How Essential Healthcare saved 950 days with RFID for equipment hire

Essential Healthcare supplies, rents and decontaminates medical equipment for healthcare providers across the UK, processing over 12,000 rental systems annually. Manual tracking met requirements but made it harder to deliver the level of traceability needed at scale. By implementing an RFID-enabled system, they cut tagging time by 50% and saved 3,418 hours - that's 950 working days - over 12 months.

The Challenge

Essential Healthcare's decontamination process involves multiple stages, and each system comprises three seperate assets - base cover, top cover and inner mattress. when covers went into industrial washing machines, there was no way to match them back together afterwards.

"We didn't necessarily track the covers and inners, and we did manual certificates to say 'yes, weve' cleaned this'", explains Lucy. *"But if we were asked to prove that unequivocally, we couldn't."*

The company also hires out pressure-relieving pups and specialised bariatric equipment. with each asset type requiing different handling procedures, service schedules and compliance documentation, manual tracking was slowing down throughput.

Essential Healthcare needed to track individual assets through their entire lifecycle without manual entry at every step.

What the client says

"[RFID] gives us the information and traceability we need, but at a cost that doesn't make it unreasonable. That means we can be competitive, because we're using a system, a process and a device that's financially manageable, but gives extensive data as well".

Lucy Mathie
IT & Business Systems Support

The solution? RFID tags and readers.

Passive RFID offered the ideal solution: no batteries to maintain, tags that survive industrial wash cycles, and a commercially viable price point. Tags could be read instantly with handheld scanners, giving the traceability they needed without constant connectivity.

CoreRFID proposed two types of passive RFID tags to fit their requirements: laundry-compatible tags for covers that go through washing machines, durable lables for pumps and bariatric equipment. Both operating at 860-960 MHz, compliant with ISO 18000-6C standards, and readable by their TSL handheld scanners for seamless workflow automation.

Each asset now carries it's own identifier and entire history - patient count, cleaning cycles, repairs. The RFID hardware integrates with Essential Healthcare's bespoke software.

The systems acts as an automatic quality gate. *"If all the steps haven't been done, when you try to assemble it, the system won't let you,"* Lucy explains. *"Incomplete or improperly cleaned equipment can't be dispatched to customers."*

How does RFID support the rental aspect?

The same tags enable Essential Healthcare to track rental performance, monitor turnaround times, log repairs to the correct hospital departments and provide customers with detailed utilisation statistics.

"The rental side is heavily fed back to the customer, and it's only possible because we have the tags in those assets. In *terms of rentals admin, I don't think I can quantify [time saved]. There is no way to replicate this process via a manual method. We would not have accurate invoicing, reporting or traceability*."

Essential Healthcare's results demonstrate what's possible when you replace manual tracking with RFID-enabled automation. Faster processing, stronger compliance and capabilities that manual methods simply can't deliver.

BENEFITS

- Cut processing time by 50% - from 3 minutes to just 90 seconds
- Saved 950 days annually on decontamination processes - 16 minutes per system
- Accurate per-asset invoicing
- API integration to existing system
- Eliminated manual data entry
- Track asset location, usage history, service records and rental status in real time
- Automate certificate generation to improve compliance
- Improved quality assurance with safeguarded processes

If you're facing similar challenges with decontamination workflows, asset traceability or equipment hire management, CoreRFID can help you design an RFID solution that fits your operation.

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CoreRFID Ltd • Unit 1 • Connect Business Village • 24 Derby Road • Liverpool • UK • L5 9PR
T: +44 (0) 845 071 0985 • E: info@corerfid.com
www.corerfid.com