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How Utility Companies can Leverage Safety & Compliance Software to Drive Operational Effectiveness

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Introduction

The utilities industry faces many of the same challenges as any other industry, and occupational health and safety is at the top of the list. Due to the high-risk nature of the industry, and the increasingly stringent safety and compliance regulations on a global scale, today's utility companies are tasked with doing more with less, and must find new ways to work smarter and drive continuous improvement in both safety and operations management. These companies are looking to integrate solutions and technologies that will provide a competitive advantage, critical data-driven insight into core business practices and operational efficiency, and above all, improve employee safety.

Companies involved in electric, water, wind, and coal energy require a comprehensive and flexible safety and compliance solution, providing the ability to achieve and maintain compliance with management standards in three main areas: Quality Management Systems, Environmental Management Systems, and Health and Safety Management Systems. In order to stay on track and protect their bottom line, industry leaders are rapidly integrating innovative safety and compliance solutions into their operations.

Here's how safety technology can support the utilities industry in managing the complexities of continuous improvement in safety and operations.

Improve Safety Practices and Ensure Regulatory Compliance

Health and safety regulations around the world continue to become increasingly stringent, and utility companies must find cost-effective solutions to help manage the intricacies of improving safety and maintaining regulatory compliance. Improving safety practices will reduce workplace accidents, increase productivity, and help maintain a positive public perception.

Intuitive and easy-to-use safety and compliance software can alleviate the administrative burden of continuous improvement when it comes to the reporting and data collection process. Today's utility companies require the immediateness of an instant reporting process, enabling employees to report hazardous conditions or practices as they identify them. In the past, hazard reporting processes have been conducted largely through inefficient paper-based form systems. The immediacy provided by capturing data through an intuitive mobile platform from the outset, allows real-time insight into important process information, including safety data, inspections, and work order tracking, from across a wide array of connected devices. There is a growing demand for safety and compliance technologies like ITRAK that help utility companies eliminate hazards, enhance reporting, maintain compliance, and most importantly, keep employees safe.

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Utility companies can leverage these advanced technologies to harness their data and improve safety and efficiency across facilities. Through an intuitive and configurable layout, utility companies can track, measure, and analyze critical safety and operations information all in one place. Access to clean and accurate data and efficient form based processes allows management to continuously improve upon processes and integrate industry leading safety practices into all facets of their operations. This results in quicker completion times for open action items and facilitates visibility, transparency, and accountability throughout the entire process.
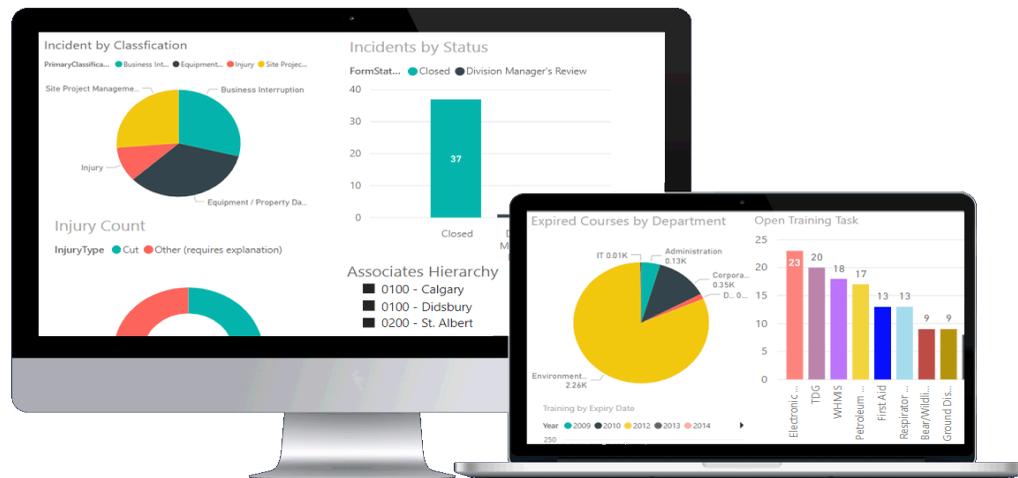
Sample of ITRAK's QHSE data extraction via an integrated Power BI dashboard

As a leading safety and compliance solution, ITRAK is positioned to assist utility companies in achieving compliance with health, safety, and environmental standards set forth by regulatory agencies in every country they operate in. ITRAK helps utility companies to adhere to safety standards (such as the newly implemented ISO 45001 global standard for occupational health and safety management systems) with a consistent and measurable approach to safety and compliance, and provides the ability to instantly report all incidents and close encounters.

