N.C. Hospital Looks to RFID Technology to Improve Asset Visibility

Southeastern Regional Medical Center (SRMC) in Lumberton, N.C., has contracted RadarFind to install an asset-tracking system that uses active RFID tags and interrogators operating in the 902 to 928 MHz range. The tags communicate with readers that plug into standard AC outlets and have a design that keeps both outlet sockets available for use by other devices. The hospital hopes the system can help it reduce its spending.

David Sumner, SRMC's VP of strategic management and support services, says the hospital currently relies on employees taking periodic manual inventory of important devices such as wheelchairs and infusion pumps. But that system takes too much time and produces erroneous data, he says, since many assets can not be easily located and, thus, might not be counted. As a result, superfluous replacement equipment might be ordered.

RadarFind's RFID readers have a pass-through design that keeps an outlet's sockets available for use by other devices.

In 2006, Wayne Memorial Hospital, a 316-bed facility in Goldsboro, N.C., deployed RadarFind's system and was able to save more than $300,000 in equipment expenses within a year of installation RadarFind's active ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) RFID transponders use multiple-input, multiple-output (MIMO) communication. MIMO is a wireless communication technique utilizing multiple analog signal paths among multiple antennas to transmit and receive data. The interrogators' range can be set from 3 to 150 feet. Once they receive tag data, the readers pass that information up to devices that RadarFind calls collectors. Typically, one collector is installed on each floor of a facility.

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