



BECOMING THE PAPERLESS FIRE DOOR INSPECTOR

By:



mpengo

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Introduction

Whether you are an organization that has staff who perform fire door inspections, or you are an independent fire door inspector, time efficiency directly relates to your profitability: time is money!

While new technology presents a learning curve that not all want to embrace, once you start integrating it into your workflow you will quickly see that you are more connected, and you can work faster and more efficiently.

If you have staff who perform inspections, you can help them to maximize their productivity, perform their tasks hassle-free, and make your own life easier.



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Transitioning from Then to Now

Paper is everywhere – literally.

- ☹️ Checklists.
- ☹️ Invoicing.
- ☹️ Documentation.
- ☹️ Sign-offs, and other materials you use in the course of your work can all pile up – and can all be managed more efficiently.

This is not to mention performing on-the-job tasks like the actual inspection and taking measurements. You need this information to be preserved and easy to find.

Action	What You May Be Doing Today
Inspection requests	Managing this process manually/internally.
Documentation	Using clipboards and forms.
Sign-offs on-site	Made physically on your hard copy documents.
Sign-offs intra-company	Sent by email to the company.
Performing the inspection and the report	Performing actions manually – e.g. taking your own measurements, writing each report.
Invoicing	Creating an invoice manually or using an accounting software and then issuing it.

Transitioning from Then to Now

Paper has its uses, but it can be hard to manage, especially when you are working primarily from a field vehicle.

While some of these vehicles come equipped with file folders and storage spaces, it's still tedious and time-consuming to have to keep these files organized — especially when there's an easier way!

What You Should Be Doing:

- ✓ Issuing the inspection request via an app where it is received by the inspector.
- ✓ The inspector would have an app with all of their customized documents and forms.
- ✓ The inspector would generate an inspection template automatically.
- ✓ The inspector would use tools like measurement technology and inspection apps (to expedite measurement, for example) to perform the inspection and that data would be loaded into their app.
- ✓ Sign-offs would occur digitally.
- ✓ Activities would trigger digital report creation and invoicing.



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Transitioning from Then to Now

Everything digital – no paper!

Want to transition from Then to Now? All you really need is an iPad/iPhone and the right mobile apps for your industry. This eBook focuses on apps for fire door inspection, but even if you are in another industry there may be tools that could work for you.



Pre-Inspection - Initial Request Comes In

When there are multiple team members performing inspections and other work associated to compliance and repairs to doors and hardware, employee and service call scheduling can become onerous — not to mention that each manual action creates more paperwork and uses more manpower. Pre-inspection technology and its uses will vary depending on whether you work alone or within a team.



CRM – Customer Relationship Management for Fire Door Inspection

CRM is becoming commonplace in most field service industries. This is a way for you to digitally store and manage your client/project data in one location. There are CRM systems that are industry-specific and there are others that some companies customize for their own purposes. Generally, you can save costs by finding a CRM built for your industry.

Pre-Inspection - Initial Request Comes In

CRM - Customer Relationship Management for Fire Door Inspection Continued

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Cloud-based CRMs (meaning they are hosted online - in the cloud) can also be of major benefit to field inspectors because:

1. You can plug other compatible technology, like mobile apps, into them.
2. They provide accessibility. All you need is an Internet connection for access.
3. They are not software, so they don't take up space on your computer.

A great example of a CRM designed for field service industries is mpengo's [Dispatch Board](#).



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Pre-Inspection - Initial Request Comes In



Employee Scheduling

Speaking to industry-specific CRM systems, one that is specific to fire door inspection/service call-based industries should offer the capability to dispatch inspection visits.

Dispatching can be greatly optimized by using a CRM with dispatch capability along with a compatible mobile app that can integrate with other technology and transmit calls digitally into the field.

A great example of this is mpengo's Dispatch Board, which integrates with many of their other field management apps: Service Call, Service Sheet, and Fire Door Safety Inspection.

Pre-Inspection - Initial Request Comes In

Field Call Management Apps

The Service Call, Service Sheet, and Fire Door Safety Inspection apps are all excellent examples of field call management apps. They can work together or separately to perform different functions. Field call management apps are designed to expedite your work in the field. Some activities that can be time consuming and create unnecessary paperwork while in the field can be mitigated through use of this technology.

Here are some examples of things that can be pre-organized digitally before you have even left the office:

- > The appointment itself – scheduled digitally.
- > Documentation – all documentation customized in your app.
- > Invoicing/time tracking – set up in the app.
- > Requirements – documented in the app.

Using this technology can save you time — allowing you to be more efficient and more productive.



