KINETIQ ANALYTICS

BUYER'S GUIDE SERIES

HEAVY INDUSTRY · EHS SOFTWARE · VENDOR EVALUATION

The 2026 Buyer's Guide for Heavy-Industry EHS Software.

How to evaluate EHS platforms when your workforce is half contractors and your audit is every quarter.

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ISSUED MAY 2026

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What's inside this guide.

A practical evaluation framework for safety leaders running heavy-industry operations. Categorical, not promotional. The product appears late.

> This guide does not name vendors in the body. Three categories of incumbent platforms exist in heavy-industry EHS, and they are referenced as categories — tier-1 enterprise multi-suite platforms, mid-market per-user-priced platforms, and narrow vertical-specific incumbents. A reader who already knows the names will recognize them. A reader who does not will leave with a framework that does not depend on them.

SECTION 01 · WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

A safety director was told to evaluate three vendors by Q3.

It is a familiar conversation. A safety director walks into a leadership meeting and is told, in passing, that the company is going to formally evaluate three EHS platforms and pick one by the end of the third quarter. The platforms have been pre-selected by procurement. The deck has already been built. The expectation is that two demos will be run, a third will be added if the first two leave gaps, and a recommendation will land on someone's desk before the next board cycle.

The director knows, before the first demo runs, that this is not going to be a clean process. Two of the three vendors come from different categories. One sells a broad enterprise suite priced in the high six figures with implementation measured in quarters. One sells a per-user mobile-first product that prices like a productivity tool and stops where industrial EHS actually starts. The third is a vertical incumbent that has been the default in the industry for fifteen years but has not visibly changed in the last five. None of the three will compare cleanly to the other two. The scorecard the procurement team built treats them as if they will.

This guide is for that director. It is not a vendor list. It does not name names. It assumes the reader will conduct their own evaluation against real vendors, and it gives them a way to compare those vendors that does not collapse the moment the first demo opens with a slide titled “our differentiators.”

The frame is categorical. There are four roads to industrial EHS. Each has a recognizable shape, a recognizable cost profile, and a recognizable failure mode. The director's job is to figure out which road each shortlisted vendor is on, what that road costs in dollars and in audit risk, and whether the road matches the operation. Once that mapping is clear, the demos become much easier to read.

> THE HARDEST PART
>
> The hardest part of an EHS evaluation is not the demo. It is reconciling three vendor categories whose pricing, implementation timeline, and field experience do not share a unit of measurement.

The rest of this guide walks the framework. Section 02 lays out the four roads. Sections 03 through 08 give the safety director a working vocabulary for the demo — what to look for, what to ask, what timelines and pricing models to expect, and where the security and compliance language tends to obscure rather than clarify. Section 09 is a blank scorecard. Section 10 names one vendor: ours. Until then, the goal is to make the reader sharper, not to sell them anything.

SECTION 02 · THE FOUR ROADS

There are four roads to industrial EHS.

Almost every shortlist a heavy-industry safety director sees is composed of vendors from three of the four roads. Recognizing which road a vendor is on is the single most useful thing the director can do before the first demo.

ROAD 01

Paper and spreadsheets.

Where most operators still live.

Inspections on clipboards. Incidents typed up after shift, often from a text-message thread. OSHA 300, 300A, and 301 rebuilt every January from email and supervisor memory. MSHA 7000-1 filed within the window, sometimes from a phone call.

Cheap to start. Expensive to defend when the inspector arrives. Visibility is whatever the corporate safety team remembers to ask for.

Typical buyer: operator with three sites or fewer who has not yet had the audit that forces the conversation.

ROAD 02

Generic forms applications.

No-code form builders and inspection apps.

A form designer with a mobile capture app. Clean for inspections and audits. Quick to deploy. Priced predictably per user. Reads well on a procurement spreadsheet.

Stops short where industrial EHS begins: federal indicator reporting, root cause analysis that holds up under regulatory citation, permit-to-work, contractor controls, claims integration, asset-bound hardware. The operator either builds all of that, or buys a second platform to handle it.

Typical buyer: operations team prioritizing speed-to-deploy over regulatory depth.

ROAD 03

Legacy multi-suite EHS platforms.

Tier-1 enterprise incumbents, built for the back office.

The recognized enterprise category. Broad modules across occupational health, environmental, sustainability reporting, and audit management. Built for corporate EHS teams and corporate reporting cycles.

Implementation is measured in quarters. Pricing is quote-only and rarely lands below six figures annually. Field-side capture varies by vendor; hardware is typically integrated through third parties or out of scope.

