# DBALT HF

# **CHAPTER 5: RFID TAGS**



RFID tags, which are also referred to as transponders, smart labels, or inlays, come in a variety of sizes, memory capacities, read ranges, frequencies, temperature survivability ranges and physical embodiments.

Escort Memory Systems offers many different RFID tag models. Cobalt Controllers are capable of reading all Escort Memory Systems' HMS and LRP series RFID tags as well most of those produced by other manufacturers. Our patented tags can be read through obstructions such as water, wood, plastic and more. Our specialty high-temperature (HT) models are capable of surviving temperatures of 415° F.

# **5.1 RFID STANDARDS**

It is important to note that not all 13.56MHz RFID tags are compatible with Cobalt Controllers and even tags that are said to be compliant with ISO15693 or ISO14443 standards may not actually be compatible with RFID controllers adhering to the same standards. This is partially due to the fact that these ISO standards are so new that they leave many features open to the discretion and interpretation of the RFID equipment manufacturer to implement or define. When using another manufacturer's tags, ensure compatibility of those tags with your RFID system provider.

### **5.1.1 ISO 14443A/B**

RFID integrated circuits (ICs) designed to meet ISO 14443A and/or ISO 14443B standards were originally intended to be embedded in secure smart cards such as credit cards, passports, bus passes, ski lift tickets, etc. For this reason, there are many security authentication measures implemented within the air protocol between the RFID controller and the tag.

ISO 14443A/B compliant tags and controllers incorporate security authentication through the exchanging of software "keys." The RFID controller and the tag must use the same security keys to authenticate communication before the transfer of data will begin. The Cobalt Controller's operating system manages these security features, making their existence transparent to the user. However, it is important to understand the implications associated with ISO 14443 when using another manufacturer's RFID tags. Because of these security "features," an ISO 14443 tag made by one manufacturer may not necessarily be readable by a Cobalt Controller and, likewise, an Escort Memory Systems ISO 14443 compliant tag might not be readable by another manufacturer's RFID controller. The Cobalt Controllers support Escort Memory Systems' security keys for use on Philips *mifare* ISO 14443A tags.

Escort Memory Systems was one of the first companies to adopt ISO 14443 standards and has incorporated much of the technology into our products designed for industrial automation applications. But because most industrial environments do not require the same level of security that monetary or passport applications necessitate, some features have not been implemented in the Cobalt HF product line.

# **5.1.2 ISO 15693**

ISO 15693 was established at a time when the RFID industry identified that the lack of standards was preventing the market from growing. Philips Semiconductor and Texas Instruments were, at that time, the major manufacturers producing RFID ICs for the *Industrial, Scientific, and Medical* (ISM) frequency of 13.56MHz. However, each had their own unique protocol and modulation algorithm. Philips Semiconductor's I-CODE® and Texas Instruments Tag-it® product lines were eventually standardized on the mutually compatible ISO 15693 standards. After the decision was made to standardize, the door was opened for other silicon manufacturers to enter the RFID business, many of which have since contributed to other RFID ISO definitions. This healthy competition has led to rapid growth in the RFID industry and has pushed the development of new standards, such as ISO 18000 for *Electronic Product Code* (EPC) applications.

### **5.1.3 ISO 18000-3.1**

The ISO 18000 standard has not been implemented in the Cobalt HF product line at the time of publication of this manual. It is a planned product enhancement for future releases. The emerging ISO 18000 Standard will provide enhanced support for EPC and *Unique Identification* (UID) tag applications.

# **5.2 RFID TAG COMPATIBILITY**

The following RFID tags are compatible with the Cobalt HF Controller:

# **5.2.1 HMS Series RFID Tags**

Integrated Circuits (ICs) used in Escort Memory Systems' HMS-Series RFID tags include:

- x **Philips mifare Classic**, 1 kilobyte (KB) + 32-bit Tag ID (ISO 14443A). One KB is the total memory in the IC. Of this memory, 736 bytes are available for user data.
- x **Philips mifare Classic**, 4 KB + 32-bit Tag ID (ISO 14443A). Four KB is the total memory in the IC. Of this memory, 3,440 bytes are available for user data.



*Figure 5-1: HMS125HT and HMS150HT RFID Tags* 

# **5.2.2 LRP Series RFID Tags**

ICs used in Escort Memory Systems' LRP-Series RFID tags include:

- x **Philips I•CODE 1**, 48-byte + 64-bit Tag ID
- **•** Philips I•CODE SLi, 112-byte + 64-bit Tag ID (ISO 15693)
- x **Texas Instruments Tag-it**, 32-byte + 64-bit Tag ID (ISO 15693)
- x **Infineon My-D Vicinity**, 1kb + 64-bit Tag ID (ISO 15693)



*Figure 5-2: LRP125 and LRP250 RFID Tags* 

# **5.3 RFID TAG PERFORMANCE**

Many factors can affect the performance between the controller's antenna and the tag's antenna. These include, but are not limited to: the tag integrated circuit (IC), the antenna coil design, the antenna conductor material, the antenna coil substrate, the bonding method between tag IC antenna coil, and the embodiment material.

Additionally, the mounting environment of the tag and controller can hinder performance due to other materials affecting the tuning of either antenna. Escort Memory Systems has undergone extensive testing to produce tags that obtain optimum performance with our RFID controllers. In most cases, optimal range will be obtained when mounting the tag and controller antenna in locations free from the influence of metals, ESD and EMI emitting devices.

