



Creative application of GPS monitoring technology: Santa Barbara County, California, Sheriff's Office

SYNOPSIS:

- Participants in GPS monitoring program remain in custody of Sheriff's Office at all times
- Supervising agents are sworn and armed law enforcement officers
- Highly successful program: since 2007, the start of the GPS monitoring program, only 13 participants escaped by cutting off the monitoring device and all were apprehended, charged and tried for a new crime: escaping
- Program's success rooted in combination of incentives, deterrents and flexibility given to supervising agents to meet participants' individual situations
- Sheriff's Office supervises between 70-100 participants every day in its GPS monitoring program, saving approximately \$70 per day per participant

GPS monitoring technology has allowed the Santa Barbara County, California, Sheriff's Office to save taxpayer money, effectively maintain a high level of community safety and help people turn their lives around. The combination of rewards, deterrents and the latitude supervising officers are given to set up participants for success result in better outcomes. GPS monitoring technology allows supervising officers to quickly learn the "games" some participants play, such as saying they were in one location when in reality they were some place else, and put a stop to them. This program holds participants to a high level of accountability.

Still in the Sheriff's custody

When inmates from the county jail apply and are accepted into the Sheriff's Office's electronic monitoring program, it is clearly and succinctly stated that if they do not comply with the terms of supervision, they will find themselves behind bars. Even though program participants are not physically in the jail facility, they are still effectively in the Sheriff's Office's custody. If a participant cuts the GPS monitoring device's strap from around his/her ankle, the Sheriff's Office and the Court classify the incident as an escape. Since adding GPS monitoring technology into the suite of available custody alternatives, only 13 participants have escaped and all of them were caught — most within hours — returned to jail and charged with escaping, meaning they were tried for a new crime.

GPS introduced in 2007

The Sheriff's Office has monitored and supervised inmates in the community since 2001, when it decided to reclassify a remote jail facility from a work furlough unit to jail housing. During this transition, the Sheriff's Office used field check personnel to verify everyday that inmate participants were in compliance with the terms of the program. When the Sheriff introduced passive GPS monitoring technology into the supervision mix in 2007, the field check personnel were reduced from four to two and worked only one or two days per week. As a result the Sheriff's Office experienced significant budget saving.

GPS monitoring program saves about \$70/day

Today the Sheriff's Office uses Satellite Tracking of People's (STOP) GPS monitoring system, which includes active, hybrid and passive GPS monitoring modes to supervise an average of 75 to 100 participants every day. By removing these qualified inmates from the jail, the Sheriff's Office saves approximately \$70 per day per participant.

The population is made up of community release inmates who are referred to the program by the Court, and those who are in jail and apply. The applicant inmates are interviewed concerning their criminal history. Their behavior while incarcerated is also reviewed. It is not unusual for the evaluation team to seek input from the County Probation Department to determine if the applicant inmate could adhere to the program and be successful. Participants can be supervised up to one year on GPS, but once their good-time, work time and credit for time-served are calculated, they can spend up to eight months in the program. Approximately 95 percent of the program participants have a stable residence and a job or they are full time students. The remaining 5 percent are placed in transitional housing or sober living facilities.

Why the program is successful

Because the supervising officers are sworn and armed law enforcement officers, they can immediately take non-compliant participants to jail. There is no waiting for law enforcement officers to pick up participants because they are already on the scene. Supervising officers are given a great deal of flexibility to help participants successfully complete the program. Many times they use the participant's allotment of free time as a means to help improve compliance. For example, the participant originally had four hours of free time on Sundays, but made numerous minor program infractions despite the supervising officer's attempts to help. The officer may

reduce the number of free hours on Sunday from four to two. Because of the high expectations, the program experiences a small failure rate — an average of only about 6 percent each year.

More information

Satellite Tracking of People LLC (STOP) provides GPS and radio frequency monitoring equipment and services to government agencies responsible for supervising adults and juveniles in the community. We developed and successfully deployed BluTag, the first one-piece GPS monitoring device. BluTag is the only device with the ability to detect, record and report when an individual deliberately shields its ability to receive GPS signals.

More than 220 government agencies use our comprehensive monitoring system. The programs range in size from an average of five supervised individuals each month to as many as 4,800. Regardless of the program size, STOP focuses on the needs and expectations of the customer. We host an annual Training Institute for all customers enabling all attendees to learn from each other how they use our system, resulting in the development of better protocols.

Learn more about either STOP's monitoring system or the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office program by calling STOP at 832-553-9500 or emailing info@stopllc.com.



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