

Real Time  
Networks

## Guide to Asset & Key Tracking for Law Enforcement



**Contact us for a NO OBLIGATION DEMO**

1.800.331.2882 | [police@realtimenetworks.com](mailto:police@realtimenetworks.com) | [www.realtimenetworks.com](http://www.realtimenetworks.com)

## AUTOMATED ASSET AND KEY TRACKING

### Proven Ways to Enhance Your Law Enforcement Agency's Capabilities, Productivity, and Efficiency

Law enforcement agencies rely on a wide range of equipment to protect the public. Firearms, safety equipment, electronic devices, and other supplies all require careful management.

Agencies also need to deal with forensic evidence, seized narcotics, fleet vehicle keys, and many objects with unique storage requirements. To better protect the public, law enforcement agencies need to improve the security and management of all these assets.

Smart asset lockers and electronic key cabinets can automate that management process. They enable your officers and staff to spend less time on tedious administrative tasks and more time on actual law enforcement. Because these systems are also modular, they are an excellent solution for smaller offices with limited storage and management needs.

Let's explore how these smart systems work, how law enforcement agencies can make the best use of them, and look at a real-world example of how a police fleet manager improved his agency's effectiveness using a fleet key management system.

## Table of Contents

- What is an Electronic Asset Locker? ..... 2
- What is an Electronic Key Cabinet? ..... 4
- Use Cases ..... 6
- How Smart Technology Benefits Law Enforcement Agencies ..... 8
- Smart Key Management Case Study ..... 9
- Take the Next Step to Enhance Your Operations ..... 10
- Learn More ..... 11





## WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC ASSET LOCKER?

Electronic asset lockers are storage systems with integrated computer access controls and sensors. They are excellent tools for equipment management and evidence management. These systems are sometimes referred to as **smart lockers** due to their "smart" computer-assisted capabilities.

Smart locker systems use those sensors, along with information collected from transaction logs, to monitor how your personnel uses them. Then, the locker system can make changes to those workflows based on the criteria you set.

For example, it can change which weapons are available to sign out depending on the requesting officer, flag weapons in need of servicing, and alert supervisors to irregular signout patterns. This type of **smart asset storage** is considered an essential component of law enforcement facility design by the US Department of Justice.

Real Time  
Networks



### Access Control

When officers arrive for duty, they log into the smart terminal access control point for the asset locker. They can use your agency's preferred authentication method, which could include PIN codes, prox cards, or biometrics, like a fingerprint, contactless palm scan, IRIS eye scan, or facial verification. The terminal prompts users to select the radios, weapons, and keys needed for their shift.

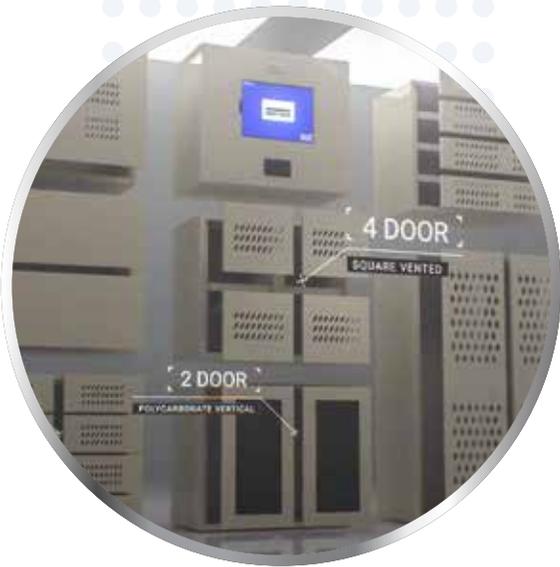
The system only grants officers access to the equipment their supervisor has authorized them to use. So, for example, if an officer is not Taser-certified, a Taser would not appear on the access list when that officer logs in. In addition, every piece of equipment controlled by the system contains an RFID chip or is ID'd by its charging bay, so everything is continuously tracked and accounted for.

