Magtek's Card Issuing FAQ

Q: Can a LoCo MCAT be upgraded to a HiCo unit?
A: The LoCo MCAT meets a number of card issuing needs. However, it can not encode in HiCo. To take advantage of HiCo's capabilities, you will have to purchase a HiCo unit.

Q: Is the MCAT Y2K Compliant?
A: MagTek products-MCAT, PINPal, and IntelliPIN Plus-do not contain any real-time clocks, current time and date codes, or internal software programs that affect Year 2000 compliance. These products do not perform date processing or date sorting. Proper operational and security procedures state that these products are to be powered down or placed in the shutdown mode at the end of each day. Failure to follow these procedures could affect the audit trail process. At the beginning of the following day the date must be key entered to initiate system start up. Under these conditions the products are Year 2000 compliant. The MCAT and PINPal may not be cosmetically compliant since these devices will continue to display and print the year in a two-digit format.

Q: Can Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) cause the MCAT or Encoder to operate intermittently?
A: Radio transmitters and RADAR installations produce an invisible energy field. This energy field can affect electronic equipment located within a half mile radius of the transmitting antenna. MagTek encoders can be affected if in close proximity to this type of equipment. The more common symptoms include:

- Intermittent reading or encoding.
- Random beeping.
- Unit locks up and refuses to work until powered off / on.

To help solve these problems, first confirm an environmental problem exists by moving the encoder to another location. Try operating the encoder at a different office or at home to see if the problem is still there. If it works okay when relocated try the following:

- Rotate the equipment 90°. Radio signals are directional. Repositioning the equipment may reduce or increase the effect.
- Move the equipment to a different location within the building. Try several locations if necessary.

The radio signal may be entering the equipment via the power cable. Try installing a "power line RFI filter". This may either be a separate filter, part of a power strip, or part of a surge protector. The filter must be plugged into a properly grounded outlet. Look for a description indicating "noise" or "RFI" filtering capabilities.

Q: Can dirt affect the encoder operation?
A: All MagTek card activators and most MagTek encoders use optical sensors to sense the position of the card. These sensors project a light beam across the card path, which is blocked by the card as it passes by. The location and number of sensors used varies by type of equipment. Dust in the card path can block these sensors. When this happens the

equipment thinks a card has been inserted. The blockage can be intermittent if vibration or air movement causes dust fibers to move in and out of the light beam.
Some possible symptoms include:

- The encoder will not initialise (blank display) at power on.
- The card is removed but the display indicates that a card is located in the card path.
- The unit beeps intermittently.

To help to alleviate these problems, use compressed air to remove dust from the card path. Compressed air is usually available at your local service station. Test the air source before using. It must be clean and dry. Blow some air onto your hand and feel for moisture or oil. Do not use if not clean and dry. Small cans of compressed gas ("canned air") used for cleaning delicate equipment is available from many stationary and computer stores.

Q: Can Static Electricity affect the operation of my encoder?
A: Everyone at one time or another has walked across a carpet, touched a door knob, and felt a "shock". The friction of your shoe rubbing against the carpet produced several thousand volts of static electricity. When you touched the door knob the static charge was passed from you to the door knob. When this static charge is passed to electronic equipment, especially equipment which is microcomputer controlled, problems can occur. This charge can be passed to the equipment during normal operation. A keyboard is the most common entry point for static charges since it is frequently the first item that is touched. Symptoms may include:

- The equipment may stop functioning entirely as soon as it was touched.
- The equipment may fail to work intermittently.
- The equipment may appear to function but produce incorrect results.

Two approaches can be taken to lessen the effect of Static Electricity:

- Fix it at the source: Anti-static treatment is available from most professional carpet cleaners. The necessary supplies for do-it-yourself application can be found at many janitorial supply companies.

Compensate by sending the charge where it will do no harm. Before using the equipment, first touch a large metal object to pass any harmful charge to it. A metal desk or file cabinet will do, but it must be within reach. Avoid walking or shuffling your feet as this could create another charge.