

South Country Co-op: Taking Safety to the Next Level with eCompliance

South Country Co-op, one of the largest co-operatives in Canada, is home to a team of true safety champions. An eCompliance customer since 2017, this multimillion-dollar organization encompasses seven different business types ranging from food stores and pharmacies to mechanic shops and gas bars across 57 sites in 19 communities.



As an organization with several moving parts, South Country Co-op is challenged with keeping both their employees and the public safe at all times.

Heather Smith-Schenkey, the Health, Safety, and Environment Manager was proud to share that eCompliance has helped protect nearly 700 employees, centralized their information, as well as helped save time and hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A Digital Hub of Information

With a manual system and cabinets full of papers, Heather knew there had to be a better way to organize and store all data. eCompliance has enabled Heather to digitize and customize all important documents and information in one simple location, saving time and optimizing their workflow.

"I'm getting the information and access to it far sooner than I ever was before, and I have so much more time on the operational end to do other things!" Heather tells us.

It comes as no surprise that South Country Co-op, a leader in health and safety, has a highly complex system of hundreds of inspection forms, documents, and records.

"My Health, Safety and Environment Management System Manual is 1,100 pages long," says Heather. "It has 11 sections and on our internal website it's 4 Megabytes. It's a huge complicated document and is nothing simple. I also had seven lateral cabinets to store everything we needed for safety."

"With thinking outside of the box of how to make it work, eCompliance has made it work. Every one of

those processes can go into the system to be used and accessed. If you're open-minded, it can happen and the eCompliance system allows that."

eCompliance's mobile safety solution has even helped Heather streamline certain inspection forms from five separate documents to just one.

"We had separate inspections for every single thing we needed, but we realized we didn't need hundreds of inspection forms with eCompliance. For example, we had a separate first aid kit audit, a separate fire extinguisher inspection, a separate eye wash inspection, plus the physical site inspection, etc."

"With eCompliance, we've melded some inspections because they were all a monthly requirement," says Heather. "Now, it takes less time, we're checking boxes, and can add comments instead of handwriting. We're also able to upload pictures into any form or any inspection and create actions items and have that all in one place!"

The ability to customize documents to meet the organization's needs, was another advantage. "We created our own incident report to meet our retail needs," Heather mentions. "There was a system incident report that was provided to us in eCompliance and we went from that and made it into our own, so it's pulling exactly what we need."

By being able to customize forms, South Country Co-op has been able to tailor their inspections and processes to fit their specific criteria.

Now, all processes and valuable documents are centralized in this mobile digital system, which everyone can access. "It's cut down on manual labor where we had to go through all the paper documents because now, we're able to pull everything from eCompliance. Without this digital system, I would probably need 14 cabinets worth of storage space,

because legislatively every possible enforcement agency is asking for more proof than ever before.”

As an environmentally conscious organization, digitizing all forms has also been able to help South Country Co-op reduce their carbon footprint. With environmental sustainability as a priority, this has helped them save more trees and money by reducing their need for paper.

Digitizing Sweep Logs to Reduce Liability

As one of the largest co-operatives in Canada, this multimillion-dollar organization can become a target for public lawsuits for personal and property damages. The law states that injured parties have a day short of 2 years to file a lawsuit and most lawyers will wait until that time to file.

This is in hopes that staff have turned over, video footage is lost, and paper documents are buried or damaged, defaulting in a win for their client. With eCompliance, Heather has been able to reduce liability and save hundreds of thousands of dollars!

“If it wasn’t written down, it didn’t happen,” Heather shares. “Memories fail, so we needed to keep records with our sweep logs.” With eCompliance, South Country Co-op has been able to digitize hundreds of pages worth of sweep logs and document any hazards mitigated so they are accessible in minutes.

In certain instances where a customer or their lawyer has claimed that an individual was hurt on site, Heather has been able to produce their electronic sweep logs to prove their innocence.

“We have had some claims, to that one day short of two years, and we’ve had luck in showing that though we don’t have CCTV footage, because it falls off after 180 days, we can show that we also don’t have any records of this person telling a single one of our team members they were hurt on our site.”

“With this system, we can say ‘Here’s our sweep records. They’re in chronological order, they are by time, they are a legal document, and they are signed.’ It’s really helped us because we’ve been able to make claims go away because we have access to this system as proof.”

