



# Shire Systems



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## Do I need a Computerised Maintenance Management System?

An industrial or commercial organisation may have anything from a few hundred maintainable assets to a few hundred thousand. A maintainable asset is an essential piece of equipment, machine or system that needs periodic checking, servicing or repair. So, what means should be used in a smaller organisation to control the maintenance of these items? Specifically, how many maintainable items can an organisation have before a computerised maintenance management system becomes a practical necessity? There's no precise and pleasant answer to this question – it's a judgement call. The stark fact is that it really depends on what degree of low productivity, waste and risk the management of an organisation is content to put up with. It's up to you. Before you decide, consider a few facts.

In the modern world nothing whatsoever gets done without the aid of assets or equipment of one type or another. These assets have to be cared for and managed individually if they are to work and perform as needed. They deteriorate in service and they're often potentially hazardous in use - and increasingly so if not looked after. The bottom line is, if they don't function as needed, then your organisation doesn't function as needed. In asset-intensive organisations - those organisations concerned with production, building and infrastructure management, the greatest opportunity for operating cost and risk reduction is in the area of asset care and repair. No other area of the business offers greater scope for guaranteed gains in economic performance and corporate well-being. Proficient asset maintenance is a pre-condition for lowest operating cost highest throughput of prime quality products and services, safety, health & environmental compliance - and high satisfaction and morale of customers and staff.

Increasingly, risk-based asset management and compliance with legislation is driving the need for tighter control of asset care and maintenance. The statutory checks and schemes of work that organisations are now compelled to carry out and document is myriad. Following the recent rail disasters and Legionellae outbreaks and deaths in the UK caused by poor maintenance practice, the Government's planned Involuntary Homicide Bill, with its provision for corporate killing, is raising the statutory compliance stakes for everybody. No matter what size the organisation, those accountable for asset care and maintenance should take heed. Asset maintenance management is now an issue at board level.

Given the grand scale of the gains that can be made and the penalties that can be avoided, there's surely no question about the good sense of carrying out asset maintenance in a methodical way. Asset maintenance management that truly focuses on the needs of the business is about 90% information management and 10% engineering – it's essential to get this balance right. So, going back to the original question - what means should you be using to control your maintenance systematically – a paper-based system or computerised maintenance management system? To assist the choice, estimate or count the number of assets you are maintaining, or should be maintaining, and then answer honestly whether or not you believe that you can manage that quantity effectively and efficiently without the aid of a computerised maintenance management system. Whether you are the responsible engineer in the workplace or the accountable manager in the boardroom, what is your instinct telling you? Any disagreement should be discussed candidly and openly.

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### Take Control

