

The EASYCAL[®] Automatic Calibration Station

By: Nicola Grun

Lifeloc
TECHNOLOGIES

The EASYCAL® Automatic Calibration Station

By Nicola Grun

This report focuses on the Lifeloc *EASYCAL® Automatic Calibration Station* for portable breath alcohol testers (PBTs). I set out to discover what the early adopters had to say about the *EASYCAL®* and its benefits to their operations.

Background

Evidential Breath Testers (EBTs) for DOT breath testing and PBTs used by law enforcement require routine calibration and verification checks to maintain and validate instrument accuracy. Calibrating an EBT sets the instrument's breath alcohol content measurement to a known alcohol concentration from either a dry gas mixture of alcohol and nitrogen or from a wet bath solution of alcohol and water. Traditionally the calibration and cal-check process has always been a manual effort, which while not difficult, can create opportunities for error and test invalidation if not performed correctly.

Lifeloc developed the *EASYCAL® Automatic Calibration Station* in response to Law Enforcement and Workplace users who, when surveyed, offered the following comments about automating the calibration process.

- “Anything that saves time and reduces possible errors is always good.”
- “Automation means less to remember and since I don't calibrate very often this would make me more efficient.”
- “Our officers have too many things to do already. Doing breathalyzer calibrations keeps them from what we want them to focus on.”
- “You wouldn't believe the mistakes I've seen over the years in calibrating and cal-checking. Especially after a positive test. Some Calibration Technicians can get pretty flustered after a positive test or if they are not called on too often to calibrate our instruments.”
- “The less administrative time and tasks I have to do the better.”

My Interviews

Stephen Prestridge is a Safety Manager for Walmart. Stephen shares the responsibility with a co-worker for calibrating over 40 Lifeloc *Phoenix 6.0BT* breath alcohol testers every month. Stephen was quick to volunteer this perspective on the *EASYCAL®*, “The monthly calibration went from being a dreaded activity to something that we look forward to now. Its very effective. Performing automatic calibrations with the *EASYCAL®* reduces the chance of inaccurate results and is far more convenient.”

EASYCAL® Saves Time

Raleigh General Hospital in Beckley, West Virginia performs DOT pre-employment and post-accident breath alcohol testing using Lifeloc's *Phoenix 6.0BT*. Lisa Gunther, Breath Alcohol Technician and Calibration Technician at Raleigh General was quick to point out, “It's so easy, I can do a calibration while I'm working on other tasks. The process is very standardized.” The *EASYCAL®* initiates and completes an entire instrument calibration and cal-check sequence without interruption or manual intervention. *EASYCAL®* was tested and approved for use on Lifeloc EBTs by the USDOT to ensure its reliability. Lisa added that the automatic calibration process from beginning to end takes no more than five minutes.



Michael Mancebo, Chief of Police for the City of

Lovelock, Nevada is also pleased with the time savings and ease of use. The *EASYCAL*® allows his department to perform their own calibrations on Lifeloc's *FC10Plus*, whereas previously they had to wait up to two months for their PBTs to be returned from another department. *EASYCAL*® ensures that each and every calibration is performed in exactly the same way regardless of who is performing the task. *EASYCAL*® allows for decentralized control and management of breath testing equipment.

***EASYCAL*® Failsafe Features Eliminate Sources of Error**

Joyce Harris from Kansas Drug Testing, Inc., a third party drug and alcohol testing company commented, "I like the ease of use since there is no need to remember how to do anything. The *EASYCAL*® does the checking for me." Checking includes verifying that the gas cylinder hasn't expired, that the gas concentration and tank pressure are correct and that the gas standard is automatically adjusted for altitude. No more gas correction factors to worry about. Joyce likes that the gas valve is automatically opened and closed for the prescribed amount of time. "That saves us on gas," she added. The device can reduce gas usage up to 50% versus the previous manual process.

Tom Econome, owner of Collection Plus, a third party drug and alcohol testing company in Sacramento, California that services a diverse client base including the California Department of Transportation, county agencies, trucking agents and taxi drivers is also very pleased with the failsafe features built into the *EASYCAL*®. Tom stated that, "The *EASYCAL*®'s expiration date notice for gas cylinders makes it especially convenient. *EASYCAL*® adds a lot of value for businesses employing multiple people using multiple breath alcohol testing units."

"The *EASYCAL*®'s expiration date notice for gas cylinders makes it especially convenient. *EASYCAL*® adds a lot of value for businesses employing multiple people using multiple breath alcohol testing units."

- Tom Econome, Collection Plus

Joyce also commented that, "The *Phoenix 6.0BT* breath alcohol tester always prompted her to perform a calibration-check after a manual calibration, however the *EASYCAL*® does one better. It automatically performs the accuracy verification check, reducing yet another opportunity for error."

***EASYCAL*® Increases Staff Independence at Corrections and Law Enforcement Agencies**

Ryan Broswell, Director of Alternative Programs for Weld County, Colorado is very pleased with the *EASYCAL*®. "Setting up the station and calibrating two Lifeloc *FC20* breath alcohol testers only took 25 minutes." *EASYCAL*® set-up is performed only once per gas cylinder and the device keeps a record of all calibrations and cal-checks performed across any number of instruments. Calibration results for unlimited breath tests are recorded in *EASYCAL*®'s internal database which can be accessed with a USB drive, and subsequently printed if desired. Multiple user names and passwords can be assigned to limit access to secure calibration data. *EASYCAL*® also allows for any number of calibration technicians. Ryan is pleased that his staff no longer have to rely on the scheduling availability of other departments to calibrate units. The *EASYCAL*® is meeting the department's need for easy and convenient monthly calibrations.

Summary

The *EASYCAL*® has proven itself a valuable time saver in keeping professional breath testers operating at peak performance and streamlining routine instrument maintenance. Extensive record keeping and password level protection ensure data integrity. Equally impressive are the failsafe checks built into the system which eliminate manual errors that in the past have resulted in voided Evidential Breath Tests or legal challenges to Preliminary Breath Tests.

For further information about Lifeloc's *EASYCAL*® please call 800.722.4872 or email sales@lifeloc.com.

