

EPnet in PPE vending

Introduction

There are a number of reasons why, in recent years, the Industrial Sector has become interested in the technology that allows PPE to be supplied through a vending machine. Hence, Quintus Systems has collaborated with vending machine suppliers to put together a package that provides a secure, accountable and reliable system to control the issue of PPE in a fully automated way.



The system is flexible, enabling a wide range of items to be delivered at the point of use whilst ensuring only those authorised are issued with PPE and a full audit trail is laid down to control the quantities issued.

The system is a software-based product that enables the authorised users to use an ID device to be recognised at the vending machine. Issue is authorised for the user and the software logs the issue. The vending machines are connected to the Manager PC over the existing LAN, with the Manager PC providing a comprehensive reports package giving details of the staff and their usage of PPE during the accounting period for a day/week/month/year or any other required period. Where contractors are using the machines, reports for billing employee usage back to the contractor can be provided.

As well as the vending machines, the software is also capable of controlling the issue at the Stores counter also via the ID device.

ID devices & users

The system is designed to integrate into the existing ID device on-site. This is usually an access card of some type. We do not require an additional card to be issued. We are also able to offer biometric readers or wristbands that allow "hands free" operation removing the need to carry a card.

The ID device is used to identify the user. If they are an authorised user they are able to select PPE items from the machine. The system will keep track of all issuing and can be used to limit the issue during a specified time period.

In the event of an ID device being lost, it can instantly be removed from the system and every machine by de-activating it at the Manager's workstation ensuring it cannot be used for unauthorised issue of PPE.

If contractors are on-site they also can be issued with PPE from the machine, but a charge can be logged against them so their PPE usage is billed back to the contractor company.

Stock

The vending machines have been chosen to maximise the PPE available from them. They can be configured to the specific client requirements to hold a variety of different items. Items that do not fit into the machine can be issued from the Stores Counter with an ID reader and software loaded onto the existing Store's PC at the counter. A bar-code reader can be added for ease, accuracy and speed of issue at the counter.

Reports & Software

The vending machines are connected to the Manager's workstation over the existing network LAN. All issuing of PPE is controlled from here. The Manager's workstation is used to set-up:

- ✓ The users and their ID devices
- ✓ The vending machine configuration
- ✓ The Stores Counter PC configuration
- ✓ The PPE items to be issued

A comprehensive suite of reports allows the Manager to fully control the system. Reports are available by:

- ✓ User: to check the items and quantities a user has been issued with over a given time period. It also tracks the location of the PPE machine and the time & date.
- ✓ Item: to check the quantities used of each individual type of PPE. Also reports on the item usage of preset and user defined time-periods and from locations allowing the manager to identify trends of time/date and location usage to optimise the machine configuration and to enable the stock to be refilled before they run out.
- ✓ Charging: if Contractors are using the system all the employees of each company can be separated into groups allowing all issue to each contractor company to be logged and billing to occur. The system will even identify different contractors and different items allowing different charges for some items and free issue of others. Issuing limits can be set where appropriate.
- ✓ Machine: to check the usage of stock at each machine for refilling purposes and maybe even for resiting machines where usage is high.

MS Windows based software is very straightforward with features enabling 'drag & drop' and 'copy & paste' for quick and simple set-up. e.g. if all the machines are configured identically, only one machine need be set-up in the software and this configuration is then simply copied to all the other machines.

Benefits

The benefits of the system are based around cost savings, convenience and reducing production down time.

- ✓ Accurate control of issue ensuring only PPE required for the job is provided.
- ✓ Machines can be placed in workshops and close to the point of use, minimising the cost of time taken between point of use and point of issue.
- ✓ Contractors can be barred or charged for issue with accurate billing system.
- ✓ Users have quick & easy access to PPE ,24/7 from reliable machine.
- ✓ Enables the employer to demonstrate it is meeting Health & Safety obligations.
- ✓ Comprehensive reports enabling stock levels to be reduced and restocking accurately predicted.
- ✓ Remote access to system from PPE supplier enables the supplier to know when and how much to re-stock.
- ✓ Accurate stock control of PPE.