## **5.4 RFID TAG EMBODIMENTS**

RFID tags come in a variety of sizes and packages. The most common and cost effective tag embodiment is the RFID label.

### **5.4.1 RFID Labels**

RFID Labels (inlays or inlets) are the lowest cost RFID tag solution and are typically used in an open system in which the tag leaves the facility attached to a product or is destroyed at the end of the process.

An inlay is a substrate (made of polyester or Mylar) with a printed, screened or etched antenna coil. Sometimes the coil consists of a wire that is laid down onto the substrate and is bonded to it with heat. Typically, the RFID IC is attached by means of flip-chip technology and the electrical connections are made by means of conductive epoxies.

RFID inlays are usually applied to sticker backed paper to create label tags which are manufactured in high volumes on roll-to-roll production equipment. Inlays can be laminated an used in smart credit cards, providing a low cost RFID tag with some protection from impact damage.



The materials and procedures used to manufacture an RFID label's antenna coil are critically important. Low cost processes (such as printing or screening) produce low quality antenna coils which can exhibit poor conductivity and cracking when flexed.

Labels with copper wire wound coils are generally considered efficient conductors of RF energy and can usually survive considerable flexing, but are often more expensive due to more involved production processes.

RFID labels with etched copper antenna coils have been found to be the most reliable, semi-low cost tag solution. Etched inlay antenna coils are usually of consistent quality and can survive a great deal of flexing and bending. However, because etching is inherently a subtractive process, the cost per tag increases in part due to copper and other metals discarded during the fabrication process.

As RFID label manufacturing technology advances, there have been several new developments made in the areas of high volume, low cost, antenna coil manufacturing.



One area, in particular, that has shown recent promise is the process of electroplating printed or screened antenna coils with an additional layer of copper to improve durability and conductivity.

# **5.4.2 Printed Circuit Board RFID Tags**

RFID tags that incorporate Printed Circuit Board (PCB) technology are designed for encasement inside totes, pallets, or products that can provide the protection normally associated with injection-molded enclosures.

These tags are made primarily from etched copper PCB materials (FR-4, for example) and are die bonded by means of high quality wire bonding. This procedure ensures reliable electrical connections that are superior to flip-chip assembly methods. The RFID tag's integrated circuit is then encapsulated in epoxy to protect it and the electrical connections.

# **5.4.3 Molded RFID Tags**



Molded tags, which are PCB tags that have been protected with a durable resin overmolding, are the most rugged and reliable type of tag offered by Escort Memory Systems. These tags are designed for



closed loop applications where the tag is reused; thereby the cost of the tag can be amortized over the life of the production line.

Typically, molded tags will be mounted to a pallet or carrier which transports the product throughout the production process. Some of the applications for these tags include, but are not limited to: embedding the tag into concrete floors for location identification by forklifts and automatically guided vehicles (AGVs), shelf identification for storage and retrieval systems, and tool identification.

High temperature (HT) tags, using patented processes and specialized materials, allow tags to survive elevated temperatures, such as those found in automotive paint and plating applications. Escort Memory Systems offers a wide variety of molded tags that have been developed over the years for real world applications.

# **5.5 TAG MEMORY**

Tag memory addressing begins at address 00 (0x0000), with the highest addressable memory location equal to one less than the total number of bytes in the tag. Each address is equal to one byte (8-bits), where the byte is the smallest addressable unit of data. So for example, writing 8-bytes to a tag beginning at address 00 will actually fill addresses 00 through 07 with 64-bits of data in all.

Depending on the manufacturer, RFID labels, molded tags and embedded PCBs can have differing memory storage capacities and organization. Tag memory is grouped into blocks of bytes that can vary in structure from manufacturer to manufacturer. Even when compliant to ISO standards, byte memory addressing can differ from one manufacturer to another. For example, tag memory can be organized in blocks of 4 or 8 bytes, depending on the RFID IC. Additionally, all bytes may not be available for data storage as some bytes may be used for security and access conditions. For more information regarding a specific RFID tag's memory allocation, please refer to IC manufacturer's published datasheet or Website.

Escort Memory Systems has taken great care to simplify tag memory addressing. The mapping from logical address to physical address is handled by the Cobalt Controller's operating system. Users only need to indicate the starting address location on the tag and the number of bytes to be read or written.

#### **Is it a Bit or a Byte?**

Customers need to understand that there are some RFID tag manufacturers that measure and specify their tag memory size by the total number of *bits*, as this method generates a much larger (8X) overall number. Escort Memory Systems, on the other hand, prefers to specify total tag memory size in terms of *bytes* (rather than in bits), as this method more closely reflects how data is stored and retrieved from a tag and is typically what users really want to know.

### **5.5.1 Mapping Tag Memory**

#### **Creating an RFID Tag Memory Map**

Creating a Tag Memory Map is much like creating a spreadsheet that outlines the actual data you plan to capture as well as the specific tag memory locations in which you wish to store said data. Tag Memory maps should be carefully planned, simple and straightforward. It is advisable to allow additional memory space than is initially required as inevitably a need will arise to store more data.

In the example below, 90-bytes of a 112-byte tag have been allocated to areas of the Memory Map (leaving roughly 20% free for future uses). Because a short paragraph of alphanumeric characters could quickly use all 90 bytes, creating an efficient mapping scheme which utilizes all 720-bits (out of the 90-bytes allocated) will provide a better use of tag space.

