Barcode • Swipe card • Real time Do you require a system with multiple capabilities?
Reporting methods	What options exist? Can reports be eMailed or web based? Must data be extracted where reporting is done? Can data be safely eMailed and not just reports?
Infrastructure Required	What is required to run the system? What current infrastructure can be used? What can be added to increase benefit or improve performance?
Data Security – it is secure? Is the data true and correct?	Critical! Can the data be “rorted” and cause eventual

Factors	Decision points
Are there audit trails? Is it verifiable?	issues rendering it valueless or worse? Is it accurate to what you are purporting? Does the system prevent tampering at every stage?
Disaster recovery	What happens if a computer system is lost, stolen or malfunctions? Can you rebuild your data?
Enterprise support	Does the system really suit your organization? Can it grow with you?
Long Term Archival	Litigation may not occur for some years after an event. Can you be sure of keeping the data and generating reports as required?
The Company	Are they active in the field? Is data compatibility with others an issue? Is there a range of product options? Can they answer your questions? Are they active in development? Do they understand your industry? What is important to you?