The compact Service Tracker marries up with a rugged Palm held PC

Keep accurate reports without the paperwork

OEM has launched its Service Tracker system onto the European market. The system maintains service and inspection reports, along with inpection warnings and a wide range of other information tracking, without the need to fill in traditional paper forms.

The product comprises a very compact unit that mounts on to the machine, it records machine usage and maintains a full service and inspection record. The device is used in conjunction with a palm PC, which transfers data using an infra red connection. The data can then be transferred to a company's IT system.

An example of the use of the system is as follows:

A lift, crane, telehandler or other machine is purchased, The tracker, via the palm, prompts the mechanic through each stage of the installation inspection recording the inputs. The machine then goes out on rental, the delivery driver can record the hand over process step by step including, if desired, the addition of digital photos of the machines condition.

In the case of a breakdown, the visiting engineer records the problem and the steps taken to verify it. When the unit is off-hired, the collection driver can record a simple check and if a problem exists add a digital photo. On return to base the machine is inspected, and once again the device takes the engineer through the inspection with all points automatically recorded as he goes.

The system will also warn of up to seven different service intervals, allowing items with different inspection periods to be phased along with six monthly inspections etc..

New ever more compact Chargers

Sevcon, the Anglo American producer of motor control systems has entered the mobile battery charger market with both custom units for OEM's and models for the replacement market.

The new chargers, build on technology that has been coming into the on-board charger market for the past five years, but Sevcon has taken it a step further in terms of compact dimensions, performance and price.

The charger is fully sealed and potted to cope with pressure washing and long term climatic abuse. It can automatically handle AC power from 90 volts up to 260 volts with a tolerance level of plus or minus 15 percent making it viable for all markets from Japan to Europe.

The charger also overcomes another problem, the heavily sulphated battery that is totally devoid of power. The charger will "break through" and start charging without risk of short circuiting.

Once running, batteries are subjected to a four phase process, starting with a rapid "Bulk charge" that takes the batteries to the "gassing" stage, it then switches to a "completion mode" until the battery is 80 percent charged to prevent rapid water consumption and protect battery life. Finally comes an Equalising mode to balance the cells and help remove plate deposits. This is a shorter phase prior to the fourth closing phase.

The chargers are fitted with internal timers that prevent damage if the unit is left plugged in for long periods. The retro fit models are distributed through IPS.

The Sevcon charger offers new levels of performance with a compact size and attractive price.

Scissor lift load limiter

At APEX last month, German company Moba displayed a highly accurate system for measuring the load on scissor lift platforms. The system, which is ideally factory fitted, is likely to be less costly, more reliable and more accurate than anything currently produced that truly meets the requirements of EN280. This product effectively makes accurate platform overload sensing on a scissor lift, "state of the art".

The system uses four very simple internal parallelogram load cells, which are mounted under the four corners of the main platform, between the top pivot points and sliding/rolling channels, and the deck. A few millimetres of extra height is required to allow the load cells to move as they are loaded/unloaded.

The four cells are wired into a processor which can then measure the precise load, no matter where it is on the platform and calculates the centre of gravity for the load, warning when this passes outside of the platform for any reason.

The system intelligently monitors the input from all four cells and can detect a fault or abnormal input, thus creating "redundancy" or fault detection at a much lower cost than building dual circuits into each load cell.

While the system is less costly than the components suggest, at between €500 and €700, it is still a high percentage of a small scissors cost. The Moba system does though, offer users and manufacturers a range of additional features that might help justify its cost. For example, the system maintains a record of maximum loads applied to the platform, thus in the case of overload damage, it provides irrefutable evidence, allowing the damage to be invoiced to the end user. Such data can also be used as part of the six monthly inspection. The system will also detect negative loads, and can be made to cut out should the platform hang up on an obstacle. Theoretically it might also be set so that any change in the load during lifting, suspends the lift process, thus helping prevent the crushing of personnel against overhead beams etc, which still claims several lives each year.

The Moba load cell for scissor lifts is highly accurate and offers a wide potential of extra features.

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