Typical buyer: Fortune 500 EHS organization with an enterprise sustainability mandate and an existing systems-integration team.

ROAD 04

Modern operational EHS.

Heavy industry, frontline-first, audit-ready by default.

Built for the operator whose workforce is half contractors and whose audit is every quarter. Field capture on the frontlines. Root cause analysis grounded in the regulation, with citations. Federal MSHA and OSHA indicators pre-loaded. Module-level access for contractors. Field hardware shipped by the vendor.

Implementation in weeks for a single site, quarters for complex multi-site rollouts. Published per-site list price for the entry tier. Single-tenant deployment. A newer category.

Typical buyer: heavy-industry operator whose existing tooling does not survive the audit.

The four roads are not equivalent. A vendor selection that compares one of each on a single scorecard will almost always over-weight whichever vendor matches the procurement team's existing assumptions about what software should cost and how it should be bought. The scorecard in Section 09 corrects for this by weighting categories that distinguish road from road, not vendor from vendor.

SECTION 03 · SEVEN REQUIREMENTS

The seven things heavy-industry EHS actually needs.

Generic EHS requirement lists run thirty to forty items. Most of them are table stakes — inspections, incidents, training records, document management. The seven items below are where heavy industry diverges from general industry, and where a vendor on the wrong road will quietly fail to deliver.

01 Federal indicator coverage that does not require a consulting engagement.
MSHA Part 50 production-rate and incidence indicators. OSHA 300-series totals. DART rate. TRIR. Filterable by site, by mine type, by contractor versus employee. If a platform requires a six-month consulting build-out before the operator can see the indicators that already exist on the operator's federal filings, the platform is on the wrong road for heavy industry.

02 Root cause analysis grounded in regulation, not generic prose.
The corrective action attached to a reportable event is the work product the regulator asks for. An RCA narrative that reads as a paragraph of generic safety language — "additional training was provided" — will be questioned. An RCA structured into immediate, contributing, and underlying factors, with the corrective action cited against a specific subsection of the controlling regulation, will not. Heavy-industry EHS needs the second mode by default.

03 Module-level access for contractor-heavy workforces.
If half the workforce is contractors who rotate between projects, role-based access at the system level is not enough. A contractor crew lead needs to file an incident on their own crew but not see the corporate safety dashboard. A general contractor needs to see their subcontractors but not their peer GCs. Module-level access control — module by module, with separate views for contractor, employee, auditor, and corporate roles — is the requirement. Most platforms do not have it by default.

04 Multi-state and multi-jurisdiction regulatory profile support.
An operator with sites in five states is filing against five state plans on top of the federal floor. Cal/OSHA is not federal OSHA. State-administered MSHA equivalents add fields. A platform with a single regulatory profile is a platform that will require workaround logic at every state line.

05 Field-side capture that does not depend on end-of-shift typing.
The narrative quality of an incident report degrades in proportion to the time between the event and the writing. A platform that requires a worker to sit down at a terminal at end of shift, or that requires a supervisor to reconstruct an event from a text-message thread two days later, is a platform whose audit binder will be reconstructed at audit time. Voice, photo, and on-site structured capture on the frontlines is the requirement.

06 Pricing transparency.
Heavy-industry EHS pricing has historically been quote-only. A vendor that will not publish a list price for the entry tier of its product is a vendor whose pricing is set by what the procurement team is willing to disclose about its budget. Pricing transparency — a published per-site or per-user anchor that the buyer can validate before the first call — shifts the negotiation. It is a useful filter on its own.

07 Single-tenant data isolation.
An operator's safety record contains incident detail, medical detail, contractor identity, and the narrative reasoning behind every corrective action. The default deployment posture for that data should be single-tenant: a database instance, encryption keys, and audit logs that do not commingle with another customer. Multi-tenant deployments are common and can be operated securely, but the single-tenant question is worth asking explicitly. The answer reveals a great deal about the vendor's architecture.

> WHY THESE SEVEN
>
> The seven map to the four roads in a predictable way. Paper covers none of them. Generic forms applications cover one or two. Legacy multi-suite platforms cover most of them in principle, but typically require professional services to land. Modern operational EHS is the category designed around all seven.

The five questions to ask every vendor on the demo call.

A useful demo question has three properties. It is concrete. It is the same question for every vendor on the shortlist. And the vendor cannot answer it with a slide.

01 **What is your published list price for the entry tier of this product, on a per-site or per-user basis?**

Vendors on the quote-only road will deflect this with a discovery question. A useful follow-up is to ask whether the published anchor exists at all, and if not, why not. The answer separates vendors who price the same product to every customer from vendors who price the same product to each customer's perceived budget.