#### **TAG MEMORY MAP EXAMPLE**



*Table 5-1: Tag Memory Map Example* 

# **5.5.2 Tag Memory Optimization**

Data stored in tag memory is always written in binary (1's and 0's). Binary values are notated using the hexadecimal numbering system (otherwise it might be confusing viewing a page full of 1's and 0's).

Below is an example of how hexadecimal notation is used to simplify the process of expressing the decimal number 52,882.



Rather than using five bytes to store the five individual ASCII characters representing the numerical values 5, 2, 8, 8, and 2 (*ASCII bytes: 0x35, 0x32, 0x38, 0x38 and 0x32*), by simply writing two Hex bytes (*0xCE and 0x92*), 60% less tag memory is required to store the same amount of information.

When an alphabetical character is to be written to a tag, the Hex equivalent of the ASCII value is written to the tag. So for example, to write a capital "D" (*ASCII value 0x44*), the Hex value 0x44 is written to the tag.

Additionally, if a database with look up values is used in the RFID application, the logic level of the individual bits within the tag can be used to further maximize tag memory.

(Note: refer to Appendix D in this document for a chart of ASCII characters, their corresponding Hex values and their decimal value equivalents).

# **COBALT HF** CHAPTER 5: RFID TAGS

#### **OPTIMIZING THE TAG**

The following example illustrates how a single byte (8 bits) can be used to track an automobile's inspection history at eight inspection stations. The number one (1) represents a required operation and the number zero (0) represents an operation that is not required for a particular vehicle.



## **Decimal** Hexadecimal Binary  $0xCB$ 203 1 0 0 1 0 1  $\mathbf 1$  $\equiv$  $\mathbf{1}$ Final Inspection Stamping Welding Paint Grinding Primer Plating Prep

# **Optimizing Tag Memory**

# **CHAPTER 6: COMMAND PROTOCOLS**

# **6.1 COMMAND PROTOCOL OVERVIEW**

In order to correctly recognize and execute commands, the Cobalt HF and the host must be able to communicate using the same language. The language that is used to communicate is referred to as the *Command Protocol*.

There are *two* Command Protocols used by Cobalt HF RFID Controllers.

- x **ABx Fast Command Protocol** for Point-to-Point, Host/Controller applications (-232, -422 and –USB models).
- x **CBx Command Protocol** for multiple RFID controller configurations, Multidrop (Subnet16) networks and Industrial Ethernet applications (-485 and –IND models).

These two Command Protocols have different packet structures and parameter settings, which are explained later in this chapter.

# **6.2 ABX FAST COMMAND PROTOCOL**

The command protocol used by the Cobalt HF -232, -422 and -USB Controllers for Pointto-Point data transmission is known as the *ABx Fast Command Protocol.* ABx Fast has a single-byte oriented packet structure that permits the rapid execution of RFID commands while requiring the transfer of a minimal number of bytes.

ABx Fast supports the inclusion of an optional checksum byte. By default, the HF-CNTL-232, -422 and -USB controllers are configured to use ABx Fast *without* the checksum option. However, when increased data integrity is required, the checksum should be utilized. See *Section 6.2.4* for more on using the checksum parameter.

### **6.2.1 ABx Fast - Command / Response Procedure**

After an RFID command is issued by the host, a packet of data, called the "*Command* **Packet**" is sent to the Cobalt Controller. The command packet contains information that instructs the controller to perform a certain task.

The Cobalt Controller automatically parses the incoming data packet, searching for a specific pair of start characters, known as the "*Command Header.*" (Note: in ABx Fast, the Command Header / Start Characters are *0x02, 0x02*). When a Command Header is recognized, the controller then checks for proper formatting and the presence of a Terminator byte. (Note: in ABx Fast, the Terminator byte is *0x03*).

Having identified a valid command, the controller will attempt to execute the instructions, after which it will generate a host-bound response message containing EITHER the results of the attempted command or an error code if the operation failed.

All commands will generate a response from the controller. Before sending another command, the host must first process (remove from memory) any pending response data.

# **6.2.2 ABx Fast - Command Packet Structure**

The packet structure of every ABx Fast command contains certain basic elements, including a Command Header, a number of command parameters and a Terminator.



*Table 6-1: ABx Fast - Command Packet Structure* 

# **6.2.3 ABx Fast - Response Packet Structure**

After performing a command, the Cobalt HF will generate a host-bound response message. ABx Fast responses contain a Response Header, a number of response values (or retrieved data bytes), and a Terminator.



*Table 6-2: ABx Fast - Response Packet Structure* 

# **6.2.4 ABx Fast - Command Packet Parameters**

#### **C OMMAND SIZE**

The ABx Fast protocol requires that the byte count, known as the **Command Size**, be specified as a 2-byte integer. To calculate Command Size, add the total number of bytes within the command packet while excluding the two bytes for the Header, the two bytes for the Command Size, the one byte for the Checksum (if present) and the one byte for the Terminator (see example below).



In the above command packet example, 8 bytes of data are located between the Command Size parameter and the Checksum parameter. Therefore, the Command Size for this example is *0x0008*.

#### **START ADDRESS**

The Start Address parameter is holds a two-byte integer representing the tag memory address location where a read or write operation will begin.

