Protect Your Cold Storage Against Costly Loss With Proactive Environment Monitoring From Room Alert

Using environment monitors to protect cold storage and goods is key to preventing loss as well as protecting the health of anyone your goods are intended for. Learn more about how one organization is using Room Alert to monitor their refrigerators and freezers to help prevent spoilage and loss.



The Importance Of Environment Monitoring

There is a wide range of environmental factors that can cause disaster for your organization. High temperature or humidity, power loss, water leaks and flood damage, or smoke in your facilities are just a few of the unexpected issues that can cause costly downtime. Nearly 30% of all outages or downtime are related to environmental factors that many organizations aren't proactively monitoring.

Organizations that rely on cold storage are particularly vulnerable to environmental concerns. Proactively monitoring the cold storage units that hold your food, medicine, or samples can mean the difference between a minor, easily fixed inconvenience or potentially going out of business.

Additionally, many organizations that maintain goods in freezers, refrigerators, or other types of cold storage units have industry-mandated temperature logging requirements that can be cumbersome if handled manually, with severe consequences for incorrectly logged reports.

Thankfully, the Room Alert proactive environment monitoring platform can handle all the requirements any organization could need – temperature monitoring, alerting, logging, and reporting along with monitoring door/access points as well as power to the facility or individual units. Here's how one organization with multiple locations and needs has implemented Room Alert to help with their monitoring and logging requirements.



About AVTECH

- In business since 1988
- Found in 187 of 196 countries worldwide
- Distribution in Rhode Island, USA and Shannon, Ireland

Room Alert Basics

- Eight monitor models
- Pricing begins at $195
- Full range of sensor options and types
- Solutions for every industry, type & size organization

Room Alert Monitoring

- Online Room Alert Account Portal
- Local software provided
- Monitor with any third-party SNMP & JSON platforms

LifePath and Their Cold Storage Monitoring Concerns

LifePath Christian Ministries was founded in 1962 in York, PA to help serve their local community as part of the national Rescue Mission movement. LifePath has expanded over the years to include shelters, thrift stores, youth programs, and food pantries to help serve the less fortunate in their region.

Much of the food that LifePath is provided comes through an agreement with the Central PA Food Bank; this agreement helps LifePath serve nearly 110,000 meals annually to guests and community members. As part of that agreement, LifePath needs to follow strict food storage temperature guidelines and to keep detailed temperature logs to ensure everything is stored within the correct, safe ranges to prevent spoilage.

G.J. Emge, Facilities Manager for LifePath, helps to oversee the monitoring and logging of the cold storage units at all their sites. Freezers and refrigerators losing power, or having their temperatures exceed recommended storage ranges, are among the largest concerns for G.J. and his staff when it comes to their cold storage. Improperly stored food needs to be discarded instead of used for meals, or even worse, food that becomes spoiled could potentially sicken their guests.

LifePath's standard procedure for logging and reporting was to have employees manually check the temperatures in every freezer or refrigerator and log the results in a paper report. Given the number of locations plus various employees assisting in this task, LifePath found that the paper logging posed problems with accurate and complete readings, which then led to compliance concerns. Additionally, LifePath also used an external company to help remotely monitor their walk-in units as part of an overall larger monitoring process, with varying response times and results.

G.J.'s concerns over their monitoring and reporting came to a head when one of their larger freezers failed due to a slow coolant leak. Although the freezer temperature was checked and logged daily, there was no analysis of the temperature readings being performed by the LifePath employees. Had they checked previous temperature logs, they would have seen the temperature gradually increasing until the freezer exceeded its recommended storage range. Unfortunately this trend was only noticed after the freezer failed… and over $5000 worth of donated food was lost. Additionally, the outside agency monitoring the freezers notified LifePath of the temperature concerns while the employees were emptying the freezer contents into the garbage, far too late for their notification to be effective in helping to prevent loss.

The Need For Room Alert Proactive Environment Monitoring

G.J. was discussing his monitoring challenges with a colleague who worked in the IT department for a local school, and his friend recommended Room Alert based on his own experiences with environmental monitoring platforms in his school. Although he was initially skeptical that hardware could replace an outsourced monitoring company, the more he investigated Room Alert, the more G.J. was intrigued by the monitoring potentials the platform would give him. Of particular note was the historical logging and reporting LifePath would have access to through Room Alert, allowing them to remain compliant with the agreement they shared with the Central PA Food Bank.

After a thorough review, LifePath moved forward with the installation of Room Alert monitors and sensors into all cold storage equipment, ranging from small refrigerators to their large walk-in coolers and freezers. Room Entry sensors were also installed on every unit's door to help log when doors were opened, or if they inadvertently were not closed properly.



G.J.'s installation went faster than expected, thanks to Room Alert being a stand-alone platform that easily integrated into LifePath's DHCP-served network with no additional hardware or configuration needed. Room Alert offering PoE-enabled monitors made setup a "breeze" for G.J. and his staff.

LifePath opted to use Room Alert Account, the online dashboard provided to all Room Alert users, for their monitoring platform since it is accessible from any internet-connected device. Within a matter of minutes, G.J. was able to create SMS and email alerts to notify his staff in the event of cold storage equipment operating outside of their established ranges. Reporting and logging was set up on each cold storage unit to identify possible temperature trends, and a dedicated link was set up for the Food Service Staff to see all the reports for their units as well.



Room Alert 3E used by LifePath

Room Alert Put To The Test

Within days of installing Room Alert monitors and sensors in his facilities, G.J. received an alert notifying him of a large freezer operating outside of the required temperature ranges he set up within Room Alert Account.

G.J. pulled up a remote security camera from his phone, allowing him to see that the freezer door was open. He immediately contacted the staff onsite so they could ensure the door was closed properly and resolve the issue. All of this was done from the convenience of his cell phone in a matter of minutes, saving all the donated food that had just been placed into that freezer for storage.

In addition to the sensors installed in every cold storage unit to monitor their internal temperature, LifePath is also using the temperature sensors built into every Room Alert to monitor the ambient temperature in all their facilities to ensure their internal environments provide for employee and guest comfort.

The reports and logs G.J. set up in Room Alert Account are allowing him to monitor every cold storage unit performance over time, and he and his staff can now visually see patterns in temperature fluctuations thanks to the reports he has set up within Room Alert Account. This provides opportunities to be proactive about maintenance and ensure future potential issues such as a slow coolant leak never causes massive loss again.

More Room Alert Opportunities To Help Prevent Downtime, Loss, Or Illness

Now that G.J. and LifePath have seen Room Alert in action protecting their cold storage units, they are envisioning installing more monitors and sensors throughout all their facilities to monitor their total environment, including HVAC systems and external environmental conditions. Of particular interest is monitoring the heat index outside of their shelters to know when to expect more guests due to potential heat illness concerns.

With Room Alert monitoring all their cold storage and automatically generating logs and reports, LifePath is assured to remain in compliance with the Central PA Food Bank to protect their relationship, along with all of the goods that the Food Bank is able to donate. Employees no longer have to manually check and log the temperatures of every refrigerator or freezer in their facilities multiple times daily, freeing them up to perform other tasks. G.J. can be alerted to any potential problems immediately through email and SMS notifications, giving him the peace of mind in knowing their food is monitored and protected against costly loss.

Room Alert provides cost-effective and easy to use proactive environment monitoring for facilities with a single location or multiple locations with their own specific concerns, just like LifePath Christian Ministries. With so much at stake for your organization, the question isn't about whether you can afford to install Room Alert... it's whether you can afford not to!

Protect your facilities with Room Alert today, and have peace of mind tonight.

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