

My ID Badge/Photo ID Badge FAQ

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What is the purpose of an ID Badge or Photo ID badge?

Can you, or your customers, tell an employee from an imposter? If your answer to this is “NO”, and this is not an important issue for your organization, there most likely no need to go any further as your security risk tolerance is high enough where the costs verses benefits of using badges are not justifiable. The same if you answered “YES. It is possible even in either case, that your organization is required to issue photo id badges due to contract requirements and/or government mandates, even though internal security issues are irrelevant.

Why do we need to have a professional printed ID Badge or Photo ID Badge?

First and foremost an ID badge or card is a security credential that verifies that the ID badge holder is who they say they are. ID badges and cards are used in two ways; as a visual form of identification and as an electronic form of verification. As a visual form of identification, the process of printing a badge on paper stock with an inkjet printer and then laminating it is not secure at all and in most cases it is not accepted as a valid credential. In addition to security concerns, when an ID badge is used as an electronic form of verification (badge readers for door access and time clocks), badge durability is an issue for environments that require the badge to last more than a year.

What is the typical life of an ID badge Photo ID Badge?

This is a loaded question that gets asked a lot. The answer depends on how the badge is made, how it is carried or worn, the environment it is used in, and whether it is used in reader based applications. As a rule, paper laminated badges last the least, standard die-sublimation PVC printed badges last longer and PVC badges using composite plastics with over-laminates last the longest.

What durability issues are there to consider?

Laminated badges that have clear borders (paper media that is laminated) will delaminate within a short period of time if used/worn regularly. PVC badges that do not use composite plastic or over-laminates are subject to image fading due to sun exposure, surface wearing due to swiping and constant contact with hand oils, and cracking from exposure to extreme temperature changes. Laminated composite media PVC badges tend to wear out over multiple years of use and fade, wear and crack much less.

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What badge technology should we use?

There are many badge technologies that are used for door access and time clock readers. The two primary types are proximity (RF or radio frequency based) and magnetic stripe. Barcodes had a run for a decade or two in the time clock reader industry, however due to security issues; barcodes have taken a back seat to the others. Smart card chips are trying to get positioned as an affordable alternative; however functionality, unit cost and industry standards keep them in the background for now.

As a rule, proximity badge technology makes the most ergonomic sense as they do not require swiping or contact with the reader. The cost of the proximity badge media can be an issue for some projects, so magnetic stripe is the second option to consider if budget outweighs badge holder's easy of use, faster throughput, and reader maintenance issues. Proximity readers have no moving parts and are not subject to dirt and moisture issues that are associated with magnetic stripe and barcode readers. Also, proximity badges will last longer... the badge surface will not wear off as fast as the swiped badges.

Will biometrics replace the tech badge?

This gets a little technical so hang on. The tech badge will not be replaced in the near or distant future. Some biometrics providers are positioning the technology as not requiring a badge for electronic verification to save on badge technology costs. However, once you see that a PIN (personal identification number) is required or manually typed into the bio-reader's key pad that is used to match the users' presented bio-read with the bio-template stored on the reader or server, the badge's role is clearly defined...a quick and accurate way to enter the PIN or unique number for efficient throughput. Also, biometrics do not work well in outdoor environments when subjected to weather and temperature extremes, so badge readers tend to be the ideal solution for outdoor use. Overall, badges and biometrics are more of a technology team...a dynamic duo so to speak! If you're considering biometrics, take in to consideration that from a low point of less than 1%, to as high as 2% of all users' bio-templates are not recordable and require PIN only or badge only verification.

What is the best badge solution for my organization?

This all depends on your organizations overall needs. The best way to determine this is to contact an **eXpress badging ID Xpert** to assist in your ID badge program solution development. Call now **800-909-8602** and get started.