

Managing a Shockswitch ID Program

The specific purpose of the Shockswitch ID Program is to give Managers the ability to control the operation and usage of their material handling equipment.

The Shockswitch ID Program controls vehicle usage by limiting access to the material handling equipment through the use of electronic Touch Memory Keys. The Shockswitch ID controls vehicle operation by monitoring and recording excessive impacts received by the material handling equipment.

Program Structure

A successful Shockswitch ID Program consist of four parts:

Program Development
Program Implementation
Program Management
Program Enhancement

These four parts carry equal value of importance in the overall success of a Shockswitch ID Program. Lack of attention of any of the parts can severely limit the success potential of the Shockswitch ID Program.

Program Development

Every material handling environment is different. Fortunately, the Shockswitch ID is very versatile and can be used to meet the needs of almost any environment. The key to success is to accurately define the environment and determine what the Shockswitch ID must do in order to be effective in that environment.

There are basic parameters that must be considered. They are:

1. *Size of Operation*
2. *Number of Operators*
3. *Operator / Management relationship*
4. *Management support*
5. *Special circumstances*

Each of these parameters influence the final determination of what Shockswitch ID Program is right for your environment.

Size of Operation

Generally speaking, the larger an operation is the harder it is to manage. In most instances, in a large operation you would want the Shockswitch ID to perform only as an access control and impact recording device. The worst possible scenario is allowing a Shockswitch ID Program to decrease the productivity of an Operator. In a large operation this can happen if you have the Shockswitch ID “do too much”. An example of this, in a large environment, would be having the Shockswitch ID set up to shut down a piece of equipment when an impact occurred. The time required for a supervisor, or manager, to respond to an event could be considerable. A

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piece of equipment could stay shut down for up to an hour. This is one hour of unproductive time. The lost time could have been avoided if the Shockswitch had not been set up to shut the equipment down. If the Shockswitch had been set up to simply record the event and sound the alarm for a short period the end result would have been no lost time but the Operator would still have been made aware that they had committed a foul and that there was a record of the incident. The deterrent to committing future fouls is still there but without loss of productivity.

In smaller operations, supervisors and managers can usually respond much faster to an incident, thus reducing the potential for decreased productivity.

Number of Operators

The number of Operators that can log on and off a particular piece of equipment must be considered. The Shockswitch ID can store 200 events in its memory. If there are 30 different operators that may log on to a Shockswitch ID in any given 24 hour period and the Shockswitch ID is set up to record all log ons and log offs as events, the memory of the Shockswitch ID could be filled up in less than four days. (30 operators X two events X 4 days = 240 events) If each Operator logged on more than once a day then the memory could possibly fill up in less than two days. If there are impact events then the memory could potentially fill up in one day.

If Operators are dedicated to specific equipment this is not an issue.

Operator / Management Relations

You can hit a home run with a baseball bat but you can save a life with a scalpel. The Shockswitch ID Program is a scalpel.

Operator / Management relations are a major point to consider when developing a Shockswitch ID Program. This relationship will determine how aggressive or passive the Program must, or can, be. If Operator relations are good, typically the Shockswitch ID Program can be set up to be aggressive. If Operator relations are strained an aggressive Shockswitch ID Program can be catastrophic.

In some environments, the idea of sensing impacts and assigning them to a driver may be considered discriminatory. In those environments you may not want to utilize the impact monitoring and reporting features. A key point to remember is that these features could be reactivated in a passive manner at any time and unannounced to the Operator.

Management Support

A key element that the Shockswitch ID uses to control how a piece of equipment is handled is knowing who the Operator is. This information allows the Shockswitch ID to identify specifically which Operator is at fault. Once this information is known, corrective action can be taken. It is this "threat" that changes the way an Operator handles the equipment. If this threat is ever lost, the Shockswitch ID loses its bite. The only way this threat can be lost is if Management fails to enforce or support the Shockswitch ID Program. If an Operator has no fear of corrective actions or reprimands, there is no incentive to handle the equipment correctly. Without this deterrent, the Shockswitch ID cannot control the actions of an Operator.

The bottom line is the aggressiveness of a Shockswitch ID Program is dictated by Management's support of the Program. If Management does not support the Program the only function that the Shockswitch ID can serve is to control who operates specific equipment. There is no need to enable the features that are designed to control how an Operator handles the equipment.