Administrators can add custom selection screens at their smart terminals to guide weapon selections. They can also make custom checklists personnel must complete at signout or return to log everything your organization must document about weapons transactions. Finally, cameras on the access terminals can log a picture of the user signing a weapon in or out for added accountability.

## Modular Storage

**AssetTracer** and **KeyTracer** systems have a modular design that allows you to mix and match compartments and key panels to hold any combination of evidence storage boxes or police gear. Stack and connect them in any arrangement you need. These systems can be custom-built for many unique needs and floor-plans.

Access doors are also customizable. You can choose between steel doors, ventilated steel to maintain temperatures for sensitive electronics, and clear polycarbonate doors depending on your use case. You can add integrated charging ports to storage compartments to keep your devices fully charged. You can store and charge multiple devices in each compartment.



## Content Surveillance

Smart locker systems use content surveillance tools to monitor the status of assets stored in their compartments. For example, smart lockers can use embedded, wireless RFID chips and sensors to track weapons. These sensors verify that the correct weapon is taken or returned when a staff member logs a transaction.

Specialty surveillance tools are also available. For example, scales inside lockers can weigh OC spray cans to check whether they were discharged during signout. You can also use TapID scanners, which read either a barcode or RFID tag before a user deposits equipment into the lockers.



Real Time  
Networks

## Equipment Management Software

The software running your asset management system allows you to do more at the locker to lessen the work you do at your desk. Smart locker systems automate many time-consuming aspects of weapons management, such as logging transactions, reporting, and monitoring signed-out weapons for late returns or other issues.

The administrator can log into the system from any authorized computer, phone, or tablet to see where each piece of equipment is at any given time. Automating these tasks using smart management software allows equipment managers to focus on more critical tasks, like weapons servicing, procurement, and long-term planning.

The equipment management dashboard provides administrators with a complete audit trail of every item taken and returned. In addition, the system can send an instant alert to the administrator or shift supervisors if someone attempts to access police equipment or forensic evidence outside their scheduled time. The system can also send alerts if the evidence or equipment isn't returned on time or an unauthorized user returns it.



## WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC KEY CABINET?

Key cabinets offer similar security and management capabilities for keys as asset lockers do for your forensic evidence and equipment. You can use key cabinets for your fleet keys, facility keys, or both. An **electronic key cabinet** is an essential tool for better **key management** at any law enforcement agency.

Electronic key cabinets offer many capabilities specifically for fleet management. They allow you to set vehicle key curfews or rotate key signouts to distribute vehicle usage and reduce maintenance. Detailed logging options are available. You can require drivers to log mileage before the system accepts key returns. You can prompt drivers to log fault codes and incidents.

Those logged events can even trigger automated maintenance requests. For example, when someone logs a critical maintenance issue, the key system will automatically prevent drivers from signing out that vehicle without the fleet manager ever needing to take direct action. Your maintenance team can also get an automated email notifying them of the issue.

Electronic key cabinets include much of the same powerful technology as asset lockers.

Real Time  
Networks

### Access Control

Key cabinets can include advanced authentication options such as touchless biometrics and the other methods described above for asset management systems. That also optional built-in cameras that can record individuals who access sensitive keys.

Smart terminals are especially beneficial for managing fleet keys. For example, you can prompt drivers to record body and engine damage at sign out and return, as we noted above. This enforced recordkeeping improves driver accountability and how safely and effectively they use your vehicles.

For example, from a maintenance log report generated by your key system, you might learn that three-quarters of all your vehicle body damage comes from second shift downtown patrols. That might influence which vehicles you make available to that set of officers.





## Secure Storage

Modular key cabinets can fit into any building footprint you need, even in cramped precincts. No matter which configuration you choose, all will be highly secure. Advanced key storage panels, like those found in [KeyTracer cabinets](#), have lock slots that secure each keyring in place, which means gaining access to the cabinet doesn't give a user unlimited access to each keyring. Instead, only the keyrings they are authorized to sign out will unlock for them.