#### **R EAD / WRITE L ENGTH**

The two-byte Read/Write Length parameter indicates the number of bytes that are to be read from or written to the RFID tag.



#### **TIMEOUT VALUE PARAMETER**

ABx Fast commands include a two-byte **Timeout Value** parameter (measured in increments of one millisecond) that is used to limit the length of time that the Cobalt HF will attempt to complete a specified operation.

The maximum Timeout Value is 0xFFFE or 65,534 milliseconds (slightly longer than one minute). Setting a long Timeout Value does not necessarily mean that a command will take any longer to execute. This value only represents the period of time for which the Cobalt HF will attempt execution of the command.

#### IMPORTANT

During write commands, the tag must remain within the antenna's RF field until the write operation completes successfully, or until the Timeout Value has expired.

If a write operation is not completed before the tag leaves the controller's RF field, data may be incompletely written.

#### **C HECKSUM PARAMETER**

The ABx Fast Command Protocol supports the inclusion of an additional checksum byte that is used to verify the integrity of data being transmitted between host and controller.

The checksum is calculated by adding together (summing) the byte values in the command packet (less the Header, Checksum and Terminator parameters), and then subtracting the total byte sum from 0xFF. Therefore, when the byte values of each parameter (from Command Size to Checksum) are added together, the byte value sum will equal 0xFF.

To enable the use of the checksum parameter, download the RFID Dashboard Utility from www.ems-rfid.com, and use it to set the *ABx Protocol* parameter to *ABx Fast with Checksum*.



#### **C HECKSUM EXAMPLE**

The following example depicts *Command 0x05* (*Read Data*) using a checksum.



Add the byte values from the Command Size, Command ID, Start Address, Read Length and Timeout Value parameters together and subtract from 0xFF. Resulting value will be the checksum.

 $[0x07 + 0x05 + 0x01 + 0x04 + 0x07 + 0x00] = 0xE8$ 

The checksum equation is:  $[0xFF - 0xE8] = 0 \times 17$ 

## **6.3 CBX COMMAND PROTOCOL**

The *CBx Command Protocol,* utilized by the Cobalt -485 and -IND models, includes Multi-drop Subnet16 networking support for use with Industrial Ethernet applications.

CBx is based on a double-byte oriented packet structure where commands always contain a minimum of six data "words," even when one (or more) parameters are not applicable to the command. CBx does not support the inclusion of a checksum byte.

The CBx packet structures described herein are protocol independent and can be implemented the same for all Industrial Ethernet protocols (Ethernet/IP, Modbus TCP, etc.).

### **6.3.1 CBx – Command Procedure**

#### **C OBALT HF-CNTL-485-01 – C OMMAND P ROCEDURE**

Commands are initiated by a host PC or Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) and are distributed to the controller via a Subnet16 Gateway or Subnet16 Hub Interface Device that is connected to the host or PLC by standard Ethernet cabling.

After a command is sent, it is executed either directly by the interface device (Gateway or Hub) or is otherwise routed to the RFID controller specified in the command. Note that when issuing controller-bound commands, instructions are directed to the appropriate RFID controller by specifying the "*Node ID Number*" of the particular controller. Each Cobalt -485 Controller on a Multi-drop Subnet16 network is assigned an individual Node ID number.

#### **C OBALT HF-CNTL-IND-01 – C OMMAND P ROCEDURE**

Commands are initiated by a host PC or Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) and are distributed directly to the controller via an M12 D-Code to Ethernet cable.

After a command is sent, it is immediately executed by the Cobalt Controller. Note that instructions are directed to the controller by specifying in the command the "*Node ID Number*" of the Cobalt Controller. For the Cobalt HF-CNTL-IND-01, the Node ID will always be 01 (0x01).

### **6.3.2 CBx – Response Procedure**

Following the execution of an RFID command, the controller will automatically generate a host-bound response message that contains EITHER the results of the attempted command or an error code if the operation could no be completed successfully.

Similar to ABx Fast, all CBx commands will generate a response from the controller. Before the host can send another command to the controller, it must first process (remove from memory) the controller's pending response data.

## **6.3.3 CBx - Command Packet Structure**

As noted, CBx commands contain a minimum of six words. Below is the structure of a standard CBx command packet. For the Cobalt HF-CNTL-485-01 model, refer to the Subnet16 Gateway or Subnet16 Hub - Operator's Manuals.



*Table 6-3: CBx - Command Packet Structure* 

## **6.3.4 CBx - Response Packet Structure**

After performing a command, the Cobalt HF RFID Controller will issue a host-bound response message. Below is the packet structure of a standard CBx response message.



*Table 6-4: CBx - Response Packet Structure* 

#### **I NSTANCE C OUNTER**

The **Instance Counter** is a one-byte value used by a Subnet16 Gateway or Subnet16 Hub to track the number of responses generated by a given Node ID number. The Gateway/Hub tallies in its internal RAM separate Instance Counter values for each Node ID. The Instance Counter value is incremented by one following each response. If, for example, 10 responses were generated by the controller assigned Node ID 01, its Instance Counter value will read 10. When the Gateway/Hub is power cycled or rebooted, all Instance Counter values will be reset to zero (0x00).