02 **How does your platform handle contractors who rotate between projects?**

Specifically: does the platform support module-level access? Can a contractor crew lead see incidents on their own crew without seeing the corporate dashboard? Can the contractor's data follow them across projects without leaking between general contractors? A vendor on the legacy multi-suite road will describe a role-based access framework. The follow-up is whether that framework is module-level or system-level.

03 **When a federal agency publishes new indicator data, what is our team's effort to update the platform?**

For an MSHA-regulated operator: when MSHA publishes new Part 50 production-rate data, what is the effort to refresh the indicators in the platform? Is it a self-serve refresh, a vendor refresh, a consulting engagement, or a roadmap item? The answer reveals whether federal indicator support is a feature of the product or a feature of the relationship.

04 **Is your deployment single-tenant or shared infrastructure?**

If single-tenant: where does the deployment live, what does the encryption posture look like, and what is the recovery posture if our tenant goes down. If multi-tenant: what is the data-isolation guarantee at the database layer, and what is the auditability of the isolation. Both answers can be acceptable. The question is whether the vendor can describe their own architecture with precision.

05 **If we terminate the contract, how do we get our audit binder out?**

Export format. Field-level coverage. Whether the chain-of-custody and audit-log content come with the export or stay with the vendor. Whether the corrective-action narratives come out with their regulatory citations intact. Vendors who treat data export as a contractual fee item should be asked to put the fee in writing during the evaluation, not after the contract is signed.

> A NOTE ON THE DEMO ITSELF
>
> A vendor who answers all five questions with a slide deck has answered none of them. A useful demo is the vendor logging into a customer-like sandbox and walking the reader through the actual product. Ask for that. Most vendors will accommodate. The ones who will not are telling the reader something.

SECTION 05 · PRICING MODELS

Pricing models in heavy-industry EHS.

Four pricing patterns dominate the category. Each one prices the same notional product differently, and each one creates a different total-cost-of-ownership profile. The buyer's job is to convert all four to the same unit before comparing.

MODEL	TYPICAL ANCHOR	HOW TO READ IT
Published per-user, monthly. Common in mid-market platforms.	`$10 – $30 / user / month`	Predictable. Reads cleanly on a procurement spreadsheet. Scales linearly with workforce, which can either favor or punish the operator depending on contractor density. A site with 200 occasional users and 30 power users prices differently from a site with 30 of each.
Published per-site, monthly. Less common but increasing.	`$250 – $1,500 / site / month`	Decouples cost from contractor headcount, which matters in heavy industry. A 200-user site costs the same as a 50-user site at the same tier. Total cost rises with site count, not with workforce count.
Quote-only enterprise. Standard for legacy multi-suite platforms.	`High five figures – high six figures / year`	Pricing is bespoke. Total cost depends on negotiated discount, module bundle, and term. Implementation and professional services frequently add 30 to 100 percent on top of the software fee in year one.
Hardware-bundled vs. hardware-separate. Cross-cutting.	`Varies`	Some vendors include field hardware (tablets, scanners, credential readers) in the subscription. Some sell the hardware outright. Some sell it through a third party. The difference can be a five-figure year-one capital item the buyer does not see until late in the cycle.

Converting between models for comparison

The cleanest way to compare a per-user platform against a per-site platform is to compute both on the operator's real footprint. For an operator with 12 sites averaging 60 active users per site — a typical heavy-industry profile — a $20-per-user-per-month platform prices at roughly $14,400 per month, or about $173,000 per year. A $250-per-site-per-month platform on the same footprint prices at roughly $36,000 per year. The two are not in the same range. Once contractor users are layered in — and contractor density in heavy industry can run 1 to 1 against employee headcount — the per-user model accelerates faster than the per-site model.

Anchoring against quote-only enterprise

Legacy multi-suite platforms in heavy industry typically clear the low six figures annually for an operator with a meaningful site count, and frequently land in the mid to high six figures once professional services are added. A buyer evaluating against quote-only enterprise should ask for a redacted prior customer quote at the operator's size band, on the same modules. Reputable vendors will provide it.

SECTION 06 · INTEGRATION STORY

The integration story that matters.

Most EHS integration conversations focus on the wrong things. The integrations that matter in heavy industry are narrower than the vendor architecture diagrams suggest, and they are not the integrations the vendor leads with.

Microsoft Entra federation

For most heavy-industry operators on the corporate side, identity is Microsoft. Single sign-on through Microsoft Entra is the integration that determines whether the platform's adoption story is real. A platform that requires its own credential set for every employee is a platform whose adoption will plateau at the safety team. A platform that federates with Entra puts itself in front of every employee's normal login.

