
FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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Costs and Uses of Electronic Monitoring

Background

Since FY 1988, the Community-Based Corrections (CBC) District Departments have been using electronic monitoring devices as a supervision tool for individuals on parole or probation. Generally, the electronic monitoring devices are used within the Intermediate Criminal Sanctions Program as defined by Iowa Code chapter [901B](#). Clients placed on electronic monitoring are usually high-risk, repeat offenders that are also being supervised according to the policies of the Intensive Supervision Program. This Program requires the client to have a variety of multiple contacts each week with a parole/probation officer (PPO). Examples of the type of offenses that may result in an offender being placed on electronic monitoring include an operating while intoxicated (OWI) third offense, domestic violence, and sex offenses.

Sex Offenders

Starting in FY 2006, Iowa law required a minimum of five years of electronic monitoring for clients under CBC supervision for certain offenses against a minor, including sexually violent offenses. The General Assembly modified the electronic monitoring requirements during the 2009 Legislative Session in Iowa Code section [692A.124](#) to permit sex offenders to be supervised by electronic monitoring based on a risk assessment validated by the Department of Corrections (DOC). As a result of this law, the number of community corrections clients on electronic monitoring systems (EMS) more than doubled during FY 2006. Between FY 2006 and FY 2024, the EMS population grew by another 881 clients. See the [Electronic Monitoring Report](#) issued by the [DOC](#) in January 2025 for more detailed information regarding the types of devices and lead offenses of affected clients.

Uses of Electronic Monitoring

Clients are placed on electronic monitoring for enforcement of a curfew (home detention), as an intermediate sanction for those individuals who fail to comply with the terms of the probation or parole agreement, or to monitor an individual's alcohol consumption. With technological advances over the years, and the development of global positioning system (GPS) devices, electronic monitoring is now used to track a client's location. Immediate reporting capability is possible when the GPS device is used in conjunction with a cell phone. The capacity of the CBC district departments, the DOC, and the Judicial Branch (Juvenile Court Officers supervise juvenile offenders) to respond to immediate reporting is limited.

Department of Corrections Program

Beginning in FY 2010, the DOC, in cooperation with the [Board of Parole](#), implemented an electronic monitoring program for offenders in prison convicted of serious offenses. These are usually offenders sentenced to lengthy prison terms who are nearing release. They are generally in minimum custody status and work outside the secure perimeter of the prison for some portion of the day to begin preparing them for release from prison. These offenders are required to be on an electronic monitoring device while outside the secure perimeter. The number of offenders in this program is limited. At the end of FY 2024, there were three offenders on GPS monitoring, all at the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility.

More Information

Department of Corrections: doc.iowa.gov

Board of Parole: bop.iowa.gov

LSA Staff Contact: Justus Thompson (515.725.2249) justus.thompson@legis.iowa.gov

Funding

The annual General Fund appropriation to the [Fifth](#) CBC District Department includes approximately \$1.5 million to fund electronic monitoring statewide. This includes the command center at the Fort Des Moines Residential Facility and the costs of the electronic monitoring devices. Of the appropriated funds, approximately \$1.3 million is allocated to costs associated with GPS monitoring technology and \$145,000 is for salaries.

The DOC utilizes three types of monitoring: GPS active (\$3.15 per day), radio frequency voice-enabled (\$2.25 per day), and Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM) remote breath (\$4.95 per day). All GPS and SCRAM units are currently leased through a contract with Allied Universal at no upfront cost. Device pricing is established via a broader National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) procurement contract that involves multiple states. The DOC incurs costs only for unreturned or damaged devices, with replacement costs of \$800 for a GPS device and \$925 for a SCRAM Remote Breath Pro. The Polk County Jail is included under the DOC's contract, along with five partner agencies that participate through a shared-use contract.

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