

3M Track and Trace Solutions Installs RFID Tracking System To Manage 150,000 Medical Records at Fort Hood

Using Radio Frequency Identification Technology, the \$3.76 Million Project Is Designed To Increase Efficiency in Medical Data Collection and Healthcare Delivery

3M has completed the development and installation of an RFID (radio frequency identification) Smart Shelf System to track and manage the more than 150,000 medical files of U.S. Army personnel and their family members at Fort Hood, Texas. Under the terms of a three-year, \$3.76-million contract, 3M Track and Trace Solutions will provide training and maintenance services over the next year.

Fort Hood, situated about 60 miles north of Austin, the state capital, is the nation's largest active-duty domestic armed forces facility. It occupies 340 square miles.

The custom-designed 3M RFID Smart Shelf System is the centerpiece of a pilot program that may be extended to other military installations after a period of evaluation. The system is intended to substantially reduce errors and inefficiencies associated with manual tracking, retrieval, filing and file merging methods of medical records management at Fort Hood, where thousands of files may be in use at the base's six clinics during any given month. In turn, such improvement would make a positive impact on operational efficiencies in health care delivery, the troop deployment process, and the management of medical data collection. One of the top priorities of the system is to provide virtually instant accessibility to complete medical records for soldiers and their family members requiring intensive and complex healthcare services.

"The cost-efficiency and far-reaching versatility of RFID is prompting an expanding range of innovative applications in almost all facets of society," observes Lem Amen, vice president, 3M Track and Trace Solutions. "As a leader in this emerging technology, 3M is very proud to help introduce this powerful tool to the Army."

The program to track and manage Army medical records utilizing radio frequency identification technology is being led by the Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC), a unit of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC).

The Army becomes the first branch of the U.S. Armed Forces to deploy this RFID system from 3M for medical records management. Three other federal government entities are using RFID systems from 3M Track and Trace Solutions for applications not requiring Smart Shelf technology.

David Erickson, 3M program manager for the Fort Hood project, said approximately 300 cabinets have been installed with "smart shelves" to accommodate the more than 150,000 medical files, whose movements are continuously monitored.

"The system is designed to provide automatic inventory monitoring and automatic error notification, and thereby essentially eliminate human compliance issues," he says. "The problems that arise in manually managing vast numbers of medical records are not only a waste of time and money, but, more important, they can adversely affect the delivery of medical services. And on a major military installation, they can also have an impact on the timely deployment of personnel to their assignments to other parts of the world."

Erickson says 3M's Fort Hood contract covered the tasks of choosing and optimizing the best radio frequency

technology for this application, developing a cost-effective system that includes shelf-based reading capabilities and specialized software tailored specifically to meet the military's processes, and the installation and training of personnel for its use and maintenance.

Sirit Inc. is providing INfinity 510 UHF tag readers for the Fort Hood RFID installation.

"This application presented a number of environmental, technological and performance challenges, and 3M has implemented several unique concepts to achieve remarkable results," says Tony Sabetti, Sirit vice president, RF Solutions. "We are pleased that the IN 510, which was selected as the top performing reader in the ODIN technologies Reader Benchmark report, provides the reader management flexibility, read accuracy, and high tag read rates needed to meet the stringent requirements for the application."

(Note: This project is sponsored by the Department of the Army under Award W81XWH-06-1-0223. Awarding and administering office: U. S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity, 820 Chandler Street, Fort Detrick, MD 21702-5014. The information contained herein does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Government and no official endorsement should be inferred.)

RFID technology uses a microchip and tiny antenna implanted in a tag, which is attached to an object, in much the same way as a barcode. A major difference, however, is that an RFID tag transmits its information to a tracking device using radio waves, and therefore no line of sight is required between the tag and the reading device. For many applications, RFID is easier to use, more accurate and more cost effective than other inventory tracking systems.

3M provides comprehensive, practical and easy to use solutions for customers in diverse markets, including health care, safety and security, government, oil and gas, process industries, supply chain, construction and utilities, libraries and legal. Utilizing RFID, GPS and RTLS technologies, our asset management, protection, and utilization solutions enable customers to reliably and accurately manage high-value assets. Unlike similar offerings, based on components rather than complete solutions, 3M Systems are designed with full implementation in mind, deploying the right solution, with the right technology, suited for the customer. For more information, go to www.3Mtrackandtrace.com.

About 3M

A recognized leader in research and development, 3M produces thousands of innovative products for dozens of diverse markets. 3M's core strength is applying its more than 40 distinct technology platforms – often in combination – to a wide array of customer needs. With \$24 billion in sales, 3M employs 75,000 people worldwide and has operations in more than 60 countries. For more information, visit www.3M.com.

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About Sirit

Sirit Inc. is a leading provider of RFID technology worldwide. Harnessing the power of Sirit's enabling-RFID technology, customers are able to more rapidly bring high quality RFID solutions to the market with reduced initial engineering costs. Sirit's products are built on more than 14 years of RF domain expertise addressing multiple frequencies (LF/HF/UHF), multiple protocols and are compliant with global standards. For more information, visit www.sirit.com.

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