LMS coexistence, not LMS replacement

Operational EHS is not a learning management system. Training records, regulatory coursework, and competency tracking belong in the LMS. Operational EHS feeds the LMS the events that should trigger training assignments, and reads from the LMS the competency status that should gate access to certain tasks. A vendor pitching the EHS platform as a replacement for the LMS is overselling the integration; a vendor that describes the two systems as parallel and bridged is describing reality.

Environmental, industrial hygiene, and ESG layers

For operators with significant environmental compliance, industrial hygiene programs, or ESG reporting requirements, the operational EHS platform sits below those layers, not in place of them. The operational platform feeds the indicators — incident counts, near-miss volumes, exposure events — that the environmental, IH, and ESG systems consume. A platform that pitches itself as a single source of truth across all four domains is pitching scope it cannot deliver in the implementation timeline the operator needs.

Claims and workers' compensation

The integration between EHS and claims is the integration that creates real annual savings, because it shortens the lag between incident capture and claims notification. A platform with a structured claims hand-off — not a PDF export, but a structured record transmitted to the claims administrator — reduces the days-to-notification metric the insurer uses to compute experience modification factor in subsequent policy years.

> THE INTEGRATION THAT MATTERS MOST
>
> If the buyer has to pick one integration to land in year one, it is identity federation. Every other integration can be sequenced behind it. Adoption depends on it.

SECTION 07 · TIMELINES

Implementation timelines you should expect.

Three timelines are useful for the buyer to carry into the demo. Anything substantially longer is a red flag for the operator's site count. Anything substantially shorter is usually a sandbox demo that has been mistaken for a production deployment.

SCOPE	REALISTIC WINDOW	WHAT “READY” ACTUALLY MEANS AT THE END
Single-site sandbox.	~60 days	One site live on inspections, incident reporting, RCA, and federal indicators. Identity federated with Entra. Field capture configured on the site's hardware. Audit binder exportable end-to-end for the in-scope events. Contractor access provisioned for the one or two active contractor crews on the site.
Multi-site rollout.	~120 days	Six to twelve sites live on the same scope as above. Multi-state regulatory profile configured. Corporate dashboard reading across all sites. LMS bridge live in coexistence mode. Contractor access provisioned for the operator's top-tier contractor population.
Complex multi-site with claims integration.	~180 days	All of the above, plus structured claims hand-off to the operator's carrier or TPA. Historical data migration in scope. Custom regulatory profile work for state-specific requirements. Production cutover from prior platform if applicable.

What is a red flag in a timeline pitch

A vendor pitching a single-site sandbox in two weeks is pitching a demo, not an implementation. A vendor pitching a 12-site rollout in 12 months is pitching a legacy enterprise implementation cycle that may exceed the operator's patience. A vendor whose timeline does not include a discrete identity-federation milestone is pitching a timeline that does not survive contact with the operator's IT team. In all three cases the timeline itself is the signal, not the duration in isolation.

What to ask about historical data

Historical incident data is the migration item that consumes the most time and the most professional-services budget in an EHS implementation. The useful question is: at what cutover date does the new platform become the system of record. The honest answer is usually a forward cutover — new events flow into the new platform from day one; historical events are migrated as a separate workstream and may or may not complete. A vendor who promises full historical migration on a 60-day timeline is making a promise that will be renegotiated mid-implementation.

Security and compliance posture, read carefully.

Most security pages on EHS vendor websites read identically. The differences are in the footnotes. The four items below are where the buyer can usually find them.

Single-tenant versus multi-tenant

Single-tenant means the operator's data lives in a database instance dedicated to the operator. Multi-tenant means the operator's data lives in a shared database instance and is logically separated by a tenant identifier. Both can be operated securely. The difference matters at three points: at audit (single-tenant produces a cleaner data-isolation answer for the operator's own auditors), at incident (single-tenant blast radius is contained to the operator), and at contract end (single-tenant export and decommissioning is a clean break, multi-tenant requires the vendor to extract and prove deletion).

Encryption at rest and in transit

Encryption at rest using a current standard (AES-256 or equivalent), with keys held in a managed key service, is the expected baseline. Encryption in transit using TLS 1.2 or higher is the expected baseline. A vendor that does not describe both clearly on a security page should be asked the question on the call.

Identity federation

Microsoft Entra federation, Google Workspace federation, or generic SAML 2.0 should be available on the enterprise tier of any serious vendor. A platform that requires its own credential system for every user is a platform whose adoption ceiling is lower than its capability ceiling.

