

BI ExacuTrack AT Q&A

with Jim Buck, Senior Product Manager

With a variety of active GPS tracking technologies on the market, corrections agencies have multiple options when considering active tracking products. Why ExacuTrack AT? Introduced in 2006, ExacuTrack AT combines the most reliable radio frequency (RF) monitoring equipment currently available with active GPS technology to provide a complete offender monitoring system that is easy for corrections officers to use.



Jim Buck, Senior Product Manager, has over two decades of experience with BI and was crucial in bringing ExacuTrack AT to market. Below, Jim answers questions about the ExacuTrack AT system and explains what makes it different from other active tracking products on the market.

Q: *Why did BI choose to come to market with an active tracking product when it did?*

A: There are a variety of reasons BI chose to come to market with ExacuTrack AT. First, customer feedback and response drove us to provide a product to meet the needs and demands of the market. Market demand has grown particularly due to increased sex offender legislation, which in some cases requires active GPS tracking. In addition, Motorola, in combination with Sprint/Nextel, introduced a rugged phone series meant specifically for industries such as construction, emergency response, and landscaping. The i355 combines Motorola's GPS technical knowledge with the ability to run a Java program on the phone as well as incorporate a radio frequency receiver for monitoring the BI transmitter. This amounted to a very durable product able to withstand rough client treatment and also integrate with the current ExacuTrack host monitoring platform.

Q: *What are the components of the ExacuTrack AT system?*

A: ExacuTrack AT is made up of four components. The system is combines our proven RF transmitter, HomeGuard 200, with a durable Motorola cell phone and base station. The final component is the central monitoring computer and ExacuTrack AT monitoring software which is completely web-based and can be accessed 24x7x365 from www.bi.com.

Q: *How do all of these components work together?*

A: An officer installs the ankle transmitter on the offender and plugs the base station into a standard power outlet in the offender's home. The offender must carry the GPS tracking unit when he or she leaves home. The tracking unit must remain with the offender at all times when away from home. While the offender travels in the community, his or her movement is tracked using GPS signals. These movements are then reported back to the central monitoring computer where the data is processed and cross-referenced with offender information to ensure compliance to zones and schedules. Officers can then use the web-based monitoring software to access and update schedules or view alerts. When the offender returns home, the tracking unit is docked and the base station becomes a radio frequency receiver for the offender's transmitter. It transmits home curfew monitoring data over the offender's home phone line to the central monitoring computer.

Q: *With so many active GPS products available to corrections agencies, what makes ExacuTrack AT different?*

A: With ExacuTrack AT, GPS data is collected and reported once per minute. This provides officers with real-time data so they are able to identify client location at all times. With other active tracking products, you have to wait up to 60 minutes before client data is called in to the central monitoring computer. ExacuTrack AT also uses the HomeGuard 200 transmitter – the most reliable and tamper resistant RF technology on the market. Another differentiator is that ExacuTrack AT enables officers to schedule or immediately text message and call the client via the voice channel. It is the first device to provide this dual-functionality.

Q: *You mentioned that customer feedback is important when developing a product. Can you tell us more about the feedback you received when designing this product?*

A: It was important for customers to have an active product that was lightweight and could easily be carried. By using the cell phone approach, BI reduced the stigma many clients suffer while carrying or wearing other products on the market. Customers also wanted the ability to transition seamlessly from RF to passive tracking to active tracking – the BI ExacuTrack series provides that. Polygon-shaped zones were also significant to customers and BI is the only company to offer that capability.

Q: *Tell us more about the limitations of active GPS technology.*

A: It is crucial for agencies to understand the limitations of the technology and the impacts of implementing a program using active GPS. Active GPS technology is more expensive than passive GPS or other electronic monitoring technologies and relies upon cellular coverage which can be spotty in some areas. Active GPS programs are generally more labor intensive as well. Agencies are tasked with greater workload including zone and schedule entry and larger amounts of information reported back on offender movements. This can result in greater agency liability and the obligation for immediate response.

Q: *Do either the transmitter or tracking unit hinder physical activity?*

A: The transmitter is made of a hypoallergenic material, fits snugly around the ankle and does not inhibit physical activity. The tracking unit is a Motorola cell phone designed to be extremely durable, yet lightweight as it is only 12 ounces. It can be carried in a purse or fanny pack, clipped to a belt or hand carried.

Q: *How much training does it take for an officer to install a system on an offender?*

A: On average, it takes around two hours for an officer to become proficient on this system. After that, each time a system is installed on an offender it takes less than 20 minutes total (including hardware and software).