



The Most Frequently Asked Questions About Wireless ... and we even give you answers to consider!

These are important questions to ask when you are considering wireless for your measurement collection solution. There are a number of options out there. The issue is determining which has the features that will benefit your situation. Our intent is to help you select the right solution whether it's our MobileCollect Wireless or another. Getting you connected is what we do. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you information and hope you decide to continue the relationship. Thank you.

1 Why should I consider a wireless measurement collection system?

Wireless measurement collection systems are not for every situation, but they are worth considering in your project evaluation. Here are some of the factors to consider:

- Do you primarily use “mobile” gages, “stationary” gages, or a combination of both?
- Do you take your gage to the items being measured, or bring the items to the gage?
- Can gage cables be snagged on moving people or objects, resulting in injury or damage?
- Will you be taking measurements more than 2 meters from your PC workstation?

2 I've heard about “integrated wireless” gages, what can you tell me about them?

Integrated wireless gages are a fairly new addition to the wireless solution. They have both advantages and disadvantages when compared to traditional wireless gage solutions.

Advantages

- No external transmitter mounted on the gage.
- No gage cable required to connect the external transmitter to the gage.
- Unit pricing may be less expensive than a standard gage with a wireless transmitter.
- Simplified ordering, no gage cable or transmitter to identify and purchase.

Disadvantages

- You are locked into a specific gage manufacturer and their wireless solution.
- Only a limited number of models are available with the integrated wireless feature.
- Not able to move transmitter to another device (damaged gage or out for calibration).
- Currently unproven track record for reliability and durability.

3 What types of gage devices am I able to connect to?

That depends upon the wireless system you choose. The major gage manufacturers each offer wireless systems, but their focus is on gages, not wireless systems. Some of these systems work ONLY with that specific manufacturer's gage products. Others offer cables compatible with a handful of their competitor's gages.

- Do you own or are you considering using gages from different manufacturers? Do the wireless systems you're evaluating offer compatibility with all of your gages?
- Do you need to connect any measuring devices that fall outside the typical gages categories - calipers, micrometers and indicators? Which wireless system offers the ability to connect these

devices?

- Do you have measurement devices with RS-232 output from a manufacturer that does not offer a wireless solution? You'll need to factor this potential need into your wireless system evaluation criteria. These devices include but are not limited to,
 - Electronic scales (Ohaus, Sartorius, Mettler Toledo, etc.)
 - Digital readout devices (Newall, Heidenhain, etc).
 - Older gaging devices with non-standard data port connectors such as 8 pin circular, RJ-11 or RJ-45 phone jacks, LEMO (multiple types).

4 *I'd like to use my existing gages, are there any hardware restrictions to consider?*

Your gage devices must include a "data out" port that allows a gage cable to plug into. These are typically called "SPC", "Data", or "I/O" ports. Their purpose is to allow the gage to connect to a personal computer.

- Analog gages do not include gage ports, and each manufacturer offers "non-SPC" digital gages in their product lines. These gages offer a cost-effective method of collecting measurement information but are not compatible with wireless.
- Some devices have a data port option; you need to confirm if this option requires factory installation or if it can be "field-installed" when the need arises. A good example of this would be a digital scale. Many offer the RS-232 data out port option, and most can be field-installed.
- Calipers, micrometers, and indicators all need to be purchased with the SPC port, there is no "field upgrade" option available.

5 *We have an SPC solution, are there any software restrictions to consider?*

It depends again on where you want to send the data.

- Are you sending the gage data into Microsoft Excel? If so, you'll need a "keyboard wedge" product to convert the incoming data into a keyboard entry that Excel recognizes.
- Most dedicated SPC applications have the ability to look at a specific PC COM port for incoming gage data; these programs would not require the "keyboard wedge" product.

The other important question to ask is "does your wireless system require a "front-end" software program in order to pass your data to your application?"

- This may not be an issue when reviewing the wireless system capabilities, but each operator will need to open this "front-end" application before any gage data can be transferred to your SPC application.
- If sending to a Windows program that cannot monitor a COM port (example: Microsoft Excel or Access), all wireless systems will require a keyboard wedge application to transfer gage data.



These are just a few of the important questions to ask when considering wireless measurement collection. There are other questions to ask and consider, and we would be happy to provide you any further assistance you need. When you are ready, call or email us. Kevin Kelly 541.593.3500 or kevink@microridge.com.