# **6.3.5 CBx - Command Example**

In the example below, *Command 0x05 (Read Data)* is issued to the Cobalt Controller assigned to Node ID 01. The controller will be instructed to read 4 bytes of data from a tag beginning at tag address 0x20. The Timeout Value has been set to two seconds for the completion of this command (*0x07D0 = 2000 x .001 = 2 seconds*).



### **6.3.6 CBx - Response Example**

Below is an example of a typical controller response after successfully executing the Read Data command (as issued in the previous example).



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# **CHAPTER 7: RFID COMMANDS**

Most RFID commands can be divided into **two** primary categories: *READ* and *WRITE*. Read commands retrieve data from a tag or obtain information from the controller. Write commands transfer information to a tag or update settings on the controller.

# **7.1 RFID COMMANDS TABLE**



*Table 7-1: RFID Commands Table* 

# **COMMAND 04: FILL TAG**

Command 04 instructs the RFID controller to fill multiple contiguous addresses of an RFID tag with a single data byte value. This command is commonly used to clear sequential segments of tag memory by writing a one-byte value repeatedly across a specified range of tag addresses.

This command requires one Data Byte Value, a Start Address and a Fill Length. It will then proceed to fill the tag with the Data Byte Value, for the specified number of consecutive bytes, beginning at the Start Address.

When the Start Address is set to zero (0x0000), the fill will begin at the first available byte of tag memory. When the Fill Length is set to zero (0x0000), the controller will write fill data from the Start Address to the end of the tag's memory. The Timeout Value is measured in 1-millisecond increments and can have a value of 0x0001 to 0xFFFE (1 - 65,534 milliseconds). If the Fill Length extends beyond the last byte in the tag, the controller will return an error.



#### **C OMMAND 04 (FILL TA G ) - AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**

#### **C OMMAND 04 (FILL TA G ) - AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the Cobalt HF to fill an entire tag with the ASCII character 'A' (Data Byte Value 0x41) starting at the beginning of the tag (address 0x0000). A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0) is set for the completion of the command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 04 (FILL TA G ) - CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the Cobalt Controller to fill an entire tag with the ASCII character 'A' (Data Byte Value 0x41) starting at the beginning of the tag (address 0x0000). A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0) is set for the completion of the command.

#### **Command from Host**



Note: The "Fill Length" in the Tag Fill Command represents the number of bytes to fill on the tag, not the length of the 'fill byte data' provided in the command, which is always just a single byte.



# **COMMAND 05: READ DATA**

Command 05 instructs the controller to retrieve a specific number of bytes of data from a contiguous (sequential) area of an RFID tag's memory.

When the Start Address is set to zero (0x0000), the controller will start reading at the beginning (or first accessible byte) of the tag. The minimum Read Length is one byte, the maximum is the entire read/write address space of the tag. Timeout Value is measured in 1-millisecond increments and can have a value of 0x0001 to 0xFFFE (1 to 65,534 milliseconds). If the Read Length exceeds beyond the last available tag address, the controller will return an error code.

#### **C OMMAND 05 (R EAD D ATA ) - AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**



#### **C OMMAND 05 (R EAD D ATA ) - AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the controller to read four bytes of data from a tag starting at address 0x0001. A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0 = 2000 x 1 millisecond increments) is set for the completion of the command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 05 (R EAD D ATA ) - CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the controller to read four bytes of data from a tag starting at address 0x0001. A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0 = 2000 x 1 millisecond increments) is set for the completion of the command.

#### **Command from Host**





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## **COMMAND 06: WRITE DATA**

Command 06 instructs the controller to write information to an RFID tag. This command is used to store segments of data in contiguous tag memory locations. It is capable of transferring up to 100 bytes of data from the host to the tag with one command.

The shortest possible Write Length is one (0x0001). When the Start Address is set to zero (0x0000), the controller will begin writing to the first available byte of tag memory.

The Timeout Value is measured in 1-millisecond increments and can have a value of 0x0001 to 0xFFFE (1 to 65,534 milliseconds). If the Write Length exceeds beyond the last available tag address, the controller will return an error code.



#### **C OMMAND 06 (WRITE D ATA ) - AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**

#### **C OMMAND 06 (WRITE D ATA ) – AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example writes the five ASCII characters **H, E, L, L, O** (Data Byte Values: 0x48, 0x45, 0x4C, 0x4C and 0x4F) to the tag starting at address 0x0000. A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0 = 2000 x 1 millisecond increments) is set for the completion of this command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 06 (WRITE D ATA ) – CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example writes the five ASCII characters **H, E, L, L, O** (Data Byte Values: 0x48, 0x45, 0x4C, 0x4C and 0x4F) to the tag starting at address 0x0000. A Timeout Value of 2 seconds (0x07D0 = 2000 x 1 millisecond increments) is set for the completion of this command.

#### **Command from Host**





# **CHAPTER 7: RFID COMMANDS**

# **COMMAND 07: READ TAG ID**

This command instructs the RFID controller to locate a tag in RF range and retrieve its unique tag identification number.

RFID tags are assigned a unique tag ID number during the manufacturing process. After a tag ID number has been assigned to a tag, the value cannot be altered and is not considered part of the available read/write memory space of the tag.

- ISO 14443 compliant tags receive a 4-byte tag ID number. By using just four bytes, tag manufacturers can generate over 4.2 billion possible ISO 14443 compliant tag ID numbers.
- ISO 15693 compliant tags are given an 8-byte tag ID number. When using eight bytes, manufacturers can generate over 280 trillion possible tag ID numbers.