Additionally, ITRAK can help facilitate proper operational and training procedures, helping equip employees with the knowledge and training to efficiently operate all equipment and machinery they will come in contact with in their role. Employees should also be aware of emergency response procedures, evacuation plans, and be prepared to recognize and report any hazards they encounter. Safety training can be regularly updated and repeated, keeping employees up to date with the current best practices. ITRAK comes with a suite of tools for managing the intricate details of employee competency, including certification and online training.

Utility companies that are compliant and stay up to date with the latest regulations will be better able to protect themselves from the corporate risk and heavy costs associated with non-compliance, workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. For companies that utilize some form of safety and compliance platform, the positive impact on health and safety performance, quality, and efficiency will be significant and tangible, both in the long and short term.

Proactively Manage all Aspects of Workplace Safety

The utilities industry involves a wide range of processes and operations, and workers can be exposed to a multitude of hazards that can result in serious injuries, illnesses, or even death. Specifically, workers can be exposed to electric utility hazards such as electrocution, falls, confined spaces, fires and explosions. The frequency and impact of these hazards can be mitigated through proactive measures, including proper training, regular inspections and maintenance, and achieving regulatory compliance. This can all be facilitated through the robust ITRAK safety and compliance platform.

To keep employees safe on the job, the utilities industry relies on health and safety programs focused on prevention. The process of proactively identifying and resolving safety issues and hazards before an incident occurs is essential, and integral to this process is worker participation. With the power of ITRAK in the hands of those at every level of the organization, hazardous conditions and problems are reported early and with inspection forms that allow for pictures and detailed location pinpointing with the use of GPS technology. This process assists in mitigating potential machinery, electrical, or chemical hazards, while reducing environmental and safety risks.

The ability to leverage employee generated data and predictive analytics to continuously refine and improve health and safety processes has already been transformative for many companies. Equipped with the power to visualize and analyze safety, compliance, and operational data, companies can use this valuable insight to boost operational efficiency, prevent injuries, and determine root causes of equipment failures, malfunctions, and defects in near-real time.
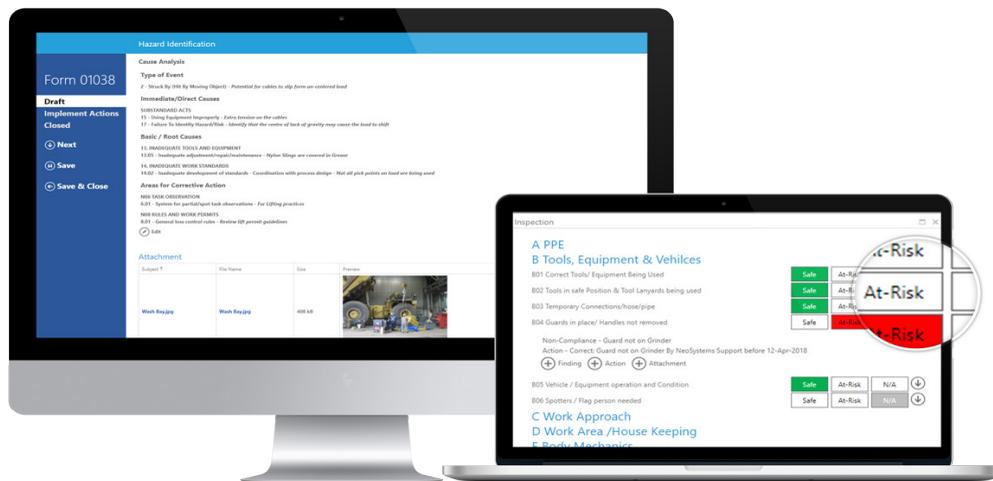
Sample of ITRAK's dashboards for Hazard Identification, Inspections and the associated Risk Matrix

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With an array of disparate processes, utility companies require a robust and scalable solution to help streamline and automate quality and safety operations. ITRAK is a proven, scalable, and flexible solution that allows utility companies to manage every facet of their quality and safety programs on an array of mobile and ruggedized devices. The efficiency of an intuitive and paperless reporting system allows utility companies to accurately collect, standardize, and analyze their safety data across their organization.