## Tracking Key Fobs

The tracking key fobs in KeyTracer systems use radio frequency identification (RFID) to match keys with cabinets. Tags communicate directly with the key cabinet. They don't require metal-to-metal contact to be read. As a result, no dirt, grime, or rust interfere with how the cabinet reads the key fob. Tag scans are always 100 percent accurate. Where less-sophisticated fobs often lose their effectiveness as their physical condition deteriorates, [Real Time Networks RFID tags](#) come with a lifetime warranty.

It's also possible to use active RFID tracking on keys. Active RFID tags communicate with sensors placed throughout your facility, so you gain accuracy, accountability, and real-time monitoring of keys anywhere they're in use.



## Management software

Key management software allows you to monitor your workflows from beginning to end. The system logs transactions anytime keys are used, so you have complete insight into how your fleet and your agency as a whole is operating.



# USE CASES

Law enforcement agencies can get a lot done using smart asset locker and key management technology. Real Time Networks has helped many agencies design custom solutions for:



Real Time  
Networks



## Evidence Management

One of the most critical duties in law enforcement is **managing evidence**. Criminal prosecution suffers if you can't demonstrate an evidence chain of custody, or worse, lose evidence.

AssetTracer evidence lockers are built to protect criminal evidence. They provide secure storage using durable 18-gauge steel. Locker management software automatically logs all evidence transactions, so you always have a complete chain of custody record that you can access on-demand.

Because the lockers are automated, they allow all personnel to deposit evidence after-hours securely. Second and third shift personnel can sign out the evidence for analysis or investigative work without compromising evidence chain of custody, even when your facility managers are off duty. Your managers can generate audit and compliance reports at the push of a button whenever they need them.



## Refrigerated & Climate Controlled Storage Units

Climate-controlled storage units are a necessity in law enforcement. Every officer now needs a wide variety of electronic devices to do their job. These devices require proper ventilation and storage temperatures to remain functional over their entire lifecycle. You'll also need to maintain a broad range of temperature-sensitive evidence, including biological specimens like sexual assault kits and DNA samples.

You must protect electronic devices holding valuable digital evidence as well. Those require proper ventilation, cooling, and humidity control to remain viable. Better climate controls for evidence management will improve your criminal case outcomes.

## Police Gear Storage

Electronic asset lockers are, of course, also excellent tools for managing all of your police gear. The rugged steel frames and doors in AssetTracer storage lockers help prevent forced entry attempts. In addition, the smart terminal authorizes and logs all access attempts for superior security and accountability.

You can configure different-sized storage compartments in any combination you need to store your gear. For example, **specialized long gun compartments** are available. In addition, you can equip smaller compartments with charging ports for powered devices, like body cams, laptops, 2-way radios, and handhelds electronics.

Tracking and content surveillance tools help you keep tabs on all of your sensitive equipment. For example, specialized scales can tell you if someone discharged an OC spray canister. RFID tag tracking can verify the contents of LTL weapons kits, radar, and LIDAR kits, duty bags, and even individually tagged narcotics vials inside medkits.



Real Time  
Networks



## Fleet Key Management

**Key cabinets** improve your management of all of your vehicle, equipment, and facility keys. An AssetTracer key cabinet is especially effective at managing **fleet keys** in law enforcement. For example, you can control who can sign out a vehicle, allow personnel to reserve certain vehicles for special duties, like surveillance, and rotate vehicle signouts to distribute wear and tear more evenly across your entire fleet.

# HOW SMART TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Asset management systems and key cabinets are both types of **smart technology**. Smart technology is any form of business or law enforcement equipment with embedded computers and sensors. These types of systems can monitor their own performance and make automated changes based on conditions you set. Leading security technology experts believe **smart technology** can improve many aspects of law enforcement due to its broad range of benefits.



