How To Make Your Scopes Tell You When They're Missing

All successful endoscopy practices within private practices and hospitals face the same dilemma – how do I track down scopes that have gone missing? With numerous docs, interns, techs and nurses all having access to all the scopes in your facility, it's a near impossibility to keep track of all of your scopes with 100% accuracy.

The typical way a hospital tracks the whereabouts of their endoscopes is to have staff fill in paper logs verifying that they have taken scopes out for their procedures. In our experience, the process breaks down in at least 20% of transactions, where the employee taking out a scope doesn't sign it out in a log book. With the system being voluntary and not closely policed, scopes will "walk away" from time to time, and these are medical instruments costing from $10,000-$80,000 each.

Typically, this information is found out 3-5 days after the scope has originally gone missing. Because no information was entered into the log book, everyone must be interrogated about the last known whereabouts of the scope. When everyone is on the hook, no one is on the hook and the culprit can be very hard to pinpoint. Usually the scope turns up several days later, but in the meantime the department has lost several days of revenue from proper utilization of the scope. And occasionally, the scope won't turn up and a new scope will have to be purchased to replace it.

So what can a manager of a perioperative or GI area do in this situation?

There's a better way: automation

Systems such as iRIScope from Mobile Aspects have been introduced in the last several years to take manual processes for endoscope management and turn them into electronic records. Using RFID technology, you can now literally have your scopes alert you when they've gone missing.

The way RFID technology helps automate endoscope management is both simple and highly effective. Attaching medical-grade RFID tags to your endoscopes allows each scope to be tracked electronically as it goes through its normal usage lifecycle. Because you now have an electronic time stamp of each scope's last known whereabouts, intelligent analytics built into iRIScope will push missing endoscope alerts right to your inbox.

Built-in analytics allow iRIScope to measure each of your scopes against a time threshold that you set – 12 hours, 24 hours, 48 hours, etc. – and alerts for scopes that have been missing for longer than the allotted threshold are delivered directly to your inbox.

The alerts delivered to your email give you a head start on locating those missing scopes. The system lets you know the last employee to touch the scope, when it was last touched and where it was last touched. While the software can't literally tell you where the scope is, it can do 95% of the investigative work for you and significantly reduce the likelihood that the scope has permanently gone missing.

Automated Missing Scope Alerts

Scope reaches user-designated threshold for missing scope alert (e.g. 24 hours) since it was last seen by the system

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Missing scope alert is generated by software

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Real-time missing scope alert is sent to your inbox

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Endoscope can now be located by staff using information from alert such as last known user, last known location and time of last use