

Low Rental

Saving Costs in Refrigerator & Catering Equipment Rental



Low Rental is an international supplier of refrigeration and catering equipment to the exhibitions, events and retail markets. Services include refrigeration, catering equipment, cold rooms and temporary kitchen rental. Although primarily a rental company, Lowe has also equipment available for sale too. Established in 1977 in Northern Ireland, Lowe has developed a team of experts in refrigeration and catering across key markets. Lowe has strategically placed offices worldwide include Lisburn (HQ), England, Scotland, Germany, Italy, Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Atlanta, USA.

Low rents out over 20,000 items worldwide including fridges, freezers, catering equipment and temporary kitchens and supplies high-profile events from Royal Ascot to the Singapore Grand Prix,

Low started work with CoreRFID in 2016 and has recently extended its use of RFID tracking to its Far East and Gulf operations after successfully deploying the technology in Europe.

RFID Tracking Saves Staff Time

Low Rental uses RFID tags on the rental equipment that it supplies. These tags allow equipment to be quickly and easily identified with greater speed and accuracy than was previously possible with paper-based systems.

Low Rental has saved weeks of staff time and achieved an almost 100% accuracy rate since installing the system from CoreRFID two years ago at its headquarters in Northern Ireland and its operations in England, Scotland and Germany.

Previously each item entering or leaving the warehouse was identified by a six-digit code, which had to be manually recorded by staff using a paper-based system. Now the codes have been replaced by RFID tags, which are detected automatically by RFID readers at the exits and the information downloaded to the database.

The new system enables instantaneous reporting and has virtually eradicated human error. Audits which took one week under the old manual system can now be completed in under half a day, using a mobile phone reader app which can monitor the tags from up to 2m away.

The system uses ultra-high frequency (UHF) RFID tags which are widely used in the logistics and distribution industry. Compared with bar code or visual number labels they are robust, can be read from a distance and can be read without having a line-of-sight to the tag. Data can be collected from a number of tags simultaneously either using hand-held computers (as show in the photograph right) or by using fixed readers which can detect tags moving through a door, for example.



RFID tags on Lowe's rental equipment allow items to be quickly identified on dispatch, receipt or in the warehouse.

CoreRFID designed and developed the system which links directly into Low Refrigeration's CRM system, automating the process and therefore removing any opportunity for errors.

Low is now working with CoreRFID to extend the system to its warehouses in Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai and Dubai.

“CoreRFID's system has transformed our operation. By automating the whole tracking process, it has allowed us to save time and achieve near perfect accuracy levels.”

Ian Lowry, European Operations Director

Expansion To Middle East & Asian Markets

Ian Lowry, European Operations Director for Lowe, said: “The solution works well in tandem with our existing systems. With the innovation now fully tried and tested, it’s a natural progression to roll out the system to our Asian operations where I’m sure it will have the same massive positive impact it has had in Europe.”

Munzi Ali, Technical Director of CoreRFID comments: “With over 20,000 items which are constantly on the move, Lowe’s operations rely on a fast and accurate tracking system. RFID technology fits the bill perfectly and offers huge potential to improve efficiency. The technology is also quick and easy to install and offers rapid return on investment.

“We were pleased to be able to help Lowe to select the most appropriate technology for their application – users are faced with a wide range of suppliers of systems with different capabilities. Success with RFID systems comes from making sure that the demands of the system and the capabilities of the equipment match each other. In this case fixed point readers from Impinj, hand-held readers from M3 Mobile and tags from Confidex and Omni-ID were chosen.



Rental equipment can be checked out automatically.

“This is just one example of the use of this hugely adaptable technology which has been used for applications as wide-ranging as IT asset management, equipment tracking, health and safety and production management as well as within the logistics and distribution industry.”

UHF RFID Systems

Ultra-High Frequency RFID tags were introduced to meet the need for tags that could be read automatically at greater ranges than had been possible with low frequency and high frequency tags. Standardised coding systems used on the tags allow a wide range of items to be uniquely identified in a way agreed globally. Tags can be small enough to identify almost any item and robust enough to be used in a wide range of environments including extreme temperatures and chemically hazardous areas.

UHF based systems are able to detect multiple tags simultaneously, for example as a pallet containing multiple items passes through an RFID monitored doorway (“portal”).

The latest developments in UHF RFID systems allow portals to detect the direction in which tags are moving or to triangulate the position of a tag in a warehouse to identify its location within a metre or so.

UHF RFID is cited as one of the core technologies at the heart of the Internet of Things, a concept that imagines the widespread interaction of computer systems and objects in the world around them. While it has the potential play its part in such revolutionary industry-reshaping applications it is also a highly cost-effective technology that can be deployed in straightforward applications like that implemented for Lowe Rental.

Benefits

Lowe Rental’s asset tracking system provides:

- Automatic identification of outbound and inbound rental equipment
- Reduction in errors booking stock out and in.
- Easy integration with existing CRM system
- Rapid, accurate auditing of warehouse stocks