

Connected Systems at the Red Cross

More efficient workflows at the DRK local chapter Schwenningen



Project Goal

- Digitalization of laundry documentation, shrinkage reduction, and automated check-out and return
- Access to vehicle keys only for authorized personnel
- Replacement of the old, problematic access control system

Challenge

- Highly variable laundry demand due to the pandemic should not cause shortages
- Guarantee 24/7 availability of keys
- Security and flexibility for room access

Solution

- RFID-based laundry management system (textag®)
- Access control system (doorLoxx®)
- Key management system (proxSafe®)
- Management software (Commander Connect)

Benefit

- More efficient process workflows
- Collection of usage data
- 24/7 availability of clothing
- Selective access control

Less Hassle with Laundry Management – More Time for Care and Assistance

The German Red Cross (DRK) handles many critical tasks daily, mostly performed efficiently by volunteers. Cumbersome administrative tasks and inefficient handling of work and service clothing can take up valuable time and resources that are already scarce.

Heiko Knickrehm, head of the DRK Schwenningen volunteer unit, along with his colleagues Daniel Weißhaar and Marvin Böck, recognized this challenge as manual tracking of clothing for nearly 100 personnel became increasingly unwieldy. Previously, paper lists were used to document who had received which clothing in what size. This often led to availability issues, lost items, and an opaque, unsatisfactory return and replenishment process. Knickrehm sought a smarter, digital solution.

Intelligent Cabinet System

He found the solution with deister electronic, a partner he had worked with before. The DRK Schwenningen clothing pool—several hundred polo shirts, pants, and sweatshirts in different sizes—is now organized in three textag® laundry cabinets, with a fourth managing spare jackets. Instead of



manually recording clothing, the intelligent cabinets automatically log every item checked out to the individual's account.

The system also tracks minimum stock levels, alerting staff when items need replenishment or the laundry service should be notified. For returns, a drop-off cabinet with laundry bags was installed, allowing users to return clothing easily. An automatic email notification is sent when a defined fill level is reached. Due to hygiene requirements and bulky items, laundry bags are emptied once or twice weekly. All users, items, events, and movements are managed centrally in the included Commander Connect software, which also allows real-time inventory monitoring per cabinet. ▶

Easy Installation and Operation

The cabinets were delivered fully assembled and only needed to be set up, aligned, and connected. This was quickly handled by Heiko Knickrehm's technically skilled team. Only a software training session and the initial commissioning required on-site support from a deister electronic employee.

Around 300 new clothing items were purchased for this purpose and, in collaboration with a local laundry service, equipped with the necessary RFID tags. After a brief test phase, a small instruction sheet was sufficient to show users how to operate the cabinets. "The system is not complicated and very intuitive to use," says Daniel Weißhaar. "The cabinets now quietly relieve



DRK Schwenningen of tedious administrative work and ensure continuous, reliable availability of service and operational clothing," adds Heiko Knickrehm.

Hygienic cleaning cycles and full transparency are additional benefits. This is particularly helpful because, given the sometimes highly variable workloads and team sizes, potential shortages in clothing supply can be anticipated and avoided. Many volunteer personnel are also motivated, as clean service clothing is always available to them.

Personnel who occasionally and spontaneously assist at DRK Schwenningen are issued a temporary user ID, granting them access to the service clothing pool. Existing IDs were also integrated into the system so that only one transponder per person is still required. An additional bonus appreciated by the team: the cabinets are certified as fire-resistant.

The need for optimization and modernization had existed for a long time. A key factor in the decision to implement the intelligent textile management system was funding from a Corona emergency relief fund for improved hygiene measures, from which resources could be requested. This has also sparked interest elsewhere: "Other aid organizations have already visited, and more will examine the system," says Knickrehm.

"Another advantage of the solution is the software, which can be modularly expanded with additional functions. For example, we are currently evaluating the use of digital door and locker locks from deister. These can be used with the RFID membership IDs that are already stored in the software for the textile management system." ▶

More Efficient Work Through Additional Access Control and Key Management

DRK Schweningen already uses the textag® system from deister electronic and has decided to integrate additional systems. Previously, system changes had to be carried out manually on site, which was labor-intensive. With the doorLoxx® access control system from deister electronic, managing the locking systems has now been significantly simplified, as all adjustments can be made conveniently and time-efficiently online via the Commander Connect software. This ensures that access is restricted to authorized employees, and it is possible to track who used which door and when. The system is particularly impressive due to its ease of use.

“The products from deister electronic are very user-friendly, even for employees with less technical experience,” says Daniel Weißhaar, trainer and team leader at DRK Schweningen. This greatly facilitates both the transition and daily use.



In addition to doors, DRK Schweningen’s changing rooms have been equipped with digital locker locks that can be opened with RFID transponders. Furthermore, DRK Schweningen now manages its keys with the proxSafe® flexx key management system from deister electronic.

This system stores vehicle and specialized keys and allows precise tracking of who last retrieved which key. At the same time, it ensures that keys can only be removed by authorized personnel and are available around the clock. This also allows the responsible employee to be contacted immediately if a key is lost.

“So far, every key has been returned,” confirms Daniel Weißhaar.

A special feature of this system is that everything is controlled through deister electronic’s Commander Connect software. ■



About the DRK Local Association Schwenningen

The DRK Local Association Schwenningen is one of ten local associations in the Villingen-Schwenningen district association. Within the scope of their capabilities, the local associations, together with the district association, carry out the diverse Red Cross activities in the northern part of the Schwarzwald-Baar district. The district association is part of the Badisches Rotes Kreuz state association within the national and international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.



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About deister electronic

For more than 40 years, deister electronic has been a modern, internationally active, and sustainably managed family-owned company, standing for innovative products and solutions in the field of identification and security for people, equipment, and buildings. Our product portfolio is used for the management of workwear and valuables, vehicle identification, key management, access control, and logistics.



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