

Smart Band® RFID Wristbands Track Runners' Medical Information at Mt. Marathon Race in Alaska

Running at Radio Frequency Speed

Precision Dynamics Corporation's (PDC) Smart Band® RFID Wristband System made its debut at the Mount Marathon Race in Seward, Alaska on July 4. The RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) wristbands were used to ensure positive patron identification and access participants' medical information.

Official records reveal that the Mt. Marathon Race began as an organized run in 1915 and has since become a regular part of the Independence Day celebration in Seward, and is the third oldest running race in the country.

Approximately 840 race participants were given RFID Smart Bands which contained their bib number, name, gender, age, and pertinent medical and emergency contact information. The system revolves around a tiny, flat RFID chip, sealed in a non-transferable wristband, that uses customized software to store and transfer data which is read by RFID readers. It provided event staff and medical personnel immediate access to personal and medical data during the race.



Positive ID / Improved Medical Care

Using RFID wristbands to positively identify patrons helped improve safety measures during the race. In past races, instances of runners giving their bib numbers to people not officially registered for the race caused confusion. This year bib numbers were encoded on the chips, and runners without a Smart Band were not allowed to participate in the race.



“Runners received their Smart Bands at registration where they presented a photo ID, and the bands were programmed using the event database information which was loaded on PDC's Banding Stations,” said Victor LaRosa, PDC RFID & Age/ID Manager. Handheld RFID readers were used throughout the race course and finish line by medical personnel.

Smart Band's ability to positively identify patrons can help save lives and money through reduced medical errors. The system helps to ensure that the “Five Rights of Medication Safety” are achieved, facilitating real-time confirmation of right patient, right drug, right dose, right route, and right time. What's more, the

RFID chips on the wristband can be read and recorded through clothing, water, glass, and the human body—ideal for challenging races in harsh terrain.

“RFID wristbands improved the ID process and overall event operations,” said Rich Houghton, race director. “The RFID wristbands gave us the capability to immediately correct and update information for each participant and have medical information on every racer. In the past, we had participants who were unconscious and we had no way of getting an accurate and fast ID on them.”

The strenuous race often leaves participants sick and nauseous at the finish line; therefore, it’s imperative that medical information be readily available. The consequences of not having a medical history on an unconscious or very sick person can be devastating. Using RFID wristbands help decrease the risk of medical errors and increase the efficiency of medical treatment.

“The RFID wristbands were non-obtrusive to the runners while at the same time the bands survived what is probably the most challenging race in the country,” adds Houghton.



Additional Applications

Smart Bands can perform a variety of functions. They are used for age verification, tracking and access control. Other common uses include utilizing the wristbands as portable electronic wallets that provide convenient cashless point of sale. Unlike debit cards, Smart Bands are non-transferable, preventing scalping and unauthorized access.

To learn more about PDC’s RFID solutions, please call 818-897-1111 ext. 1320, email info@pdc-rfid.com, or visit www.pdc-rfid.com.