SOC 2 Type II, HIPAA, and FedRAMP scope

SOC 2 Type II is the audit most relevant to an EHS evaluation. A vendor with a current attested SOC 2 Type II report should be able to provide it under NDA. A vendor whose SOC 2 status is “in progress” or “Type I attested, Type II planned” is a vendor whose audit posture is younger than the vendor's marketing implies. HIPAA scope is relevant only if the operator's EHS workflow touches protected health information, which most industrial EHS workflows do not. FedRAMP scope is relevant only if the operator is selling into federal government work; for most industrial operators it is out of scope. The buyer should ask each vendor to be specific about what is scoped and what is not.

> A BOUNDARY WORTH BEING EXPLICIT ABOUT
>
> No EHS platform brings an operator into compliance with a federal regulation. The operator's safety program brings the operator into compliance. The platform supports the program — it captures the events, structures the corrective actions, makes the audit binder defensible, and shortens the lag between an event on the frontlines and the record of it at the corporate level. The judgment about what is reportable, what the corrective action should be, and how a regulator's rule applies to a specific event belongs to the operator's qualified safety professional. A vendor who describes their platform as making the operator compliant is overstating what software can do.

SECTION 09 · VENDOR SELECTION SCORECARD

The vendor selection scorecard.

A blank scorecard with six categories weighted for heavy-industry EHS. Score each category 0 to 5 per vendor. Multiply by the weight. Sum the weighted scores. The scorecard will not pick the vendor for the buyer, but it will surface the points at which the buyer is making a tradeoff that the demo did not surface.

CATEGORY	WEIGHT	VENDOR A	VENDOR B	VENDOR C
Federal indicator coverage Pre-loaded MSHA / OSHA indicators, refresh cadence, self-serve.	× 20	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
RCA quality and citation grounding Structured RCA, regulation citation, audit defensibility.	× 20	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
Contractor and module-level access Module-level controls, GC/sub separation, rotation handling.	× 15	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
Pricing transparency Published anchor, verifiable on the website pre-call.	× 15	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
Deployment timeline credibility Single-site sandbox in ~60 days, identity-federation milestone.	× 15	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
Security posture Tenancy model, encryption, identity federation, SOC 2.	× 15	– / 5	– / 5	– / 5
Weighted total (max 500)	–	–	–	–

How to read the result

A vendor that scores within ten percent of another vendor on weighted total is not meaningfully ahead. A vendor that scores within ten percent on weighted total but is on a different road — for example, a tier-1 multi-suite at six figures next to a modern operational platform at low five figures — is a vendor whose total-cost-of-ownership profile is different by an order of magnitude. The scorecard is the input. The road framing in Section 02 is the lens. The buyer's judgment is the output.

SECTION 10 · KINETIQ ANALYTICS

Modern operational EHS for the frontlines.

The first nine sections of this guide were written to be useful regardless of whether the reader ever talks to Kinetiq. This section names the publisher so a reader can find out who wrote the guide and what the platform behind it actually does.

KINETIQ NEXUS · INDUSTRIAL EHS PLATFORM

Built for the frontlines, grounded in the regulation.

Kinetiq Nexus is an industrial EHS platform built for operators whose workforce is half contractors and whose audit is every quarter. Field capture on the frontlines. Root cause analysis grounded in the regulation, with citations to specific subsections of the controlling rule. Federal MSHA and OSHA indicators pre-loaded and refreshable without a consulting engagement. Module-level access for contractors, with separate views for crew leads, general contractors, employees, auditors, and corporate roles.

Single-tenant deployment. Microsoft Entra federation on the enterprise tier. Published per-site list price for the entry tier — $250 per site per month at the time of publication, verifiable at kinetiq-analytics.com/pricing. Single-site sandbox in roughly 60 days, including identity federation, field capture configuration, and audit binder export.

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What this guide is, and what it is not

This is a buyer's guide, not a vendor pitch. The first nine sections were written to be useful regardless of whether the reader ever talks to Kinetiq. The categorical framing was deliberate. The omission of competitor names was deliberate. The omission of Kinetiq from the body until this section was deliberate. A reader who walks away with a framework and a scorecard has gotten what the guide was designed to deliver, even if the next conversation is with a different vendor.

For the reader who does want to talk to us, the operational EHS road is the road we are on, and the seven requirements in Section 03 are the requirements we built the platform around. A 30-minute working call is the most efficient way to find out whether the road matches the operation.

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Jeffrey works on the frontlines on the operator side and builds at the platform side. He hosts Bridging the Gap, a podcast about the space between corporate safety policy and what actually happens on the floor. Reach him at solutions@kinetiq-analytics.com.