Special Circumstances

Every environment differs in some way. This difference, no matter how small, can play a role in determining how the Shockswitch ID Program should be set up. Previously, we talked about how the Shockswitch ID should never be set up so aggressively that productivity is decreased. There can be an exception to that statement. If the material being handled has an extremely high value, a decrease in productivity may be acceptable if the damage reduction savings are more than the additional expense of decreased productivity.

Program Implementation

Once you have determined the best Program characteristics for your operation you must implement the Program.

Implementation begins with the physical installation of the Shockswitch ID units. The Shockswitch ID has been designed so that it can be installed within the equipment. There are two schools of thought on Shockswitch ID placement. One thought is that the Shockswitch ID should be installed out of sight, out of harms way. The second thought is that the Shockswitch ID should be installed in full view of the Operator so that an increased psychological effect can be attained. The old saying "out of sight, out of mind" deserves consideration in some applications.

The next part of Program implementation is programming the Shockswitch ID with the features you desire. Please consult the Operations Manual for the software package being used. After programming is complete you must adjust the impact sensors to appropriate sensitivities. A word of caution.....if you have determined what you consider the appropriate setting for the impact sensor, initially set the sensor at a higher value. For example, if you have determined that the appropriate setting is 1.0 G, initially set the sensor to 1.25 G or 1.5 G. The reason for this is to give the Operators a "feeling out" period and time to become comfortable with the presence of the Shockswitch ID. The worst possible scenario is to initially have the sensors set too low, generate an excessive number of events, and have the Operators become negative toward the product. If you will provide them a "feeling out" period they will determine what level of impact is required to activate the Shockswitch ID and will begin working within that parameter. After this "feeling out" period you can go back the sensors and adjust them down slightly. Again, after this change the Operators will determine the "edge of the envelope" and will begin operating within this new parameter. The bottom line is that you can eventually arrive at the setting you desire, but instead of going "cold turkey" straight to your desired setting and creating mass havoc, you can get there in smooth transition.

The last part of implementation is communication to the Operators. They must be made aware of why the Shockswitch ID Program is being implemented, how the units and Program work, and what is expected from the Operators and the Program. Communication is paramount to a successful Program. They must also be informed of any disciplinary procedures and any award programs based their performance within the Shockswitch ID Program.

Program Management

Now that you have implemented your Shockswitch ID Program you must manage it correctly to realize maximum benefits. There are three elements to consider when managing a Shockswitch ID Program. Each of these elements plays a vital role in the success or failure of a Shockswitch ID Program. These elements are:

1. *Data collection*
2. *Data analysis*
3. *Program adjustment*

Data collection

You can't make a logical assessment of your situation without data.

The frequency at which you collect and review data is dependent on your situation. If you have a large quantity of Operators and equipment then you must collect data very frequently. In an action packed environment a Program can quickly get out of control. In this type of environment we recommend that data be collected at the end of each shift. In some situations this frequency is not possible. The bottom line is that data should be collected as often as is feasible.

Data analysis

You can't make a logical assessment of you situation without analyzing your data.

*The software packages that support the Shockswitch ID provide you with extensive data analysis tools. Use them! Review your data with one thing in mind.....**trends**. Instances happen to everyone and everything. Instances are usually driven by chance or luck. Trends are repetitive. Trends will continue until action is taken. Look for trends by Operators, equipment, area, etc. Trend analysis can lead you to some startling revelations.*

Program adjustment

After your Shockswitch ID Program has been implemented for a period of time you may see that what you initially considered to be the ideal unit configuration was wrong. You may see that impact settings need to be higher, or lower, than what you thought. You may see that the Program has been accepted by the Operators better than what you anticipated and thus you can become more aggressive with the configuration. You may also see that you've been too aggressive with the configuration and need to back it down a bit in order gain it's acceptance with the Operators. Whatever the case may be, don't hesitate to make changes that you are sure will provide you with more benefit from the Program.

Review the situation, make changes if required

Program Enhancement

There are many ways to enhance a Shockswitch ID Program. Most are specific to your application and environment. One is common to all. All employees appreciate recognition or rewards for their performance. Knowing that they may be rewarded or recognized for their actions is a tremendous incentive. Consider using some type of a rewards program to augment, or enhance, your Shockswitch ID Program. If the Operator recognizes the Shockswitch ID Program as an opportunity rather than as a policing action, everyone benefits.