



Ten Recommended Practices for Electronic Logbooks

Electronic logbooks – if set up and utilized correctly – are a powerful tool in any industrial process environment. Decades of industrial software experience underline our passion to set the standard for operations and process safety management software.

Here are our ten recommended practices for electronic logbooks.



For more information on j5 Operations Management Solutions, please visit

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1. Free-text Fields Should Be Minimized

With any electronic logbook, it is essential that the data being gathered is consistent and clear. Dashboards, reports and views can only be effective if the source information is being collected efficiently. As a result, drop-down fields, checkboxes and other pre-defined selection methods should be used where possible. This saves time, allows consistent reporting and encourages personnel to concentrate on providing value added information when it is really required.

2. Make It a Central Hub of Operations Data

On many industrial sites, there are scattered software systems that are constantly collecting real-time data. It is very valuable to have visibility and workflows from all these systems in the same place. As a result, it is important to interface an electronic logbook to plant systems such as Data Historians, Maintenance (CMMS), Asset Management (EAM) and so on. j5 applications integrate seamlessly with each other and interface with external applications, creating a central hub of operations data.

3. Easy Configuration Is Essential

Within an industrial plant there are many types of data which need to be recorded. This leads to many different types of logbooks which need to be tailored individually and shared across sites. j5 applications such as the j5 Operations Logbook allow users to create and modify logbook templates quickly and globally. Electronic logbooks need to be configured to the unique process, information and reporting requirements of each site. Future adaptability and extendibility is also essential in the ever-changing industrial world. j5 IndustraForm® Templates make this configuration simple, in a familiar spreadsheet-like tool.

4. Mobility Should Be Encouraged

The central control room is still an important part of any industrial site. Although with the advancement of mobile technology, it is becoming essential to electronically log events in the field away from a desktop console. Traditionally this was done with clipboards and paper, but j5 applications such as j5 Operator Rounds allow operators to sync and react to field data in conjunction with the central control room easily.

5. Create Thorough Workflows

When an event is recorded on a paper logbook or spreadsheet, the information trail ends there, unless the logger verbally speaks to their colleagues or manually shows them the actual record. Electronic logbook systems can be set up to share information, assign tasks and send alerts in real-time. Thorough workflows allow companies to manage their sites more effectively, because information is not missed or ignored. j5 IndustraForm Templates allow workflows to be added and configured easily.

6. Set up Dashboards, Reports and Views

With the sheer quantity of information now available on industrial sites, operations personnel now rely on extensive dashboards to get a functional overview of their work environment. To manage all the aspects associated with an industrial process adequately, operations personnel also require a comprehensive repertoire of reports and an easy-to-use, powerful report designer. It is also useful to see data in lists, Gantt-style timelines, plot plans and calendar views.

7. Go Web Browser-based

Having your electronic logbook accessible in a web browser has many advantages. Operators can log events in a familiar environment, and managers can view site data at all times on the move. A web browser-based system also just needs to be installed on one server and no client installations are required.

All the operator needs to access the system is a web browser or mobile device at each location. This also encourages a standard logbook approach for multi-site operations.

8. Manage Site Processes within One System

Electronic logbooks such as the j5 Operations Logbook allow you to immerse your current site processes into a singular web browser-based platform. For example, you can sync an Asset Register between the j5 Operations Logbook and the CMMS, allowing consistent data flows and reporting. Using the j5 Operator Rounds application, you can also set up workflows and procedures when an operator scans a barcode associated to a piece of equipment.

9. Use a Plot Plan Display

With the advancement of GPS tracking in mobile technology, it is now possible to geographically tag where events are logged. The j5 Operations Logbook has a dynamic plot plan display which shows where events have happened, but also allows the user to drill down on each marker to get additional information. Plot plan displays are very useful because users can see which areas of the plant require the most attention, and they can color code each marker to give a visual representation of the severity of each event. It is also very useful to use this for multi-site comparison.

10. Save Time with Data Automation

On every industrial site, there are repetitive tasks that need to be logged and managed daily. This can take up a lot of personnel time, therefore automating events from workflows, Data Historians, the CMMS and others can drastically reduce manual entry time. An operator should focus on adding rich information to logs. Data such as timestamps, operating areas and tag values should be automated as much as possible. This reduces operator fatigue and allows them to concentrate more on operating a safe and efficient plant.

About Hexagon

Hexagon is a global leader in sensor, software and autonomous solutions. We are putting data to work to boost efficiency, productivity, and quality across industrial, manufacturing, infrastructure, safety, and mobility applications.

Hexagon's PPM division empowers its clients to transform unstructured information into a smart digital asset to visualize, build and manage structures and facilities of all complexities, ensuring safe and efficient operation throughout the entire lifecycle.

Hexagon (Nasdaq Stockholm: HEXA B) has approximately 20,000 employees in 50 countries and net sales of approximately 3.9bn EUR. Learn more at [hexagon.com](https://www.hexagon.com) and follow us @HexagonAB.