#### **C OMMAND 07 (R EAD TAG ID) – AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**

#### **C OMMAND 07 (R EAD TAG ID) – AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the controller to retrieve a tag's ID. In this example, the 8-byte tag ID number is *E0040100002E16AD*. A Timeout Value of two seconds is set for the completion of this command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 07 (R EAD TAG ID) – CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example instructs the controller to retrieve a tag's ID. In this example the 8-byte tag ID number is *E0040100002E16AD*. A Timeout Value of 2 seconds is set for the completion of this command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **Response if tag not found**



## **COMMAND 08: TAG SEARCH**

Command 08 instructs the controller to search for the presence of a tag within RF range of the antenna. If the controller finds a tag it will return a Command Response to the host. The Timeout Value is measured in 1-millisecond increments and can have a value of 0x0001 to 0xFFFE (1 to 65,534 milliseconds).



#### **C OMMAND 08 (TAG SEARCH ) – AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**

#### **C OMMAND 08 (TAG SEARCH ) – AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example checks for an RFID tag within range of the antenna. The checksum is enabled and the Timeout Value is set for 2 seconds (0x07D0 = 2000 milliseconds) for the completion of this command.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 08 (TAG SEARCH ) – CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This command will instruct the controller to search for the presence of a tag within RF range of the antenna.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **Response if tag not found**



### **COMMAND 0D: START/STOP CONTINUOUS READ**

Command 0D instructs the controller to start (or stop) Continuous Read Mode.

When the Cobalt Controller is in Continuous Read Mode, it will constantly emit RF energy in an attempt to read any tag that comes into range of the antenna. As a tag enters the antenna field, it is immediately read and the data is passed to the host. The controller will continue to read the tag but will not re-send the same data to the host until the tag has moved outside the RF field for a specified time period. This parameter is known as the *Delay Between Duplicate Reads*, which prevents redundant data transmissions when the controller is in Continuous Read Mode.

If another RFID command is executed while the controller is in Continuous Read Mode, the Cobalt HF will temporarily stop Continuous Reading to execute the command, after which the controller will return to Continuous Read Mode.

The Start/Stop Continuous Read command contains three primary components: a **Start Address,** a **Read Length** and a **Delay Between Duplicate Reads** value**.**

- **Start Address:** The Start Address is a 2-byte integer indicating the tag address location where the read will begin.
- x **Read Length:** The Read Length is a 2-byte integer that represents the number of tag data bytes of retrieve. By setting this parameter to one (0x01) or higher, Continuous Read Mode will be switched ON at the completion of the command. Setting the Read Length to zero (0x00) will turn Continuous Read Mode off.
- x **Delay Between Duplicate Reads:** During Continuous Read Mode, any tag that comes within range of the antenna will be constantly read and the requested data from the tag will be passed to the host. This single-byte delay parameter indicates the number of seconds that a tag must remain out of RF range before it can be re-read and have its data sent to the host for a second time. It is implemented to enable the operator to limit the volume of information sent by the controller. The Delay Between Duplicate Reads parameter can have a value of 0 to 60 seconds. When the Delay Between Duplicate Reads value is set to 0, the controller will continuously read AND transmit duplicate tag data to the host.

#### **Continuous Read at Power-up**

By default, Continuous Read Mode is not restarted if the controller is reset. However, through the use of the *RFID Dashboard Utility,* the Cobalt Controller can be configured to enter Continuous Read Mode automatically after a reset or power-up. See *Section 3.1* for more information regarding the RFID Dashboard Utility or visit: www.ems-rfid.com.

#### **C ONTINUOUS R EAD M ODE LED B EHAVIOR**



*Table 7-2: Continuous Read Mode - LED Behavior* 

#### **C OMMAND 0D (START / STOP C ONTINUOUS R EAD ) – A B X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**



#### **C OMMAND 0D (START / STOP C ONTINUOUS R EAD ) – A B X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example places the controller in Continuous Read mode and reads four bytes of data from the tag starting at address 0x0001. The Delay Between Duplicate Reads is set to two seconds  $(0x02 = 2 \times 1$  second increments).

**Starting Continuous Read - Command from Host** 



**Starting Continuous Read - Initial Response from Controller** 



**Continuous Read Mode Evoked - Response from Controller (after Tag Read)**



To exit out of Continuous Read mode, issue Command 0D with zero (*0x0000*) in the Read Length parameter field.

#### **Stopping Continuous Read - Command from Host**



#### **Stopping Continuous Read - Response from Controller**



# OBALT HF **CHAPTER 7: RFID COMMANDS**

#### **C OMMAND 0D (START / STOP C ONTINUOUS R EAD ) – C B X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example places the controller in Continuous Read Mode and reads 4 bytes of data from the tag starting at address 0x0001. The Delay Between Duplicate Reads is set to 2 seconds  $(0x02 = 2 \times 1$  second increments).

#### **Starting Continuous Read - Command from Host**



**Starting Continuous Read - Initial Response from Controller** 



**Continuous Read Mode Evoked - Response from Controller (after Tag Read)**



To exit out of Continuous Read Mode, re-issue the command with zero (0x0000) for the Read Length.





#### **Stopping Continuous Read - Response from Controller**



## **COMMAND 35: RESET CONTROLLER**

Command 35 will cause the controller to cycle power - effectively rebooting the device without clearing any stored configuration information. Command 35 will reset the controller's configuration to default settings when a Configuration Tag is placed in the antenna's RF field prior to execution.

