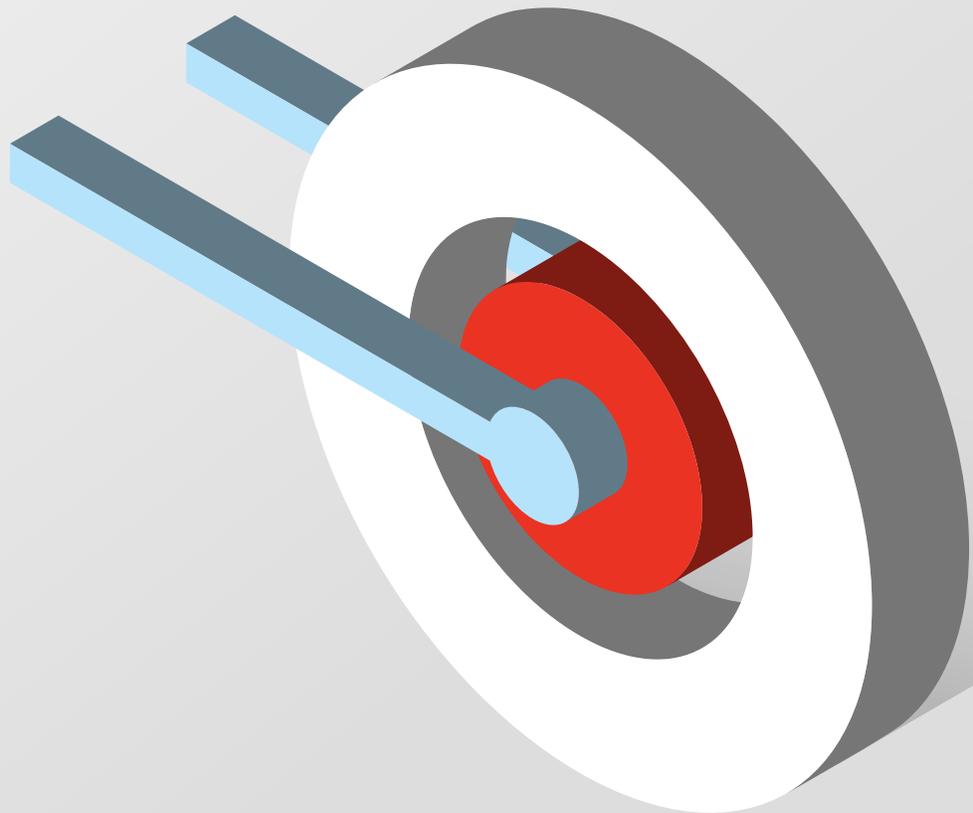# Fulcrum

GUIDE

Not just for OSHA: How digital inspections are the power tool of workplace safety

OSHA makes your company do safety inspections. So do your insurers, your investors, your unions, your contractors, your state and local agencies. At times it may seem like a line of people is at your front door with pen and clipboard in one hand and a flashlight in the other, looking to nitpick and find fault. We invite you to move away from the mindset of the inspection as an annoyance, a deterrent, and a punishment, but instead look at it as a valuable tool with benefits far beyond those of keeping all the clipboard-wielders appeased.

A brief list of inspection benefits include:

1. **An ounce of prevention.** Just taking a turn generating a few scenarios on OSHA's Safety Pays tool demonstrates how avoiding an accident saves money being spent, and the necessity of making more money to offset the injury expense – for example, the $26k price tag for the injury of contusion (in layman's terms, a bruise) translates to roughly $1.9 million in additional sales needed to offset the expense in a 6% profit industry. As for the cost of implementing (and the ROI associated with) a company safety program, OSHA is widely cited as estimating that every dollar employers spend on safety saves four to six dollars.

2. **The inspection as a procedural.** When you've got a checklist for doing an inspection, it can also work as a guideline for doing the work itself. Even the newest worker can follow along with an inspection checklist, while you don't have to create another piece of collateral in the form of a manual or SOP.