Real Time  
Networks

## Automated Audit Trail for All Items

The management software maintains a complete audit trail of who had accessed what item, when it accessed it, and how long. Audit trails have the obvious benefit of keeping officers accountable, encouraging them to be more careful when handling forensic evidence and equipment. The **theft of police guns**, in particular, is a growing problem with severe criminal and public relations repercussions that law enforcement agencies can mitigate with better auditing and tracking.

## Advanced Officer Authentication

Rather than relying on logbooks or multiple locker keys, the smart terminal on electronic lockers offers multiple superior authentication methods, including PIN code authentication, prox cards, or biometrics, like fingerprint, contactless palm scan, IRIS eye scan, or facial verification. In addition, the system logs every interaction a user has with it, and many of these authentication methods are impossible to spoof.



## Restricted Access

Electronic asset lockers and key cabinets can lock out users so that items are only available during certain hours of the day or according to other factors. For example, is an officer's weapon license expiring? The locker will lock out the user and prompt them to complete the license renewal process. Are officers required to take a certification course before using a new piece of equipment? The locker can restrict users until they have been authorized. Did a technician deposit a rape kit into evidence storage in a high-profile case? Restrict access to only senior personnel working that case.

## Tracking and Asset Monitoring

Tracking, monitoring, and analytics of equipment and evidence access have become crucial aspects of **evidence-based policing**. For example, using content surveillance, administrators gain better insight into how officers use consumable items, like OC spray and medications. RFID in-compartment sensors and digital scales are the most common forms of content surveillance in law enforcement. Administrators can monitor content surveillance records any time they need, on any authorized computer, phone, or tablet.

For more cost-effective surveillance, you can use a TapID RFID scanner on the outside of the lockers that scans every item before a user deposits it. This solution is ideal for lower security environments where you do not need content surveillance sensors in each compartment. The system verifies equipment identity before a user deposits it.

## Improved Chain of Custody

The US National Institute of Standards and Technology has extensively studied the importance of maintaining a reliable **evidence chain of custody**. An electronic evidence locker with access control and auditing options greatly enhances any law enforcement agency's evidence management capabilities.

## SMART KEY MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY

Real Time Networks commissioned this anonymous case study to give leaders in law enforcement a behind-the-scenes look at how one agency solved a challenging and sensitive security problem using a KeyTracer key management system.

In 2017, the Fleet Management Coordinator at a police division headquarters in a small, coastal city in the US saw the writing on the wall. He had been tasked with managing fifty vehicles used by detectives, forensic teams, and other investigative units. This personnel conducted law enforcement activities across the local city and in the surrounding rural county.

Their vehicles collected a lot of mileage. As a result, maintenance schedules were full. And on top of that, the scope of their work was expanding. Budget constraints meant that the Fleet Coordinator alone would be the only staff member managing their expanding motor pool. "The difficulty [would lie] in ensuring oversight and accountability of all the keys," the Fleet Coordinator said.

He already maintained primary and secondary key sets for each vehicle. But more often than the Coordinator liked, neither key set could be located, which delayed investigations. In addition, busy detectives would often forget to return keys or misplace them when urgent questionings or phone calls came up. "Before [using] KeyTracer, the keys could just be on a cup hook near the back door or left on someone's desk," when someone else needed them the most.

The Fleet Coordinator realized he needed to take action before an investigation was compromised. So he contacted Real Time Networks to find out what could be done.

## Finding a Solution

Speaking with Real Time Networks consultants, the Fleet Coordinator realized that the [RTNHub fleet management software](#) module would be a good fit for an office of this size. The fleet management module would give the Coordinator a set of automated key and vehicle tracking features they could otherwise only get from an enterprise-level solution priced beyond the scope of their small regional office's budget.

After several consultations to dial in the exact specifications, the Fleet Coordinator agreed that the proposal for a 64 keyring [KeyTracer system with RFID technology](#) was the best option for their office.

