

Supply Point Systems

Supply Point System, 'point of use' storage and dispensing equipment for engineering and maintenance spares and other support consumables.

Tracking and Auditing the supply, storage and use of Engineering Spares and Support Consumables

The equipment automatically manages and controls the storage and dispensing of engineering and other consumable items and maintains a live audit trail of each item dispensed.

The Supply Point equipment provides a drawer and/or locker storage and dispensing facility which is accessible, secure and controlled 24 hours a day. Users, engineers and maintenance fitters log in to the equipment via a touch screen and key in the identity of the item and quantity they wish to withdraw. The users can be required to key in the designated equipment for which the item is required, the job number or budget code as designated by the organisation's processes and procedures. The user can only withdraw defined quantity of the specified item from the equipment. In both the engineering and the medical arenas the Supply Point equipment is a useful configuration tool for creating sets from single inventory items. The dispensing process is fully auditable in terms of the identification of the person withdrawing an item, the number of items withdrawn, when withdrawn and where the item was used. There is also the capability to return items by keying in the required information. The system therefore gives an organisation total 24 hour control of the use of engineering items and maintenance spares, and other consumable items.

Whilst the use of the Supply Point equipment will reduce the stock levels required and can yield considerable savings on the use of consumable items, the prime objective for using the Supply Point equipment for a number of organisations is the ability to fully audit items withdrawn from the stores. The equipment can also be used for the storage and issue of special tools, and the knowledge that all items and tools issued are accounted for is an important, if not essential, aspect of managing certain operations.

Live and recorded audit trail

1. Individual is given an ID and password/confirmation of ID
2. The individual can be given full access to the items stored in the Supply Point equipment or restricted access only allowing the individual the ability to withdraw a specific range of items.
3. In order to carry out a particular activity the individual is required to withdraw an item(s) from the Supply Point equipment.
4. The individual identifies himself/herself to the equipment by way of a swipe card, password, fingertip ID, or whatever the organization chooses.
5. The individual keys into the equipment the details of the item required. The individual may know the part code of the item. If not, in order to assist the individual finding the item the item category can be keyed in and the individual can scroll through a list or photo gallery of items.
6. Once having identified the item, the individual keys in the number required. The equipment will then only allow the withdrawal of that number of items.
7. The individual can be, and is usually, required to key in more information before withdrawing the item(s); this information can include and is usually two or three of the following, a machine number, a vehicle number, a job number, a department, an operational area. The information required can be determined by the organization to ensure it knows exactly the time, place of the item(s) withdrawn from the store (Supply Point equipment).
8. The audit trail of the item(s) can be checked (on-line) immediately or at some time after the event and audit reports can automatically sent or printed off, as required by the organization.
9. If it is discovered that the item withdrawn is wrong the item can be returned to the Supply Point equipment ; this transaction is audited in the same way as a withdrawal.
10. If special tools are stored in the Supply Point equipment, their withdrawal and returned, can be checked and if there is the requirement for the tool(s) to be returned at the end of the day/shift, any tools not returned can be followed up with the identified user.

The Supply Point equipment is a useful configuration tool for creating sets from single inventory items which is more efficient in the use of the individual items than the creation of pre-prepared kits. The user keys in the kit number or description and other information, as per a single item, and the equipment automatically and immediately takes the user to all the items in the required set/kit. As with the single items this transaction is fully audited.

The Supply Point equipment has a comprehensive capability and is self contained in its control and reporting. The equipment can prompt the re-ordering of stored items by issuing a re-order report, or email a supplier directly, or the equipment's software can be linked to an existing ERP/purchasing system, and therefore be part of an integrated supply management system. In this way the whole supply chain of any item can be tracked and audited.