

Major Gas Supplier Improves Data Accuracy and Streamlines Operations with Durable Bar Code Tags

Long-Lasting Labels Play a Critical Role in Furthering Utility Company's Applications and Customer Experience Goals

Millions of gas meters are in service today. Some are positioned outside homes and businesses, weathering snow, rain and blistering heat. Others are installed in tight spaces in multi-dwelling units. Regardless of location, the meters are expected to meet the energy needs that customers rely on as they go about their day.

When Con Edison of New York, a major U.S. utility supplier with approximately 1.1 million gas customers, evaluated bar code options for their meters, they wanted durable tags that met its current and future requirements.

"When we looked at bar code labels, durability was our top consideration," said Tom Hardman, Con Ed technical supervisor. "Our meters sit outside for 20 or 30 years. There's no other bar code badge (than Camcode's) that has a chance of making it that long. It was much more durable than the closest competitor."



Honeywell American Meter AC-250 Class Gas Meter

Coordinates With New Applications Easily

Along with durability, Con Ed wanted bar code badges that enabled it to track the status of meters from cradle to grave. It found that Camcode's bar code tags seamlessly integrated with TESCO-The Eastern Specialty Company's asset and inventory management applications, which Con Ed uses to process every new meter it installs. The bar code tags have also streamlined the way testing data is gathered.

Now, each time a new meter is taken into inventory—an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 per year—the Camcode bar code badge on the meter is scanned into the utility's asset database with 100% accuracy. For meters that are shipped out and installed or removed from service, technicians use a Tesco bar code scanning kiosk, where Con Ed securely stores inventory, to scan each Camcode bar code badge. Since implementing its scanning procedures, technicians no longer key in each meter's six-digit serial number, a process that was slow and prone to errors.

"By scanning each tag, we've been able to remove over 99% of the errors caused by manual intervention."

Camcode: Bar Code Labels

Durability: Camcode offers bar code label solutions that can withstand abrasion, high temperatures, and exposure to UV, chemicals, and solvents, along with multiple attachment options to suit your application.

Compatibility: With Camcode's bar code label solutions, your data is formatted correctly for easy database integration.

Durability: Camcode can recommend the right label or mark type for any asset identification needs. Our recommendations are based on decades of durable label expertise.

Cost-Effective: Camcode's bar code label pay for themselves in reduced maintenance costs, increased productivity, and reduced rework.

Long Life: Camcode's bar code labels remain readable throughout the lifespan of your assets, so you'll never need to re-label.

Accuracy: With Camcode's durable bar code label solutions, you'll ensure that all data collected is accurate, virtually eliminating errors caused by manual data collection.



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Similarly, each gas meter is thoroughly tested as part of Con Edison's quality control. For each test, the Camcode badge is scanned to make sure the test data is associated with the correct meter.

"The bar code tags have been a huge time saver for our employees, especially during our semi-annual physical inventory reconciliation," said Hardman. "By scanning each tag, we've been able to remove over 99% of the errors caused by manual intervention."

Staying Ahead of the Curve - Realizing Benefits From Technology

The bar code tags have provided other benefits, including improving Con Ed's customers' experience and furthering its advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) technology initiatives. For example, Con Ed has found that by installing TESCO's Meter Manager to store replacement gas meters at multiple service facilities, it's better positioned to meet its 24/7 operation. Technicians scan their employee ID to enter the kiosk and digitally record the replacement meter's bar code badge before removing the unit and traveling to the customer's site.

"This has gotten positive reviews from our technicians and improved our operations, tracking and meter availability," Hardman said.

Con Ed has also improved safety and service in multi-dwelling units. Technicians don't have to climb or crawl around to scan the bar code tag. Instead, using their scanner, they can retrieve the meter information safely and cause less disruption to their customers.



Today, Con Ed is looking ahead at ways to install more AMI technology features.

"We want everything bar coded," Hardman said. "As our industry deploys more AMI technology, we want to be in a position to complete orders and handle even more functions quickly, inexpensively and accurately."



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