In 2019, South Country Co-op had approximately 4 slip, trip, and fall claims that would have resulted in a potential loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Thanks to eCompliance, only one of those cases

resulted in a loss and it was a mere \$1000 in paramedical care.

Asset protection checklists are also on the eCompliance platform which helps South Country Co-op minimize the risk of shoplifting, customer break-ins, and lawsuits, helping their organization go beyond safety to ensure a sense of security.

“This inspection is done at every site, every day, 7 days a week,” says Heather. “Employees are checking to see if the outside perimeters are intact, if the door was locked in the morning, if the security system was armed, if the cameras are working, etc. Every day they are also assessing our high theft items which are things we know people are stealing regularly.”

“There are thousands of these asset protection reports on our system because we expect a daily security compliance check to be done at every site, every day.” With eCompliance, South Country Co-op has been able to use these records to save money, reduce liability, and protect their organization.

An Accurate Method of Tracking Permits and Employee Training

Heather has also been able to use the system to track permits and expiry dates. With several licenses expiring at different times, eCompliance has helped them stay on top of all renewals.

“Those permits are typically annually based permits and we save them under the site person. We then set it to alert on permit renewal to the site manager and our fleet manager. This is also the same with our business licenses. Now, we can set a 120, 90, or 30-day reminder, and it’s done!”

Keeping track of training and certificates of all employees was also a challenge before eCompliance, as their original system was very cumbersome. Now, they are able to avoid any fines for employees failing to produce any certificates.

“Not one of our drivers has ever been fined for failing to produce their certificate because they’ve been able to pull up the PDF on eCompliance and show the person that stopped them that they have it and have access to it.”

This has also made it much easier for auditors to access whatever documents or information they may need about employees, as Heather can simply pull up a report in a matter of seconds!

A Central Point of Communication

With a team of nearly 700 employees, covering every generational gap from 14 years old to over 70 years old, eCompliance has helped to connect all employees on one mobile platform.

"Communication has always been the biggest barrier," Heather tells us. "South Country Co-op is all the co-ops from Calgary down to the Saskatchewan border and over to the US border. We even have a site that would take us three and a half hours of driving to get to!"

"For us to put boots on the ground and hands on support, we do it as often as we can, but it's not immediate because of the pure kilometers between the sites...we had to come up with something to help improve that and grant access to things, whether it was a process or policy, to hold people accountable and allow them to see things with the possibility of not being at work."

Heather shared that there were four different levels of approval that were in place when they were paper based. But when they started using eCompliance they were able to notify those who needed to be alerted to streamline the communication processes.

This was done with the help of what Heather calls Report Cards which would help them see which team member had submitted what.

Heather also gets notified immediately as reporting is much more timely with eCompliance. "Now, no matter what time it may be, people can just put everything on the system," Heather says.

With a single platform, accessible by all employees across 57 sites, Heather never has to worry about anything falling through the cracks ever again.

“**When I access the system, it has all the answers I need.**

Heather Smith-Schenkey, HSE Manager

The Bottom Line is...

It's clear that with eCompliance, safety is just the beginning. Not only has Heather been able to centralize all information and optimize all processes, but she has used this safety software solution as an operational and organizational tool. Let's not forget the impact it has also made on the organization as a whole in terms of protection and security.

When asked what would have happened if Heather did not choose eCompliance, she told us, "I can't even imagine the storage piece of it and the financial impact of the staff that would have needed to be added to even stay at the base service we were able to provide, if we couldn't have made some processes easier with this software."

"If we were still all paper and all manual, the team would have had to have grown four or five times over and the consequences would have been exponential."

As a rich cornerstone of so many communities, South Country Co-op has been a place that people can rely on as their commitment to excellence has never faltered. We are proud to call this organization an eCompliance customer and one of the leaders in health and safety among federated co-ops!

Are you facing any similar challenges? Want to see if eCompliance is the right software for you? Check out [our demo](#).

About eCompliance

eCompliance safety software is the leader for improving worker participation in safety.

The eCompliance mobile app connects workers with head office, creating a two-way conversation so safety leaders can make faster, fact-based decisions, and executives gain an unrivaled view of safety risks across their company.

With the mission to eliminate 1 million incidents by the end of 2020, eCompliance is the fastest growing safety software company in the world with hundreds of client success stories.

eCompliance empowers organizations to improve EHS performance and use safety as a competitive differentiator. For more information, visit www.ecompliance.com