



Containing the Coronavirus Outbreak – Real-Time Location Systems Can Help

Hospitals already have many tools in their toolbox to fight the spread of contagious diseases such as coronavirus. Technology solutions can provide additional tools to assist in that crusade. Here are four ways **Real-Time Location Systems (RTLS)** can help with containing the coronavirus outbreak:

CONTACT TRACING

Hospitals often admit new patients without knowing if they are carrying a communicable disease. We only know if a patient is a carrier after a medical evaluation and test results. In this situation, we put at risk many of our patients and staff who were exposed to the carrier in the waiting room, exam room, or lab.

With the assistance of an **automatically generated contact tracking report** which leverages data collected by Real-Time Location Systems (RTLS), healthcare organizations can take the necessary steps to minimize the spread of the disease. These steps can include quarantining staff and patients, and sterilizing potentially contaminated equipment.

For example, our healthcare clients can leverage RTLS data to implement an effective communications strategy. Since their patients and staff all wear RTLS badges, the facility can run a contact tracking report and send out targeted messages to everyone who came into contact with an infected patient. The same protocols can be applied if they identify a patient carrying the COVID-19 virus.

AUTOMATED AIR-PRESSURE MONITORING

Condition-sensing sensors can also provide needed assistance with the containment of infectious diseases. With pressure sensors, hospitals can monitor 24/7/365 air pressure conditions of rooms which require a constant positive or negative air pressure per ASHRAE regulations, such as positive air pressure in patient rooms and operating rooms, and negative air pressure in isolation rooms and soiled utility rooms. If the pressure levels go beyond an acceptable threshold, the proper staff is alerted so that corrective actions can be taken immediately.

This not only ensures environmental safety in case of “out-of-range” situations, but also allows clinical and

engineering staff to eliminate time-consuming manual compliance logging, enabling them to focus on tasks that cannot be automated.

ASSET LOCATING

During an outbreak, hospitals inevitably experience a higher influx of patients, which creates an increased need for essential medical equipment like ventilators, powered air purifier respirators, and infusion pumps. With a Real-Time Locating System (RTLS), medical personnel can **use a search function to immediately find needed equipment**. In addition, the Environment Services staff can be notified automatically to retrieve soiled equipment, minimizing the risk of exposure and enabling equipment to be circulated back to the pool of clean inventory (after proper disinfection procedures).

HANDWASHING MONITORING

The importance of thorough handwashing in a situation like the COVID-19 epidemic is unquestionable. By simply **wearing a location-enabled badge**, Real-Time Location Systems can remind staff to follow proper hand hygiene protocol at critical moments. This little reminder can be the difference between preventing a spread of coronavirus or causing it.

If your organization has already invested in RTLS for use cases such as asset management or nurse call integration, the infection prevention and containment use case should be the next logical step in your RTLS progression. The Infinite Leap team can assist with creating a fast-track plan to implement RTLS-enabled solutions that aid in preventing and containing outbreaks. If your organization does not have an RTLS system in place, this might be the tipping point in making a decision to invest in RTLS.

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