# Potential Problem

I have experienced an unexpectedly high frequency of assignment of bar codes to newly acquired transfer boards despite our NOT getting any additional boards. “Transfer Boards” have multiplied in our bar code worksheet. When searching the bar code worksheet for a particular bar code attached to an existing “Transport Chair” there is a fair likelihood that the descriptor for the bar code will be “Transfer Board”.

# Suspicion

“Transfer Board” category is assigned to a new bar code; when, in fact, the category should have been “Transport Chair”. One likely cause for this is thinking the DME item is called “Transfer Chair”, the Operator enters the letters- t, r, a, n, s, f -at which point the description “Transfer Board” pops into the cell. Tapping the Enter key now locks the description for “Transfer Board” into the cell.

Less likely, but potentially:

The Operator incorrectly copies the cell spatially above “Transport Chair” which is “Transfer Board” and pastes this value into the description cell.

# Facts

In our Excel spreadsheets,

* There are a total of 70 bar code entries defined as “Transfer Board”
* There are a total of 53 bar code entries defined as “Transport Chair”;

Periodic inventory counts in storage at all locations are about

* 10 “Transfer Board”; at most 1 is in the field.
* 33 “Transport Chair”; many more are being used in the field.

For the 3-month period October – December 2021

* ONE (1) Transfer Board was requested.

A random analysis of “Transport Chair” (30) in the “Return History” worksheet that were incorrectly barcoded as “Transfer Board” (15) indicate an error rate of 50% (15/30). The highest numerical bar code identified as erroneous is HH1264.; and the lowest numerical bar code correctly identified as “Transport Chair” is HH 1265. This suggests that error creation has stopped beginning with bar code HH 1265. Further analysis would be needed to further define the error limits.

# Potential Solutions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pros** | **Cons** |
| Do Nothing | * Simple
* No cost
 | * Existing errors will persist
 |
| Encourage Operator to pay close attention to what appears in “Description” when assigning new bar code | * Simple
* Straightforward
 | * Consistent message received?
* Reliance on individual skills
* Errors may continue to occur
 |
| Change “Transfer Board” description to “Sliding/Transfer Board” | * Alphabetically removed from neighboring “Transport Chair”
 | * Fate of existing “Transfer Board” bar code assignments?
 |
| Remove Transfer Boards from Inventory | * Simple
* No more confusion
 | * Fate of existing “Transfer Board” bar code assignments?
 |

# Potential Fix of existing Errors

1. Take inventory of all Transfer Boards in our possession noting the Bar code of each. (These are HH 367, 368, 369, 370, 372, 783, 784, 1063, 1071, 1517)
2. In Equipment Drop Down worksheet, change the Equipment Description for “Transfer Board” to “Sliding/Transfer Board”.
3. In the bar code worksheet, change the description for all bar codes with “Transfer Board” description to “Transport Chair”.
4. For all bar codes identified in “1”, change the description to “Sliding/Transfer Board””.

# Result of Applying Potential Fix

These changes will result in:

1. all existing transfer boards in inventory to have the description “Sliding/Transfer Board”
2. previously mis-defined “Transfer Board” will be defined as “Transport Chair” in the Bar Code worksheet for each of the affected bar codes.

Additionally, these changes may result in some errors in assignment of “Transport Chair” descriptions to equipment that was previously defined as “Transfer Board”.

# Summary

My opinion is that applying these fixes would result in more accuracy than currently exists. Once these changes are made, they are effectively irreversible. We should therefore proceed with deliberation and caution.