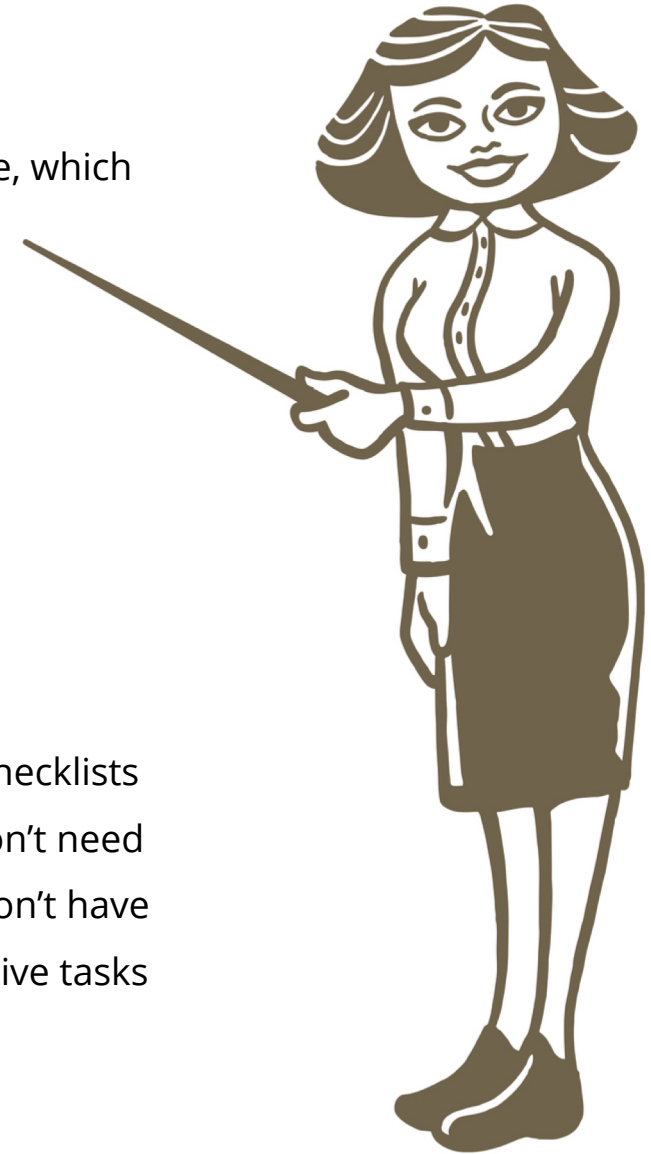
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On-and-Post-Site Inspection

When on-site at an inspection there are activities that you will have to complete, which include:

- ✓ Documentation and cataloging.
- ✓ Measurements.
- ✓ Photos and labelling.
- ✓ Obtaining sign-offs.
- ✓ The time-consuming reports.
- ✓ Invoicing.

These are all activities you can now perform digitally. You don't need to bring checklists and paper-based documentation because you can create it in your app. You don't need to deal with paper-based sign-offs because you can also do this digitally. You don't have to spend unneeded time taking manual measurements and performing repetitive tasks during your inspections – because there are apps for that, too.



On-and-Post-Site Inspection

Measurement Apps

Virtually all of today's smartphones come with built-in tools that can also be manipulated to do amazing things, like take measurements.

Today's camera and phone-processing power can take photos of two different locations, measure the variation in angles, and triangulate and calculate both distances and measures.

The built-in GPS, great for navigation and directions, can also use the same techniques to measure distances, often as accurate as within 15 feet, and future phones are predicted to be as good as 1-foot resolution.



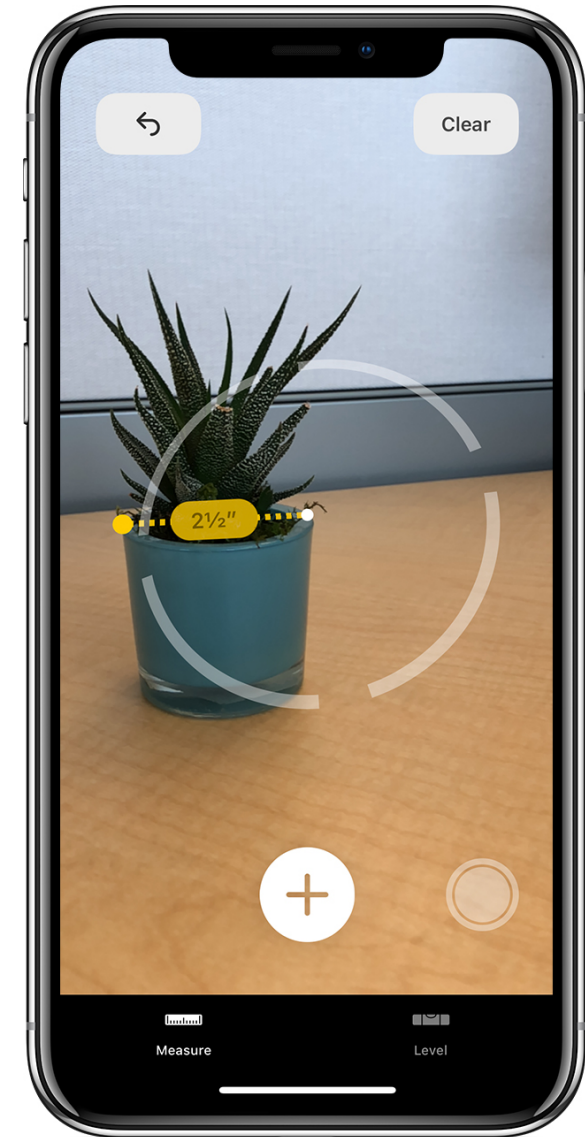
On-and-Post-Site Inspection

Measure:

The iPhone comes delivered with a built-in “Measure” app utility that uses the camera. Start the app and wait a few seconds for it to calibrate itself. Aim the camera at the starting point of the measurement and tap the button. Move the camera to the end point of the measurement and tap again. You’ll get the value expressed in both metric and imperial.

