Personal emergency response systems

Snapshot

Pricing based on number of people to protect:
Will vary, depending on coverage area desired, technology and number of units used.

Average price per resident per year:
After initial set-up (which could run from $200 to $400 per room), costs will depend on what type of monthly pass-through a provider charges users.

Pricing Trends

2008-2009: Flat to +2%
2009-2010: Flat to +2%
2010-2011: Flat to +5%

Typical delivery time: Around 2 weeks

Typical delivery charges: Sometimes part of the price — ask.

Average life span of product: 7 to 10 years

Power sources: Electric and battery

Installation: Usually done by a certified technician, though advanced staff members might be OK for some systems

Average maintenance cost per year:
Batteries are the most common need

(Figures cited are averages of all respondents' answers. Actual pricing will vary due to volume, bundling and other factors of a purchase.)

Sources: 3M Resident Monitoring, Crest Healthcare Supply, Digital Care Systems, RF Technologies, Stanley Healthcare Solutions, Status Solutions

Photo: RF Technologies

FROM THE FRONT LINES:
"Look at what your needs are, who your residents are and then talk to your vendor. Tell your vendor your needs. Once, we had pagers that were too bulky and told them. Within three months, they gave us brand new pagers that were very small. We discovered vendors [can be] quick to meet needs."
Marlisa Thompson, Administrator, Greene Acres Nursing Home, Paragould, AR

Buyer Notes

• Be clear on what added costs you might incur. Some systems are monitored onsite by the provider, while others can be monitored offsite (at a higher cost that you may have to pass along).

• One veteran vendor clearly stated: A lot of homework is needed to properly research these.

• Some companies are using wireless technology instead of using telephone lines or having them hard-wired. Assess how this might affect your IT infrastructure.