

Addressing Lone Worker Safety in the Wildlife Control Industry



Skeddadle Humane Wildlife



Founded in 1989, Skeddadle Humane Wildlife Control (Skeddadle) is Canada's largest company providing humane wildlife removal to hundreds of homes and businesses across the country each day. Over the last 30 years, Skeddadle has completed thousands of wildlife removals through environmentally friendly and poison-free practices. The company has experienced significant growth in recent years, requiring the implementation of a comprehensive and connected program to address the safety of their personnel working alone (lone workers). Skeddadle implemented Blackline Safety's G7 lone worker solution to replace their manual email check in system, resulting in fewer false alarms, tighter emergency response times and enhanced worker safety.

Skeddadle's Challenge: Lone Worker Safety

More than 50 Skeddadle employees are in the field each day throughout Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Houston, Texas. On the job, technicians perform a comprehensive inspection of the area, use hands-on techniques to remove wildlife, identify and clear nesting areas and identify potential points of entry to secure them from future infestations. This requires technicians to assess potentially dangerous situations on a daily basis, often by themselves. "Our team members work alone going to peoples' homes — sometimes when there is no one around," says Bill Dowd, CEO of Skeddadle. Technicians also face ever-changing safety hazards as no job site is the same. From working at heights and electricity to bites and scratches, hazards are unpredictable and difficult to plan for.

For Skeddadle, the safety of its employees has always been a top priority. Previously, the company utilized an email check-in system that required its employees to check in prior to traveling to an appointment, after arriving at the appointment, before climbing up on the roof, and after climbing down from the roof. Emails were received and monitored by the company's customer service team, which would manage emergency response and dispatch in the event that a check-in was missed. While safety compliant, this process proved to be inefficient, difficult for technicians to maintain and prone to human error. "We needed something that was more effective than the manual check-in process," said Bill. "Our employees were losing time and we didn't feel like it was a robust enough way to mitigate the risks of workplace injury."

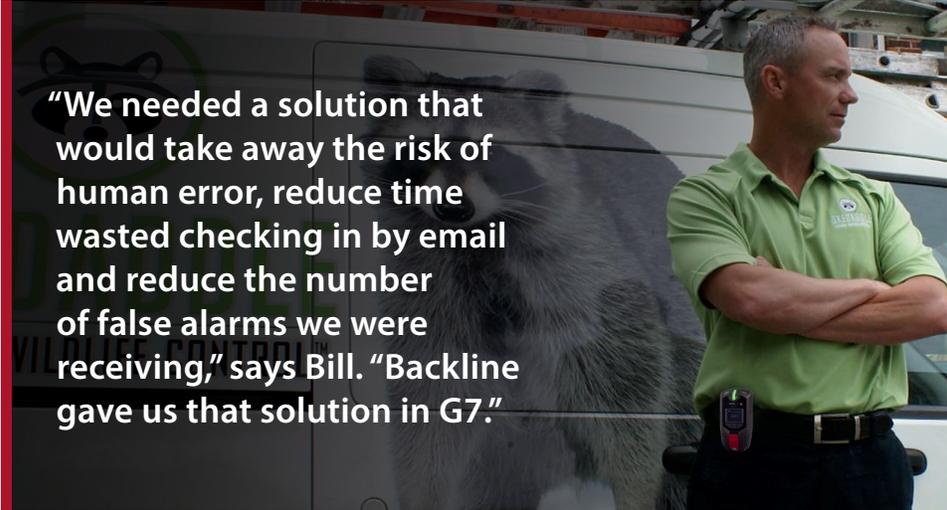
Blackline's Lone Worker Solution: G7

After becoming aware of Blackline's G7 employee-worn device and comprehensive lone worker solutions, Skedaddle's leadership recognized the value of incorporating it into their operations. "When we realized that there was a new technology out there to help monitor the safety of our team members, we know we had to check it out," said Bill.

Blackline's G7 equips workers with real-time, wireless two-way voice communication, fall detection and automatic no-motion detection to instantly notify monitoring personnel in the event of an emergency. Real-time alerting is coupled with precise location technology to enable monitoring personnel to dispatch a nearby coworker or EMS to a wildlife emergency, saving valuable time in a situation where every second counts. G7's assisted-GPS technology provides accurate location outdoors, accounting for any scenario a Skedaddle employee may face.

Fostering a Culture of Safety

Blackline's G7 provides Skedaddle's leadership, employees and their families with peace-of-mind that lone workers are protected in the event of an emergency. G7 was easily incorporated into Skedaddle's safety procedures and technicians' daily routine. This eliminated time-consuming, error-prone email check-ins and strengthened the company's safety culture.



"We needed a solution that would take away the risk of human error, reduce time wasted checking in by email and reduce the number of false alarms we were receiving," says Bill. "Blackline gave us that solution in G7."

Skedaddle technicians working in the field wear their devices throughout the course of their day — while traveling from job site to job site, climbing on roofs and extracting wildlife. They can feel secure knowing that they are always connected to monitoring personnel should a safety incident occur. "Blackline is a Canadian company with a good solution that worked perfectly for our business," said Ryan Rainville, General Manager for Skedaddle. "G7 has become a big part of our culture. Employees can enter the field knowing it's always there."

In addition to enhanced worker safety, implementing stronger lone worker safety solutions has helped Skedaddle grow. These devices show customers and stakeholders alike that the company is committed to the safety of its employees. Investors and potential franchisees can put their safety concerns at ease knowing that Skedaddle has an effective safety program in place to respond should the unexpected occur.

CHALLENGES

- Technicians were often travelling to different locations alone, working in ever-changing, dangerous scenarios often from heights that pose a great safety risk
- Technicians and customer care personnel were spending too much time following up on missed check-ins that resulted from forgetting to check in at appropriate times
- When there was an emergency, technicians had no simple way to share locations with dispatchers and emergency services
- The time to respond to an emergency was only as good as the interval between check-ins. Check-ins are time-consuming and it was difficult to find the right balance of responsiveness and productivity.

SOLUTION

- Blackline's G7 provides automatic no-motion and fall detection, detecting when a technician is no longer moving, slips, trips and falls
- G7 incorporates real-time, two-way wireless communication, allowing monitoring personnel to speak with lone workers via speakerphone
- During an emergency, precise location technology allows monitoring personnel to immediately dispatch the nearest co-worker or emergency responders

BENEFITS

- No-motion and fall detection, a manual SOS latch and two-way communication ensures that no safety incident goes unnoticed
- Reduced false alarms due to human error and increased productivity
- Faster emergency response times, improving the outcome of an injury or health incident