Some caveats with camera-type apps:

1. The apps won’t calibrate in low-light.
2. The resulting imperial measure rounds to the nearest 1/2 inch, so unless you convert the metric to imperial yourself, you won’t see 24 3/8”, for example.
3. The measurement apps are great, no question, but they’re possibly not precise enough for certain measures, especially where 1/16” is meaningful. They may not completely replace a measuring tape.



On-and-Post-Site Inspection

Room Scan:

An easy-to-use app that can measure a room's dimensions and provide you with a floor plan. Just place your phone against each wall, wait for the prompt to continue, walk to the next wall, and so on, until you return to your starting wall. You'll get a surprisingly accurate floor plan complete with dimensions.

AirMeasure:

A similar app that combines both the camera and placing your phone from location to location. Offers a few more tools.

Area Measure:

Using the built-in GPS in the phone, this app can measure large areas and distances. For areas, you will need to walk the field. For distances, you will use the camera for shot one, move to another location, shoot again, and the app will triangulate and give you a distance.

There are many more apps that embody the built-in GPS and camera tools that smartphones have today - but remember, though remarkably good, the apps cannot completely replace an actual measurement tool, like a ruler, tape, or transit/theodolite.



On-and-Post-Site Inspection

Inspection Apps – Fire Door Safety

As you know, documentation and follow-up reporting are the most time-consuming parts of any fire door inspection. Using mobile app technology to streamline and cut down the time it takes to inspect fire doors from start to finish can make you considerably more efficient and profitable. Here are some benefits to using a fire door safety app:



- Convenience of completing your work on your phone or tablet vs. organizing paperwork.
- Use your smartphone's capabilities to identify, label, and measure.
- The app guides you throughout the entire process: no forgotten steps.
- As you perform your visual inspections, record your measures, any deficiencies, and note any recommendations, all your work is stored literally in your hand, and all the documentation and reporting is available the instant you have completed the on-site work. (When's the last time you had to work late in the evening to complete your paperwork? More times than you wish to remember?)



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On-and-Post-Site Inspection

Mobile Invoicing/Billing – Service Call

Invoicing, time tracking, and sign-offs often go hand-in-hand. Sign-offs occur when work is completed, the reports are prepared, and time is logged. Under today's standards, inspectors are required to sign-off their reports.

The signature aspect is what keeps many property management companies and fire door inspectors alike continuing to use paper reporting/invoicing/time tracking and sign-offs.

But there is a way to cut down on the paperwork and maintain that due diligence. An app that tracks time, generates the report, generates the invoice, and also enables you to obtain digital sign-offs that can be transmitted between other team members and clients is recommended. A great example of a field service management app that deals especially with fire door inspection and does this — and one we mentioned earlier in this eBook — is [Fire Door Safety](#).



What to Look for in a Field Service/Inspection App Provider

The best field service and inspection app providers will:

- ✓ Be proven – have many years producing apps.
- ✓ Offer many industry-specific apps.
- ✓ Provide fair and scalable pricing, and potentially even offer a trial period, so you can try before you buy.
- ✓ Have apps that integrate with one another and can do more things in less places.



Key Takeaways

If you want to go paperless in your inspections, start by:

1. Looking at the current tools and technology you are using, including your hardware. If you don't have an iPad/iPhone, consider getting one.
2. Investigating the industry-specific apps that are available to you. Look at the capabilities of each one.
 - a. Are they able to integrate with other technology? Are they customizable? Do they offer real value?
 - b. Do they deal with the pre, on-site, and post aspects of your profession?
3. Look at app providers who offer the most value – that doesn't just mean price. While a low price is appealing, you want apps that are going to make your job easier and earn you more profit.
4. Apps that offer trial periods and scalable pricing can eliminate any concerns about being 'locked-in' before you've had the opportunity to fully gauge its effectiveness in your trade.



About the Authors



This eBook was produced by mpengo. Gary Jonas, president of mpengo and designer of our apps, including the Fire Door Safety app, contributed to this content.

Although primarily a software developer, Gary worked with a good number of field inspectors to create an app that could readily meet the needs of the industry. He also took the time to join the Door and Hardware Safety association, and attended the courses to certify as an industry partner. These extra steps are just one example of the efforts taken by Gary and his team to ensure good familiarity with the requirements of a proper fire door inspection product — and this dedication extends to other apps they develop.

Gary and the team's passion is mobile app development and usability for field service and inspection-based industries.

[Download a FREE Trial of the Fire Door Safety App Now](#)



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