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What's The Difference Between a HiCo & LoCo Magnetic Stripe Card?

The amount of data that can be encoded on to a card with a magnetic stripe card is the same for both HiCo and LoCo cards. The primary difference between HiCo and LoCo cards has to do with how difficult it is to encode and erase the information on each type of stripe.

The High Coercivity Magstripe Card

[High Coercivity](#) or "HiCo" cards are recommended for a majority of applications. HiCo magnetic stripe cards are typically black in color and they are encoded with a stronger magnetic field (2750 Oersted).

The stronger magnetic field makes HiCo cards more durable because the data encoded on the stripes are less likely to unintentionally be erased when exposed to an outside magnetic field.

HiCo cards are common in applications where they require a longer card life and are swiped often. Credit cards, bank cards, library cards, access control cards, time and attendance cards and employee ID cards frequently use HiCo technology.

The Low Coercivity Magstripe Card

The less common [Low Coercivity](#) or "LoCo" cards are good for short-term applications. LoCo magnetic stripe cards are generally brown in color and they are encoded at a low-intensity magnetic field (300 Oersted). LoCo cards are typically used for short-term applications including hotel room keys and season passes for theme parks, amusement parks, and water parks.

When selecting a magnetic stripe card for your business, ask yourself how long you want your cards to last. Many of us have experienced a situation where a hotel room key stopped working. Magnetic stripe cards can be reprogrammed, but it can be inconvenient. In most applications, HiCo cards are recommended. The small difference in price for the HiCo card is worth the value and reliability. For more information on HiCo and LoCo cards or for help deciding which is best for your application, call an ID Professional today at (855) 275-5098.

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