An abbreviation for Radio Frequency IDentification. It is a technology that incorporates the use of electromagnetic or electrostatic coupling in the radio frequency (RF) portion of the electromagnetic spectrum to uniquely identify an object, animal, or person. RFID is coming into increasing use in industry as an alternative to the bar code. The advantage of RFID is that it does not require direct contact or line-of-sight scanning. An RFID system consists of three components which are an antenna, a transceiver (often combined into one reader), and a transponder (the tag, bracelet or ID object). The antenna uses radio frequency waves to transmit a signal that activates the transponder. When activated, the tag transmits data back to the antenna. The data is used to notify a programmable logic controller (PLC) that an action should occur. The action could be as simple as raising an access gate or as complicated as interfacing with a database to carry out a monetary transaction. Low frequency RFID systems (30 KHz to 500 KHz) have short transmission ranges (generally less than six feet). High frequency RFID systems (850 MHz to 950 MHz and 2.4 GHz to 2.5 GHz) offer longer transmission ranges (more than 90 feet). In general, the higher the frequency, the more expensive the system. RFID is sometimes called dedicated short range communication (DSRC).

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