

TRL Systems, Inc.

RTLS Technology Making Hospitals Safer Places



Nursing has long held a dubious position on the lists of the most dangerous professions. Workplace violence against nurses is approaching epidemic levels, notes a recent report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. According to a [2015 study](#) in the *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, in 2014, three in four nurses experienced verbal or physical abuse from patients and visitors. Three in ten nurses reported physical abuse, and it's getting worse. Nurses' and nurse assistants' rates of workplace violence injuries are steadily rising.

Adding to those dangers is the increasing number of active shooter incidents in U.S. hospitals. Recent reports put the number at more than one hospital-based active shooter incident a month. The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) took note in late 2014 by issuing a guide to help healthcare facilities incorporate active shooter planning into their emergency plans. Hospitals seeking accreditation now must document their emergency planning for active shooter situations.

Last July, California joined more than 30 other states in recognizing the need to protect healthcare workers from workplace violence when California Senate Bill 1299 (SB-1299) took effect. The law requires certain healthcare employers to adopt violence prevention plans and was passed in response to a spike in nonfatal assaults in the healthcare and social assistance industries during the past eight years. It requires, among other things, that hospital workplace prevention plans include alarms and emergency response tools.

Healthcare workers' significant risk of job-related violence also prompted the U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration to publish guidelines for preventing violence in the healthcare workplace. Its recommendations for violence prevention programs include "installing panic alarm systems" and "personal alarm systems for staff and an appropriate system and way to contact security/correctional officers."

Real-time locator services (RTLS) badges programmed with panic buttons are helping hospitals satisfy these recommendations. TRL Systems, a leader in implementing real-time locator services in hospitals, is working with some of Southern California's leading healthcare facilities to implement RTLS technology, automate procedures and gather data in support of violence prevention initiatives.

RTLS can assist nurses and other staff when and where they need help — fast. The locator badge includes a button that acts as either a panic button, or a simple call for assistance. When pressed, the badge sends a wireless signal to designated locations such as a nurses' station and/or security desks. The alert notes who called for help, the time, and their exact location, so help can be sent immediately.

In addition, RTLS systems provide reports on all panic calls placed, so facilities can evaluate high-volume call areas and proactively target education or security measures to offset threats.

"Hospitals are seeking solutions that maximize efficiency and enable them to be smarter about how they use their available resources. RTLS technology helps them achieve that," says Sy Granillo, lead account executive in TRL's Healthcare Division. "Not only does RTLS improve the safety of hospitals' employees and patients, it also gives hospital leadership critical operational intelligence to drive process improvement and workflow optimization."

TRL customers using this system can track real data to understand where security improvements may be needed. "By applying what we learn through the RTLS system," he says, "we are able to help our hospital customers create a safer environment both for employees and for patients, which translates to happier and more loyal employees and greater patient satisfaction."