

JOBSITE ACCESS CONTROL: HOW TO KNOW WHO'S REALLY ONSITE



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Everyone, including safety managers, project managers, project engineers, and superintendents knows know that jobsite access control comes down to three seemingly simple factors — the Three W's of Labor Tracking:

Who — Is everyone where they are supposed to be? Is each worker properly authorized to be there?

When — Are workers visiting jobsite areas according to schedule? Is there any misunderstanding regarding access expectations?

Where — The fundamental labor tracking question: Where is everybody?

However, adhering to these three guidelines is much easier said than done. Many factors play into access control, and good intentions are constantly up against the volatility of day-to-day construction processes.

To understand the importance of jobsite access, you have to know what's at stake — the efficiency of your project is directly correlated to these five, interconnected, access control considerations:

- ▶ **Labor tracking**
- ▶ **Security**
- ▶ **Compliance**
- ▶ **Emergency situations**

Let's explore each of these considerations individually to better understand how you can improve project productivity, safety and security through improved access control.

LABOR TRACKING

Ensuring the right workers are in the right place at the right time sounds simple in theory. But, in reality, it can be a logistical nightmare. When managing a large project with many workers, all with varying levels of clearance, there are a lot of moving parts.

When you consider the impact of employee hours on project cost, there's no wonder why labor tracking is a primary concern on all job sites. And, while seasoned safety managers can make it look easy, monitoring labor, while also overseeing restricted access areas, can feel like spinning plates — under the strict constraints of day-to-day operation, no less.

This is especially true when it comes to subcontractors. As if monitoring your own team wasn't hard enough, the addition of unfamiliar faces, with uncertain credentials, makes your job that much more difficult. When someone is only on-site for a few days, it's still your responsibility to monitor their access and ensure they have the correct safety equipment before entering a restricted area.

And, unfortunately, the construction industry has historically fallen short.



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, **exposure to a harmful environment has increased 22 percent in recent years**. This figure is due, in part, to labor tracking inefficiencies that exist today and increasingly obsolete jobsite monitoring processes.

Simply put: Everything from your production schedule to your foreman is going to tell you where your workforce is supposed to be. Only a sophisticated labor management system can tell you where those resources actually are.



SECURITY

Second only to worker safety, jobsite security is one of the most pressing project concerns.

The most blatant, and potentially detrimental, security breach is civilian trespassing. Whether due to mere curiosity, or something more insidious like vandalism or burglary, many people interpret a “Do Not Enter” sign as a challenge rather than a safety warning. This is not only dangerous for a trespasser — who would be navigating an unfamiliar work zone full of hazards — but it can be costly for construction companies.

Stolen equipment, damaged property, vandalism, and legal action are just a few of the negative financial results of trespassing crimes.

However, not all unauthorized breaches are caused by civilians. Caught up in the everyday bustle of a construction site, it’s common for workers to inadvertently enter a restricted zone. What might be an honest mistake at first can have serious safety and legal implications.

According to the Construction (Design and Management)

Regulations of 2015 — the legislation which governs how construction projects operate — unauthorized access implicates contractors, safety managers, and even the client who hired the construction company in the first place.

A simple oversight in jobsite access can have serious legal repercussions and forces culpability on many.

COMPLIANCE

The biggest challenge of compliance is adhering to state and federal requirements. For example, states often require a certain percentage of labor come from local workers — this means knowing the residence of not only your employees but also all contractors. Tracking this for an entire team of permanent and transient workers can be daunting.

On top of all this, owners often have their own, separate requirements that must be honored by the GC. This might include particular worker training, NDAs, etc.

Jobsite compliance goes hand-in-hand with worker safety and project security, so while monitoring workers can feel like micromanaging, it's actually an important, and legally mandated, safeguard.

OSHA standards are there for good reason. The frequency of **fatal work injuries** on the job site increased 7 percent in 2016, and 5,019 people died on the job that year. This grim fact stands as evidence to the ever-increasing need for OSHA compliance and standard enforcement.

