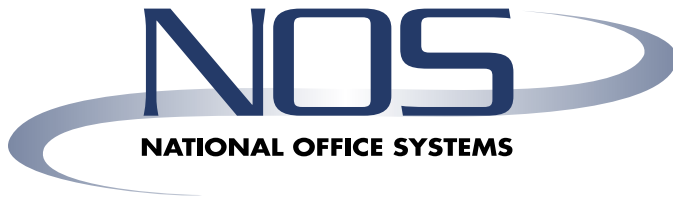


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For more information, contact:
Dan Harbison, President
301-840-6264
dharbison@nosinc.com

Dangers of Lost Homeland Security Weapons Could Diminish with Hi-tech Inventory Controls

Gaithersburg, MD — The threat posed to the public of nearly 300 firearms lost by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) could be dramatically reduced with comprehensive and appropriate inventory safeguards. RFID (radio frequency identification) systems to manage weapons collections are already in place in area agencies served by National Office Systems (NOS), headquartered in Gaithersburg, MD.

A recent report from the Department's Inspector General indicates that 289 handguns, shotguns and M4 semi-automatic rifles were lost between 2006 and 2008. Nearly 75 percent of those losses were due to carelessness by DHS officers and agents. "Lost firearms created unnecessary risk to the public and law enforcement personnel," the report says. State and local officers have recovered lost DHS weapons from felons and gang members; one rifle had even been imprinted with a gang logo.

"The technology is here to keep weapons securely where they belong, to control who has access to them and to track them when they're in the field," says NOS Principal Joe Alvarez. "Lost weapons are a serious danger to each and every one of us, but that risk could be decreased with the right inventory controls and security," he says.

The Armory Management System (ARMS) developed by NOS tracks the precise location of each weapon. Jim Breedlove, Director of Tactical Weapons Solutions, explains each weapon is tagged with an individual RFID tag, and the firearm's homebase is established as its stationary location. When moved from its homebase, the tag is immediately activated, records the movement and sends a message through a pre-determined system, such as email, text message or alarm. For weapons assigned to personnel in the field, the tag tracks the firearm's location with date and time stamps, keeping constant tabs on its whereabouts.

"ARMS reassures officials that their weapons are accounted for at all times," says Breedlove. "Careful controls will reduce losses of firearms and we'll all be safer."

For three decades, NOS has provided traditional and technology-based space- and asset-management solutions to allow companies, agencies, professional practices, organizations and institutions to increase productivity and save space. Services offered by NOS include asset/records-management consulting, customized storage design, asset/records-management software, document imaging and customized electronic records software. The firm also specializes in state-of-the-art storage products, such as mobile shelving systems, high density units and filing supplies.

For more information, contact NOS at 301-840-6264 or info@nosinc.com.

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7621 Rickenbacker Drive ■ Suite 400 ■ Gaithersburg, MD 20879