



10 Ways Digital Forms Help You Run a Modern, Data-Driven Public Safety Agency





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Technology has enabled public safety to optimize their processes and provide better service to your constituents. Your EMTs use modern medical devices to provide care. Fire departments used thermal imaging cameras to help firefighters see areas of heat through smoke, darkness, or other types of barriers. Dispatch centers use location-based call tracking to aid in responding to calls for assistance. So why are you still sending your employees out to perform daily checks with a clipboard and paper?

Conducting the necessary checks and inspections is an everyday part of managing a public safety agency. Like clockwork, you need to monitor vehicle and equipment performance, measure inventory, and ensure employees have everything they need at the beginning of each shift.

Managing these checks with paper forms is time-consuming and makes it challenging to gather the information you need for reporting. However, by transitioning from paper to digital forms, you'll save time and easily stay on top of every checklist, log, and report. Digital forms provide a secure repository for the information you need to make data-driven decisions.



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The Importance of Digitizing Inspections, Checks, and Forms

In public safety, your top priority is serving the needs of the community, and today, that requires modern tools to keep your workforce and equipment in top shape. These processes are necessary for meeting state and local reporting requirements and ensuring your employees are in the best possible position to respond to routine and emergency calls.

Many public safety agencies say digitizing their daily checks has done far more than just eliminating tedious tasks, it has revolutionized their processes. In fact, firefighter Tim Bailey said, "[By digitizing our forms] we were also able to eliminate 95 percent of our paperwork..."

Beyond saving time, modernizing your daily checks processes can help you run a more effective agency.



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Meeting compliance requirements

Serving the public also means being accountable for using resources wisely. For this reason, you may have to submit reports about your activities to county, state, or federal agencies. For example, local municipalities must keep a record of ambulance dispatches and response details, and submit this information to the state public health agency. Similarly, police departments may be required to submit reports to the state regarding arrest totals, call logs, and overall staffing levels.

Tracking employee training and certification is also necessary for many agencies, as it helps ensure that employees have up-to-date skills and knowledge to perform their duties. For example, counties and states requiring emergency medical technicians to have their [Nationally Registered EMT \(NREMT\) certification](#) need to track employees' continuing education hours as they are completed.

Tracking staffing and resourcing needs

Completing forms like inventory checklists and equipment maintenance reports helps your agency know when you have the resources you need to accomplish your work, and also where you may be lacking in specific areas. A great example is vehicle inventory and maintenance. Police cars, fire trucks, and ambulances not only require all the maintenance a civilian vehicle needs, but they also require specific maintenance for things like emergency lighting, sirens, and additional radios.

Checks and inspections also help to determine instances when you may be understaffed. For example, conducting routine checks of shift staffing levels helps to identify gaps where you may not have enough employees, and where you may be light in some ranks and experience levels.

Ensuring readiness

Meeting the health and safety needs of the community is always your highest priority. Checking inventory, conducting proper equipment maintenance, and managing employees effectively all support your mission of ensuring that every emergency call gets the response, care, and level of urgency it requires. While completing a form may feel like a hassle at times, it can make all the difference in ensuring vehicles, people, and equipment are ready to respond at a moment's notice.





How Digital Forms Make it Easier to Complete Routine Checks and Inspections

To meet your agency's compliance obligations and ensure you have the resources and staff you need to save lives and keep the community safe, you need the right tools. Modern technology makes it easier to complete daily, weekly, and monthly checks, and keep that information secure and available for reporting anytime you need it.

Routine checks and inspections can be as critical as checking ambulance life support systems or as simple as tracking firehouse food supplies. Here's just a partial list of all the types of checks and reports your staff may be responsible for completing on a regular basis:

- Inventory checklists
- Vehicle maintenance reports
- Purchase requisitions
- Training checklists
- Orientation checklists
- Uniform inspections
- Mileage logs and reimbursements
- Incident reports
- Shift logs
- Station duties
- Gear checks
- Ambulance rig checks

Completing and organizing forms manually ultimately can be clunky and time-consuming. Each check needs to be completed on time and submitted to

the necessary supervisor or other authority for sign-off. Moreover, information from the forms must often be entered into a spreadsheet or another summary document, and then filed away. While some agencies may have the resources to hire administrative staff to handle all this paperwork, many don't, and it's often up to a sergeant or another manager to keep track of it in addition to their other job responsibilities.

Automating your agency's forms makes them easier and faster to complete, all without making you blow through your budget. With digital forms, you can accomplish everything you did with paper forms, and much, much more.

Here's how moving to paperless forms will completely change the way you run your public safety agency:

1. Simplifies check and inspection processes

Simply put, technology makes a lot of things easier. Just like it's more convenient to pay bills online than mail a physical check, the same is true for completing checks and inspections. By putting your forms online, you don't have to worry about deciphering someone's handwriting, producing documents in duplicate or triplicate, chasing down signatures, or losing forms. Every form, field, and checklist you currently use can be moved online, making it one less thing employees need to carry around when trying to complete other job duties.

2. Enables regulatory compliance

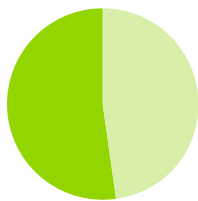
Digital forms make it easier to respond to information requests by state and federal agencies. Each form creates a digital paper trail you can easily access and share. You can also fulfill information requests by running reports by completion date, type of form, who submitted the form, and several other parameters.



