

Two Paths to Upgrade Your Access Control Technology



Choosing the right approach for your organization can simplify the transition to a new standard

Implementing new, more dynamic access control technologies provides many benefits over maintaining older, more static technologies. Organizations are facing an evolving threat environment and the challenges of maintaining the security and privacy of identity data. Growing demand for a higher level of security and the convenience of using mobile devices for access control is driving change and spurring innovation.

By making the right steps in moving toward a more reliable, upgraded access control standard, organizations can meet the need for security and privacy with confidence, leveraging investment well into the future.

For many organizations, initiating this change may seem daunting. With the right approach, organizations can easily and inexpensively expand and upgrade systems and take advantage of the benefits offered by these new, breakthrough technologies.

Choose the Approach that Fits Your Organization's Needs

There are two approaches to choose from when upgrading from legacy low frequency to newer high frequency access control systems: changing readers or changing cards. The answer to which is best depends on your organization's particular needs.

Option #1: Change Readers

This approach begins with installing readers that support a combination of old, low frequency and new, high frequency technologies with the latest RFID technology. These flexible, multi-technology readers enable an organization to develop a upgrade plan where rebadging is done gradually rather than all at once.

In this scenario, the new high frequency standard cards are issued as new employees on-board, and existing card populations can be moved to the new standard over whatever period of time best suits the organization's timing and budget.

Multi-technology readers can also offer a single card solution, particularly useful in mixed technology environments requiring support for multiple locations with differing technologies.

Option #2: Change Cards

This approach starts with the complete rebadging of existing populations with multi-technology smart cards. These multi-technology cards can securely house up to four different types of access control technologies (weigand, magstripe, low frequency, high frequency or a contact chip).

Readers are replaced gradually, as time and budget allow. Once all readers have transitioned, switch to a card that supports only the go-forward standard.

This approach works well if an organization initially wants to upgrade security for only a specific department or group of professionals. Multi-technology cards can support both old and new technologies. This enables employees to enter any location they have the right to, regardless of whether it has an old or new reader.

Making the Transition

The first step in the transition is to choose the right partner. Choose a system integrator that has the expertise and end-to-end capabilities that covers the scope of your project. Flexibility is key. If an organization does not have adequate internal resources to handle the upgrade itself, finding a partner that fully understands the situation and provides options is key. The goal is to create a solution that makes the technology work for the organization's specific needs, rather than forcing the organization to settle for limitations associated with the technology offered.

Today's access control platforms allow a secure, phased upgrade path from old to new systems. Depending on the size of the population, it can take several days or several weeks for the initial upgrade. Ensure a smooth transition through adoption of a parallel system. This system can be in place until budget and resources allow the full transition to new technology to be completed.

Some technologies require more setup and take longer to integrate due to programming or additional equipment needs. It is important to ensure interoperability between legacy and future systems. This requires that the access control platform includes multi-technology cards and readers that are able to bridge the gap between the legacy system and today's more secure contactless technology.

Completing the Transition

Once a forward-looking strategy is decided upon and the implementation strategy has been selected, the transition can begin. The organization will eventually move toward the desired more secure, more functional end-state with the flexibility to adapt to future requirements if needed.

Another important consideration in a transitional plan is how and when to terminate legacy technology. If multi-technology cards are employed in the process, it is important to "Change" or "Roll" the media keys once the technology upgrade is complete.

Learn more about the latest advances in access control technology and why HID Global is trusted by companies around the world to safeguard their facilities, assets, networks, and cloud resources by visiting hidglobal.com/access-control.