OSHA has compiled a step-by-step guide which outlines the major safety requirements for all construction jobsites. While this guide includes several steps — from how to recognize the workplace hazards to training workers to follow best practices — the sentiment can be summed up simply: remain compliant by ensuring workers are in the right location with the proper safety equipment. To avoid costly — even dangerous — non-compliance, it's your job as safety manager to ensure strict access restrictions.



EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Part of controlling jobsite access is understanding the specific physical limitations of each worker in order to mitigate jobsite hazard — this is no small task. Within every construction project are individual workers with their own unique backgrounds and specific medical needs, and it's your job to have this information on-hand in case of an emergency.

When faced with an emergency situation, you won't have time to rifle through filing cabinets to uncover critical worker information. Details such as emergency contact information must be accessible on-the-fly to guarantee timely resolution.

According to OSHA, an emergency situation can include:

- ▶ **Floods**
- ▶ **Hurricanes**
- ▶ **Tornadoes**
- ▶ **Fires**
- ▶ **Toxic gas releases**
- ▶ **Chemical spills**
- ▶ **Radiological accidents**
- ▶ **Explosions**
- ▶ **Civil disturbances**
- ▶ **Workplace violence resulting in bodily harm and trauma**

On top of tracking employee information, you need to track the employees themselves. In the chaos of an emergency situation, leaving a worker unaccounted for is unacceptable.

Read the OSHA guide “[How to Plan for Workplace Emergencies and Evacuations](#)” for a comprehensive look at the proactive measures you can take to prevent catastrophe. It probably comes as no surprise that access control ranks as a main protection against jobsite injury in the case of an emergency.



ONBOARDING

The greatest defense against access control breaches is education. Establishing best practices from the get-go is a great way to ensure security, safety and legal compliance. New employee onboarding is a time-consuming process, but consider it an opportunity to educate workers about the importance of access control.

During this process you will collect signatures on agreements like NDAs, Safe Practice Agreements, and other documents like professional certifications to determine each employee's clearance level. In the event of a clerical error, a new worker could gain access to a restricted area, put themselves and others in danger, and harm the project. So, while onboarding might seem like another logistical box to check off, it's actually an important, preventative measure for ensuring project access control and project success.

STREAMLINE ACCESS CONTROL WITH A LABOR TRACKING SYSTEM

There's no doubt the importance of jobsite access control has been sufficiently driven home. At this point, you might be asking yourself, "Now what?"

It's clear that monitoring workers, their clearance, and their on-site location is an important part of your job, but with so many factors to keep track of, how can you be expected to meet the demands of access control?

The best way to control access to restricted jobsite areas is through labor tracking technology specially designed for the construction industry. This **access control solution** displays area access permissions in real-time to help safety managers be in multiple places at once.



Avoid costly and dangerous unauthorized access by displaying worker location and controlling entry points. Worker access records can be batch uploaded, and then reflected in a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) card or Low Energy Bluetooth (BLE) beacon to protect entry-exit areas, hard access control gates, and open access zones for vehicle entry. In the event unauthorized access does occur, you will be notified within the app on the spot.



Let's revisit the five factors of access control and consider how each is addressed with the help of this technology:

- ▶ **Labor tracking** — Labor costs usually contribute to around 40 percent of total project costs, so monitoring hour utilization is key to uncovering savings. Labor trackings allows you to monitor workers' hours on-site for accountability purposes.
- ▶ **Security** — Oversee where crews are working and ensure that everyone has proper clearance to be there. Receive alerts and reports if unauthorized access occurs.
- ▶ **Compliance** — Compile all workforce data into the app, and consolidate your compliance efforts into one, easy to use, application.
- ▶ **Emergency situations** — Electronically access workers' emergency contact info and send out safety alerts in the event of an emergency.
- ▶ **Onboarding** — Electronic self-enrollment allows fast, efficient new employee onboarding, so you can create a smooth onboarding workflow that adheres to your existing safety orientation process.

Don't let unauthorized access compromise your construction project. Equip yourself with an all-in-one labor tracking application designed to make access control easier and your workers safer.