

# RFID and Privacy: Frequently Asked Questions

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## **How secure is RFID?**

RFID systems today already include a number of security features designed to address privacy issues by protecting consumer information.

1. In most applications, RFID safety tags placed on cargo pallets or ID cards contain nothing more than a unique identifying number, much like a license plate on a car. Sensitive information is maintained in a separate database and protected by firewalls and other security features.
2. To guard against unauthorized access, transmissions between RFID readers and safety tags can be protected by encryption and authentication protocols. Generally, transmissions between an RFID reader and a back-end database are also encrypted to protect confidential and personal information.

## **Does RFID protect citizens' privacy?**

RFID protects privacy since the information contained on the tag does not contain any more personal information than that displayed on a vehicle license plate. Without the database, all that is left are just "numbers." Additionally, privacy concerns can best be addressed by controlling access to the database linking the tag to individual information, and more narrowly restricting the uses of RFID to those areas of concern.

## **Why have some people objected to the use of RFID technology?**

A number of advocacy groups have recently raised objections to the use of RFID technology, citing privacy concerns. These objections are largely unfounded and based on a poor understanding of the technology and its security and economic benefits. Looking back, when bar codes were first introduced to the retail industry in 1974, similar concerns were raised that an individual's privacy might be violated. However, these predictions proved to be unfounded, and bar codes have become an accepted part of everyday business and consumer life.

## **How is proposed legislation in a number of states affecting the implementation and growth of RFID technology?**

Restrictive legislation pending in some state legislatures would place limits on this technology and unnecessarily stifle growth and capital investment of this vital technology and burgeoning industry.

## **Is there a role for legislators to protect consumers in this area?**

Yes, there is a role for legislators in protecting consumers from those who would use RFID technology to harm others. Our public officials should legislate against this bad behavior, not against good technology.

## **Why is it important that RFID not be legislated?**

As part of a growing sector within the high-technology community, the RFID industry is creating quality jobs in the United States and around the world. Beyond job creation, it is also the foundation for new productivity-enhancing tools that are helping a wide-range of industries experience growth, as well as better manage their supply chains to ensure products are at the right place at the right time. At the present time, the state officials seeking this restrictive legislation have lost focus on the bad acts and actors who deserve their attention. These states run the risk of falling behind the federal government and other localities that recognize how RFID technology's amazing applications will save both time and money.

**If there should be no legislation that stunts the growth of RFID, what is the industry doing to protect consumers?**

Motorola and its RFID industry partners have worked hard to develop secure, effective RFID systems that protect private information. Legislation or industry regulation restricting the responsible use of RFID is both unnecessary and counterproductive.

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