Adopting a digital forms solution also allows you to ensure all checks and inspections are happening according to agency requirements. At any time, you can see which forms are in-progress, completed, or behind schedule, allowing you to take quick action to follow-up on any delays or missed checks. And if you need to prepare for an audit, you can easily pull reports containing all the information requested by auditors.

3. Saves time on administrative tasks

In a 2022 survey of law enforcement officers, 48% said they spend two to four hours a day on reporting and other paperwork. EMTs and firefighters are likely to have similar demands on their time for paperwork. By using a modern, digital solution to complete forms and inspections, you'll save time completing forms, submitting them to the correct approver, and creating reports to help you identify exactly where you stand with staff readiness, equipment, and agency vehicles.



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4. Covers all of your form needs

Chances are, the types of checks you perform change over time. As your agency grows and you acquire new equipment, you may also need to make changes in the forms you use. Comprehensive digital forms integrated with existing software not only enable you to create and edit custom forms, but it also comes with

pre-loaded forms covering a variety of areas, including:

- HR forms, including training, evaluations, and employee onboarding
- Safety apparatus checklists
- Uniforms, gear, and other clothing checks
- Community events
- Finance claims and reimbursements
- Health, screening, and physical activity logs
- Incident Logs
- Inspections for facilities and equipment

[TCP's Aladtec solution](#) comes with a library of over 200 pre-made forms, based on checklists and logs implemented by actual Aladtec customers. You simply find the form you need, customize it if needed, and begin using it immediately.

5. Improves decision-making around agency resources

Looking at a paper form can tell you a check has been performed, but it can't provide any historical or trend information. Also, information from paper forms is time-consuming to summarize. At some point, someone has to pull all the files from the filing cabinets and manually enter information into a spreadsheet or other document before it can be analyzed or shared with others. This simply isn't a modern way to manage important data.

Alternatively, digital forms allow you to run reports in a matter of clicks, helping you identify trends in areas such as response time, incident resolution, and shift



staffing levels. Equipped with this information, you can make better-informed decisions involving additions to staff, equipment purchases, and other improvements.

[Habersham County Emergency Services](#), the ambulance and fire service team used Aladtec digital forms to track the rate at which current staffing levels hindered their ability to respond to emergency calls, forcing them to route some calls to other counties or private services during high-volume periods. Trend reporting from the system provided the data they needed to justify a new ambulance and EMTs to help meet rising call volume and bring in more revenue for the city.



6. Mobile capability increases overall accessibility

Modern digital forms technology is accessible from any mobile device, including laptops, tablets, and smartphones. As a result, it's easy to complete forms with the devices your employees already use for other job duties. Instead of carrying an armful or clipboard full of forms, police, fire, and EMT staff can complete

forms digitally at any time, day or night. [Dynamic mobile capability](#) enables employees to find and complete forms and reports, no matter where they are in the precinct, firehouse, or out in the community.

7. Simplifies form sign-offs

Getting completed checks approved is fully automated with digital forms. The software can automatically route digital forms to the correct person for their review and sign-off, no matter how many levels of management need to give approval. Moreover, in addition to determining who can view, edit, and approve completed forms, you can [set parameters for who should be notified](#) when specific checks are completed and approved. So, for example, you can easily configure the system to notify your Finance Director each time a new expense reimbursement claim is approved by the battalion chief or sergeant on duty.

8. Makes it possible to add more context to forms

Where a paper form can only provide the information on the page, digital forms can expand to provide additional context. For example, you can attach images to equipment maintenance logs identifying a part that needs replacement. You can also [attach files](#) related to the part warranty or other information that may speed up the part reorder process.

9. Keeps forms and data secure

Paper forms sitting on someone's desk or in a filing cabinet can get misfiled, damaged, or accidentally discarded. But cloud storage of digital forms provides full access to agency employees while also keeping forms protected from unauthorized users and data loss. Each form has its own set of permissions, and all form changes are date and time stamped.



10. Offers integration opportunities

Part of what makes modern technology so versatile is its integration capability. For example, Aladtec's digital forms solution is integrated with our scheduling software, making it easy for employees to use both. That's exactly what the [New Albany Fire Department](#) did. After starting out with Aladtec's solution for scheduling, the department quickly found ways to use digital forms for daily checks. Employees used the solution to digitally complete daily truck checks, equipment inventory checks, fuel logs, and others.

Aladtec solutions also integrate with the many of the [public safety technologies you already use](#), such as station-to-station communication systems and national incident reporting platforms. These integrations can help you cut down on double-entry and achieve more centralized reporting across your agency.

Get Rid of Paper Forms and Filing Cabinets for Good

Before digital technology and automation, you found a way to complete daily and weekly checks with paper forms and spreadsheets. But manual forms are time-consuming to complete and difficult to track. They also make it virtually impossible to collect and analyze data for better decisions around staffing and agency resources. Fortunately, with a digital forms solution, you can modernize checks and inspections, making it easier than ever to manage reporting requirements and keep your agency productive.

TCP's Aladtec solutions are specifically designed for public safety, helping thousands of fire and rescue, law enforcement, EMT, and dispatch agencies do the life-saving work communities need. To see for yourself why so many agencies choose Aladtec, [reach out to talk to an expert](#).



Want to learn more? Let's talk.

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