#### **C OMMAND 35 (R ESET C ONTROLLER ) – AB X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**



#### **C OMMAND 35 (R ESET C ONTROLLER ) – AB X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example resets power to the controller.

#### **Command from Host**





#### **C OMMAND 35 (R ESET C ONTROLLER ) – CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

#### **Command from Host**





# **COMMAND 38: GET CONTROLLER INFO**

Command 38 is used to retrieve hardware version, serial number and installed firmware identification information from the controller.

#### **C OMMAND 38 (GE T C ONTROLLER I NFO ) – A B X FAST C OMMAND STRUCTURE**



#### **C OMMAND 38 (GE T C ONTROLLER I NFO ) – A B X FAST C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

This example will query the Cobalt HF and retrieve specific internal hardware information.

#### **Command from Host**









### **Controller Information (retrieved in the above example response)**



# COBALT HF **CHAPTER 7: RFID COMMANDS**

#### **C OMMAND 38 (GE T C ONTROLLER I NFO ) – CB X C OMMAND EXAMPLE**

#### **Command from Host**





# **CHAPTER 8: ERROR CODES**

If the Cobalt Controller encounters a fault during operation, the response that is generated will include a 1-byte error code. Entering an invalid Start Address for a Read Data command, for example, will generate Error Code 0x32 (Invalid Programming Address).

# **8.1 ERROR CODE TABLE**



# **COBALT HF** CHAPTER 8: ERROR CODES



*Table 8-1: Error Code Table* 

# **CHALT HF CHAPTER 8: ERROR CODES**

# **8.2 ABX FAST: ERROR RESPONSE PACKET STRUCTURE**

For any ABx Fast error response, a single-byte **Error Code** always follows the **0xFF** byte (Error Flag byte).



*Table 8-2: ABx Fast - Error Response Structure* 

#### **A B X F AST - E RROR R ESPONSE E XAMPLE**

Below is an example of an ABx Fast error response (with checksum) for a failed Write Data command (error code 0x06).



# **8.3 CBX PROTOCOL: ERROR RESPONSE PACKET STRUCTURE**

A one-byte **Error Code** will be returned in the MSB of the seventh data word in the error response packet (followed by a zero - *0x00* in the LSB).



*Table 8-3: CBx Error Response Structure* 



#### **C B X - E RROR R ESPONSE EXAMPLE**

Below is an example of a CBx error response (error code 0x08) for a failed Tag Search (Command ID: 0x08).

#### **Command from Host**



#### **Error Response (if no tag is found)**



# **APPENDIX A: COBALT HF SPECIFICATIONS**

#### **ELECTRICAL**



#### **COMMUNICATION**



#### **MECHANICAL**



#### **ENVIRONMENTAL**



# **APPENDIX B: MODELS & ACCESSORIES**

# **COBALT HF RFID CONTROLLER MODELS**

There are five models of the **Cobalt HF RFID Controller**:

**HF-CNTL-232-01** – for RS232 interface connections

**HF-CNTL-422-01** – for RS422 interface connections

**HF-CNTL-485-01** – for RS485 interface connections

**HF-CNTL-USB-01** – for USB interface connections

**HF-CNTL-IND-01** – for Industrial Ethernet interface connections

# **COBALT HF ANTENNA MODELS**

There are four models of the **Cobalt HF Antenna**:

**HF-ANT-1010-01** – 10cm x 10cm

**HF-ANT-2020-01** – 20cm x 20cm

**HF-ANT-3030-01** – 30cm x 30cm

**HF-ANT-0750-01** – 7cm x 50cm (for conveyor applications)

# **SUBNET16 GATEWAYS**

#### **GWY-01-TCP-01**

Subnet16™ TCP/IP Gateway – for commercial TCP/IP environments

#### **GWY-01-IND-01**

Subnet16™ Industrial Ethernet Gateway – for Industrial Ethernet environments

# **SUBNET16 HUBS**

#### **HUB-04-TCP-01**

Subnet16™ TCP/IP Hub (4-port) – for commercial TCP/IP environments

#### **HUB-04-IND-01**

Subnet16™ Industrial Ethernet Hub (4-port) – for Industrial Ethernet environments



### **POWER SUPPLIES**

**00-1166:** 24VDC, 1.88A max, 45W, Universal Input (90-264VAC, 47-63Hz), 5.5x2.5mm plug, positive tip; Note: Requires country specific power cord to mate to IEC 320 power cord receptacle.

**00-1167:** 24VDC, 4.17A max, 100W, Universal Input (90-264VAC, 47-63Hz), 5.5x2.5mm plug, positive tip; Note: Requires country specific power cord to mate to IEC 320 power cord receptacle.

**00-1168:** 24VDC, 5.0A max, 120W, Universal Input (88-132VAC/176-264VAC switch selectable, 47-63Hz) DIN Rail Mount; Note: AC wire receptacles are spring clamp for direct wire connection.

# **COBALT HF SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS**

**RFID Dashboard:** provides users with complete control over their Escort Memory Systems RFID system. The RFID Dashboard allows system operators to configure, monitor and control Cobalt HF-Series RFID devices from anywhere on their network.