3. **Everyone's an inspector.** Every workday, your employees are monitoring, checking, and documenting sites, equipment, and tasks – why not put the data to use? Your workers in the field will

also have a better idea of day-to-day conditions of machinery, equipment, and surrounding environment than a dedicated safety inspector who may stop by once a week, once a month, or even less. When you make everyone an inspector, you not only introduce more data points for use and analysis, but you also give every worker a stake in the safety of his or her workplace.

4. **Attract/retain employees.** No one wants to work at a place that's dangerous, or stay employed at a place that they feel isn't safe. This works the other way around, too, as the longer employees stay at a job, the safer they are: a National Safety Council study found that about one-third of occupational injuries and illnesses were among those with less than a year on the job. As new workers gain experience, the risk of accidents declines, so keeping your workplace safe so workers stick around long enough to become experienced and less prone to injury presents a clear win for companies investing in a safety culture.

4. **Get more work.** As noted in a buildings.com article, a contractor with a great record is "more efficient at reducing risks, being profitable, and completing projects on time" — all definite pluses when it comes to getting more jobs, winning more bids, and signing more contracts. On the flip side, contractors with substandard safety records will likely face hardships in getting past the initial stages of bidding, as a company's safety record is often used as a prequalifying factor early in the bidding process, sometimes without the contractor's knowledge.

5. **Lower insurance premiums.** If you're a safety inspector, the acronym EMR can cause cold sweats and sleepless nights. Standing for Experience Modification Rate, it's the factor used to calculate future risk using actual insurance and workers' compensation

claims. With an average risk translating to a 1.0 EMR, a company with greater safety challenges can see EMRs of 1.25 or more, which factor is then multiplied by the standard premium to determine the modified premium, or what your company actually pays. A lower EMR can mean you get a discount, while a higher one means you'll pay more... and often, much, much more.

6. **Data at your fingertips.** Rather than scrambling to compile data when OSHA shows up at your door, being on top of data collection with regular, self-directed inspection cycles means you'll have information to share with OSHA before the agent even steps out of his or her car. This readily available data will not only provide documentation of compliance (or at least proof of an effort to comply, in case you end up lacking something), but also be able to be shared immediately with OSHA or any other stakeholders for review and further analysis. Even better, if you're keeping up with regular, consistent inspections, you're far less likely to receive OSHA citations.

7. **You are your reputation.** If your company is known for terrible accidents, headline-grabbing fines and violations, or even a steady stream of injured workers in the community talking smack, your business will suffer. Making safety part of your brand through the very-visible commitment to safety through regular inspections is a win for keeping your workers, stakeholders, governmental agencies, and the public on your side.

In conclusion

Clearly, the need for inspections will always be present, and, as we discover new workplace hazards, will likely only increase as time passes. So, if we have to do inspections anyway, we might as well make the most of the investment of time, money, and effort. While the number of OSHA inspectors may ebb and flow due to funding issues, policy debate, and administration priorities, the cost to businesses for workplace injuries and illnesses is going nowhere but up, and the wise business will put its safety house in order long before OSHA comes knocking.

Now that you're convinced about how inspections aren't all bad, we invite you to check out our guide, Using Technology to Make Inspections Less Painful (and More Powerful), for some tips about supercharging your field safety management program.

About Fulcrum

The Fulcrum field inspection management platform gives non-developers the tools they need to create powerful mobile applications to transform their safety inspection processes, allowing users to:

Digitize inspections, procedures, and data collection. Replace paper and spreadsheets with iOS and Android apps to collect, store, and correlate more types of data at scale with the industry's best offline collection capability.

Deploy new inspection processes — without code. Create, update, and deploy mobile apps and processes in minutes, leverage the cloud for easy and continuous deployment, and integrate with IT for data and security while avoiding its backlog.

Deliver intelligent automation of field workflows. Easily adapt to changing standards and requirements with one-click app and workflow deployments.

Do more with location data and mobile location intelligence. Create "apps with maps" in minutes while automatically capturing the high quality location information your GIS specialists need — all without programming.

Drive business optimization with unique data-driven insights. Improve field performance, routing, and other workflows, and deliver fully formatted inspection reports to managers, customers, and auditors, complete with location-based insights.

LEARN MORE To find out more about the Fulcrum field inspection management platform and how it can help you improve performance, increase compliance, and prove the effectiveness of your safety program, visit fulcrumapp.com.

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