

Print This Article

<< Return to [How to do it...Resident safety](#)

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1

There is virtual unanimity that providers are in for trouble if they do not consider in advance how a resident safety platform will integrate with others, either now or in the future.

“A common pitfall is to think about a resident safety solution as a standalone or ‘silo’ system,” notes Tim Cavins, vice president of [long-term care](#) sales for Status Solutions. “Systems such as wander prevention, [fire safety](#), fall management, environmental monitoring, access control, etc. should operate seamlessly together.

2

Fixating on after-the-fact responses also can be a problem.

“Another common pitfall is focusing only on reactive safety, as opposed to preventative safety measures, like health monitoring,” Cavins says.

With tracking of activity and movement patterns, as well as fall detection capabilities, some products can create “an electronic safety net,” Cavins explains.

“Since these residents may not frequent common areas where staff is present, there is technology available that can proactively track their patterns/behavior,” he adds.

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Amid the rush to acquire diverse detection and reporting capabilities, keep an eye on ancillary costs, advises Danielle Vander Ploeg, [product manager](#) for Crest Healthcare Supply.

“[Advanced reporting] typically requires software offered by the manufacturer to access these metrics on your facility's computers. Some systems may charge you licensing fees to use this software, which can be per computer, per year, or both,” she explains.

4

Be thorough with questions to a potential system supplier, many experts emphasize.

“Ask companies how the service for their systems is provided,” advises Chris Beekman, vice president of sales for Stanley Healthcare Solutions. “Some companies provide third-party distribution service, while others provide direct.”

Similarly, providers should seek broad input in-house.

“Involve many staff from different areas of the facility in the [acquisition] decision,” Beekman says. “What is good for maintenance is not always the best for nursing.”

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Kelly Besecker, vice president of sales and marketing for AFrame Digital, has a few other preferred practices. “Choose a system that is ‘FDA cleared’ and not just ‘FDA registered,’” she recommends. “This demonstrates that it has been through the work to get the approvals for resident safety and wellness.”

6

Ease of installation and use also are potential pitfalls that providers might sometimes overlook.

Try to select a system with a “dustless” installation, Besecker advises. It also should have an interface “that works for staff who have English as a second language.”

7

While looking for robust solutions to help your facility, it also is important not to overreach, Besecker adds.

“Choose systems that do not create a load on your IT infrastructure and staff. Most companies do not have a large IT department, if at all, and choosing a wireless system that is simple and self-healing is key. HIPAA requires data protection and data retention. Make sure your provider can do this for you,” she adds.

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Keeping regulators in mind in [long-term care](#) is always important, so don't fall in the trap of coming up short with documentation, cautions Trevor Gruby, Chief Technical Officer at Intelligent InSites.

“Look for a system that includes automated reporting so a proper [audit trail](#) of events and how they were handled is available,” he says. “This will help identify areas of improvements, as well as improve regulatory compliance.”