**C-MacroBuilder:** an easy to use GUI-driven utility that allows users to create, edit and save powerful RFID macros.

**Cobalt HF-SDK:** Cobalt HF Controller - Software Development Kit (requires Microsoft® Visual Studio® .Net). Contact your distributor.

Visit the Escort Memory Systems website (www.ems-rfid.com) for download instructions.

# **COBALT CABLES & CONNECTORS**

**CBL-1478 -** RS232 Cable with DB9 Female Plug and 2.5mm DC Jack

**CBL-1480-0.2 -** Male/Female, ThinNet Drop Cable, 0.2m

**CBL-1480-02 -** Male/Female, ThinNet Drop Cable, 2m

**CBL-1480-10 -** Male/Female, ThinNet Drop Cable, 10m (for Hubs only)

**CBL-1481-0.2 -** Male/Male, ThinNet Drop Cable, 0.2m

**CBL-1481-01 -** Male/Male, ThinNet Drop Cable, 1m

**CBL-1481-02 -** Male/Male, ThinNet Drop Cable, 2m (Gateway to T)

**CBL-1482-02 -** Male/90 Degree Female, ThinNet Drop, Cable, 2m

**CBL-1482-10 -** Male/90 Degree Female, ThinNet Drop, Cable, 10m

**CBL-1483 -** Male/Female, ThickNet Trunk Cable, 10m

**CBL-1484 -** Female w/ Bare Wire, ThickNet Trunk Cable, 2m

**CBL-1485 -** ThickNet to ThinNet Drop-T

**CBL-1486 -** ThinNet to ThinNet Drop-T

**CBL-1487 –** Straight Female M12 Field Mountable Connector

**CBL-1488 -** M12-8, Female w/ Bare Wires Cable, 2m, (-232- & -422)

**CBL-1489 -** Male 7/8-16 ThickNet 120-Ohm Termination Resistor Plug

**CBL-1490 -** Male M12 ThinNet 120-Ohm Termination Resistor Plug

**CBL-1491 -** 90 Degree Female M12 Field Mountable Connector

**CBL-1492 -** M12-8, 90 Degree Female w/ Bare Wires Cable, 2m, (-232 & -422)

**CBL-1493** - M12-8, Straight Female Field Mountable Connector

**CBL-1513 –** M12, 5-Pin, Male, Reverse Keyed to Type A, USB Cable 3M

**CBL-1514 –** M12, 5-Pin, Straight Male, Reverse Keyed Connector for USB

**CBL-1515-05** – Cable, Ethernet/M12, 5-Pin, Male, D-Code, 5M

# COBALT HF

# **RFID TAGS**

Escort Memory Systems designs and manufactures several lines of RFID tags. LRP and HMS-Series passive read/write RFID tags are specially suited for the Cobalt HF Series product line.



# **OBALT HF**

# **APPENDIX C: NETWORK DIAGRAMS**

- Cobalt Ethernet Network
- Subnet16 Gateway ThickNet Network

# **COBALT HF**



# COBALT HF



**ASCII Chart** 

# **APPENDIX D: ASCII CHART**

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# **COBALT HF** APPENDIX D: ASCII CHART



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# **WARRANTY**

scort Memory Systems warrants that all products of its own manufacturing conform to Escort Memory Systems' specifications and are free from defects in material and workmanship when used under normal operating conditions and within the service conditions for which they were furnished. The obligation of Escort Memory Systems hereunder shall expire one (1) year after delivery, unless otherwise specified, and is limited to repairing, or at its option, replacing without charge, any such product which in Escort Memory Systems' sole opinion proves to be defective within the scope of this Warranty. In the event Escort Memory Systems is not able to repair or replace defective products or components within a reasonable time after receipt thereof, Buyers shall be credited for their value at the original purchase price. Escort Memory Systems must be notified in writing of the defect or nonconformity within the warranty period and the affected product returned to Escort Memory Systems factory or to an authorized service center within thirty (30) days after discovery of such defect or nonconformity. Shipment shall not be made without prior authorization by Escort Memory Systems. E

This is Escort Memory Systems' sole warranty with respect to the products delivered hereunder. No statement, representation, agreement or understanding oral or written, made by an agent, distributor, representative, or employee of Escort Memory Systems which is not contained in this warranty, will be binding upon Escort Memory Systems, unless made in writing and executed by an authorized Escort Memory Systems employee.

Escort Memory Systems makes no other warranty of any kind what so ever, expressed or implied, and all implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular use which exceed the aforementioned obligation are here by disclaimed by Escort Memory Systems and excluded from this agreement. Under no circumstances shall Escort Memory Systems be liable to Buyer, in contract or in tort, for any special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages, expenses, losses or delay however caused. Equipment or parts which have been subject to abuse, misuse, accident, alteration, neglect, unauthorized repair or installation are not covered by warranty. Escort Memory Systems shall make the final determination as to the existence and cause of any alleged defect. No liability is assumed for expendable items such as lamps and fuses. No warranty is made with respect to equipment or products produced to Buyer's specification except as specifically stated in writing by Escort Memory Systems in the contract for such custom equipment. This warranty is the only warranty made by Escort Memory Systems with respect to the goods delivered hereunder, and may be modified or amended only by a written instrument signed by a duly authorized officer of Escort Memory Systems and accepted by the Buyer.

Extended warranties of up to four years are available for purchase for most Escort Memory Systems products. Contact Escort Memory Systems or your distributor for more information.