## Implementing Their Plan

Once the key cabinet was installed and the software configured for the division's particular needs, the system was ready to be deployed for full use. With Real Time Networks' help, the Fleet Coordinator conducted training sessions on the new system for his office's personnel. While the KeyTracer system would automate many tasks personnel previously needed to do themselves, staff still needed to be trained on:

- The key transaction process worked
- How to [reserve vehicles](#) for specific assignments
- How to log maintenance notes when returning vehicles to the motor pool

The Fleet Coordinator was blunt. At this point, staff at his headquarters was wary of the new system. But while "it was met with some hesitancy and reluctance...eventually everyone came to see the benefits of the system."

## Seeing the Results

The results were impressive. "[Setting up] KeyTracer made my job easier, as I now had complete control over fleet keys," the Fleet Coordinator said. In addition, previously long and complicated tasks, like tracking maintenance and servicing schedules, managing reservations, and getting notifications for unreturned keys, were handled automatically.

And his staff could use a host of new features that made their lives easier. These quickly put any initial wariness to rest. For example, the problem of misplaced keys went away almost overnight. Staff was able to reserve particular vehicles when they needed to and automatically retrieve keys even when the Coordinator was away from his desk.

The Fleet Coordinator was able to rotate key signouts to distribute vehicle usage and reduce maintenance. In addition, drivers could log fault codes and incidents to aid mechanics when problems did occur, so their cars were back in service faster.

KeyTracer was critical to this law enforcement office's performance improvements. Costs dropped, work rate efficiency ticked up, workflows improved. KeyTracer let this office continue to grow cost-effectively.

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO ENHANCE YOUR OPERATIONS

Using smart asset and key management systems can save your law enforcement agency money, increase asset intelligence, and deter security threats.

Ready to see these solutions in action? Book a [free, personalized virtual demo](#) today.

## LEARN MORE

More information about tracking keys and other critical assets in law enforcement settings.

- **Smart lockers save time and money**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/assettracer/intelligent-lockers>
- **AssetTracer's modular asset storage solutions**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/assettracer/locker-system>
- **Electronic key cabinets increase security**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/keytracer/key-control-system>
- **KeyTracer cabinets are flexible and expandable**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/keytracer/electronic-key-cabinet>
- **How smart technology systems work**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/blog/what-are-smart-security-systems>
- **KeyTracer system with RFID technology**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/keytracer/key-control-system>
- **Ultimate Guide to Key Control in the Workplace**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/key-control>
- **Why RFID tags are the most reliable**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/blog/keytracer-key-fob-torture-test>
- **Optimize fleet management and reduce costs**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/blog/new-solution-brings-flexibility-to-fleet-management>
- **Key cabinets are critical for fleet management**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/blog/why-electronic-key-management-is-critical-for-fleet-managers>
- **Specialized long gun compartments**  
<https://www.realtimenetworks.com/blog/weapon-storage-lockers-7-must-have-features-for-high-security-environments>



AssetTracer



RTN  
WORKPLACE  
SAFETY



# AssetTracer



## Intelligent lockers to store police gear:

Control who can access each item in the locker, restrict when they can be taken, automate weight checks for pepper spray auditing and regulations and ensure that equipment is fully charged before it can be taken.

Our electronic storage system allows you to manage access to firearms, tasers and police gear efficiently, while ensuring accountability.



## Automated and secure key management system

Automated key management systems can improve accountability in your department and provide you with a complete secure storage and tracking solution. Key cabinets can be used for fleet keys, facility keys, or both. For any law enforcement agency, an electronic key cabinet is an essential tool for better key management.



## **FOCUS ON YOUR COMMUNITY MISSION LEAVE THE TRACKING TO US**

At Real Time Networks, we help law enforcement agencies focus on their passion and community mandate. Our AssetTracer™ and Key Tracer™ solutions will streamline your processes and reduce operating costs by managing your key, asset, and evidence storage so that you don't have to. Using smart asset and key management systems can save your law enforcement agency money, increase asset intelligence, and deter security threats.

### **SEE THESE SOLUTIONS IN ACTION**



**Book a Demo**