



RFID: What Does Congress Need to Know?

3M appreciates that the federal government has approached the development of RFID applications with interest but legislative and regulatory caution. This technology can be adapted for many commercial, military, and intelligence community uses and will flourish best if regulation is minimal. Government actions should encourage using RFID technology to enhance supply chain logistics, security, chain of custody, and high value and/or activity asset tracking.

3M has been working with RFID for several years. Three technologies were demonstrated at the Congressional Internet Caucus RFID Policy Primer and Tech Exhibition:

- 1) Market research has shown that many offices and firms do not have a file tracking system or process in place or, if they do, it's a very manual process (signing out files, marking shelves with cards, etc.) Other offices use spreadsheets and barcodes. 3M created a file tracking and locating solution using RFID technology. The 3M RFID Tracking Solution tracks and locates files and includes hardware, software, tags, installation, training and support. In early adopter sites the solution has paid for itself in less than a year, but the real value is in knowing where files are at all times.
- 2) The 3M Dynatel 2200MiD Series Locating and Marking System for field mapping and facilities maintenance makes it possible to find a location and confirm details of the buried feature before excavation begins, and workers know in advance what to expect (i.e., per line, gas valve, telephone stub, or point where a utility has been repaired as well as when it was placed and who did the work. Each active marker comes with a unique preset identification number and programmed with point-specific information by the placement crew. In addition, markers come in a series of colors, each intended for a specific underground utility per industry standards. The precision of this marking method now makes it possible for a crew to go back at a later date, quickly find the marker, verify underground details, and then excavate with confidence using a tool as small as a post-hole digger.
- 3) The current 3M Smart Shelf system is an internal research and development program, partially funded through government contracts, to demonstrate technical feasibility of meeting the unique and stringent requirements of a military medical file tracking application. For records managers who require continuous and automatic locating of their high-value files, Smart Shelves will be a file locating system that uses RFID technology to locate and log file location, increasing security and productivity. Unlike other systems, smart shelves would continuously locate files while on smart shelves with minimal human intervention.