The utilities industry requires a highly configurable and customizable solution, through which the interface can be tailored and customized to the industry's suit specific safety and operational needs. The flexibility of the solution is a critical factor to consider, as it will be paramount in properly integrating the solution into every facet of the organization's operations.

Maintaining Service Quality Throughout the Supply Chain

In today's competitive environment, utility companies are under increased pressure. As operations become increasingly complex and compliance stakes become higher, digitization and innovation drive continuous improvement, helping industry leading utility companies maintain service quality throughout the supply chain.

For companies operating in the utility sector, mistakes are costly, and avoiding blackouts or service disruptions is top priority. Modern utility companies are taking advantage of safety and compliance software to gather data and generate valuable insights, resulting in improved service quality, utilization, and customer experience. As data quality, volume, and reporting frequency increases, this technology has huge potential to optimize the way that utility companies operate and will help minimize the potential for service disruptions. Competitive advantages can be seen in the following aspects of quality:

• Increased efficiencies in operational processes
• Service reliability & quality
• Regulatory restructuring
• Root cause analysis
• Increased productivity
• Reduced costs
• Risk management

Companies in the utilities sector must ensure total visibility and transparency throughout their organization and supply chain. The most effective safety and compliance platforms contribute to continuous improvement by delivering powerful data collection and analysis tools and quality checkpoints. Real-time analytical capabilities allow supplier problems to be pinpointed and performance standards accurately measured. With the right tools in place to gather, standardize, and analyze safety and workflow data all in one place, utility companies can identify trends and see improvements in performance over time.

Employee generated data is a valuable part of the process because it promotes transparency between all departments, ensuring that safety and operations information is available, accessible, comprehensive, and clearly understandable. This provides utility companies with a valuable level of accountability, transparency, and visibility across their organization. To maintain the highest levels of safety, it is critical that safety policies, procedures, and data is communicated effectively and in real-time.

With an increasingly globalized workforce across many sites in different geographies and cultures, standardizing and sharing safety and compliance information and data efficiently, in real-time between facilities, is critically important. Using safety technology, facilities around the world can measure, track, and analyze key metrics and operational data critical to staying safe and maximizing efficiency. This data can be analyzed to compare departments and facilities, and this insight can be used to drive continuous improvements throughout the organization. The healthy competition created between departments and facilities breeds efficiency, with departments striving to be the safest and most productive.

ITRAK is the solution for the utilities industry, helping ensure effective safety practices and regulatory compliance, establishing proactive safety measures, and maintaining quality throughout the supply chain. Safety is the utility industry's number one priority, and industry leaders must integrate innovative safety and compliance solutions into their operations to support continuous improvement in safety and operations. NeoSystems' expertise in mobility guarantees that the ITRAK solution works on a wide variety of devices, is configurable to their specific needs, integrates seamlessly into their Microsoft environment and ultimately provides the confidence that they have the insight and knowledge to keep safe and compliant.

ITRAK is the #1 QHSE solution for the Microsoft Cloud, it is certified for Microsoft Dynamics 365 and integrates with Power BI and Azure, allowing users to leverage the power and scalability that comes with Microsoft technology. Our solution allows organizations of any size, to customize the software to their ever-changing workflows, enabling them to be more agile and responsive to operational risks. ITRAK can be implemented within any organization small or large, and through a wide variety of industries across the globe. For over a decade, ITRAK has been enabling businesses from various industries to become more proactive with their safety compliance & reporting processes. We support an established base of customers worldwide in Oil and Gas, Mining, Utilities, Forestry, Transportation and many more.

ITRAK - The #1 QHSE solution for the Microsoft Cloud.

Learn more at **www.useitrak.com**