

Advanced Technology Supports Delaware's Home Confinement Program



“If we are going to release more people from prison, home confinement can be a good outlet for that with the right equipment. The more types of equipment we have, the better able we are to fit the risk level of each offender.”

– Rick Figurelle, Regional Manager,
Delaware Department of Correction

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Delaware Department of Correction's Home Confinement Program helps state reduce prison overcrowding, lower costs.
- About 400 offenders are supervised daily in the Home Confinement Program using a mix of electronic monitoring technology.
- Delaware recently added Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking to its Home Confinement Program.
- Department operates its own monitoring center, but also uses BI GuardCenter® to monitor offenders on GPS tracking.

Delaware is unique in that it has no regional, county or municipal correction or jail system—the Delaware Department of Correction runs a unified correctional system for state and local offenders. This Department supervises approximately 7,000 inmates and 17,000 probationers at five levels of sanctioning: administrative probation; regular probation; intensive probation; community-based programs such as work release, residential drug treatment, home confinement or probation violation centers; and incarceration. Delaware’s flexible approach to supervision, including its many community-based programs, has helped ease pressure on the state’s limited prison bed capacity. This approach has also helped save money through lower cost alternatives to detention, an important consideration as daily incarceration rates average \$79/day. One program, the Home Confinement Program, has been in use for more than 20 years. Today, this program continues to evolve and now uses the most sophisticated supervision technology available, GPS tracking.

THE HOME CONFINEMENT PROGRAM

The Delaware Department of Correction’s Home Confinement Program began in the late 1980s, when electronic monitoring was first introduced to the corrections industry. Formed to ease prison overcrowding, the program originally supervised nonviolent offenders in the community. Since first opened, Delaware has worked with BI Incorporated for its electronic monitoring equipment and monitoring services. The state has migrated from an early generation radio frequency monitoring system, BI 9000® Series, to BI HomeGuard® 200, the most widely used radio frequency system on the market today. HomeGuard includes

a transmitter installed on the offender, a field monitoring device installed in the offender’s home, and a monitoring server. Delaware set up its own monitoring center with state staff and BI’s GuardServer to handle monitoring services and violation alerts for individuals on HomeGuard. HomeGuard monitors the absence or presence of a person at home to ensure compliance to schedules and curfews.

In 2006, the Department took its Home Confinement Program to another level by adding GPS tracking technology. The state selected BI’s ExacuTrack® AT system to monitor high-risk offenders, such as sex offenders. BI’s ExacuTrack AT, considered an active GPS tracking system, provides near real-time data on individuals as they move through the community. Importantly, ExacuTrack AT reliably monitors whether individuals remain in certain boundaries, called zones, and avoid prohibited zones, such as schools, day care centers, and more.

While Delaware’s Home Confinement Program began as an alternative to incarceration to ease overcrowding, the scope of the program has expanded to include offenders referred as a “step down” from incarceration. The department is using this program to prepare offenders for reentry into the community or as a last chance before reincarceration for probation violators. The Home Confinement Program supervises offenders for anywhere from three months to two years; the average monitoring period is six months. There is a Home Confinement Program office in each of Delaware’s three counties. On average, the Department’s Home Confinement Program monitors 400 offenders daily – 300 using radio frequency technology and 100 using GPS tracking technology.

THE RESULTS

The Delaware Department of Correction has taken advantage of advances in electronic monitoring technology and uses a variety of monitoring systems to match each offender’s situation. The result is a cost-effective alternative to detention that adds flexibility and capacity to the state’s correctional system. For example, higher risk and sex offenders are monitored using GPS tracking while lower risk offenders are monitored for curfews and schedule compliance using radio frequency equipment. By diverting 400 individuals from valuable facility space, the state can reserve beds for the most serious offenders. In addition, when individuals are diverted to home confinement, it comes at a fraction of the cost of the \$79/day prison bed costs. Finally, when individuals are monitored with electronic monitoring technologies, up to and including GPS tracking, the state has a much clearer picture of this individual’s patterns and activities while they live in the community, increasing public safety.

THE TECHNOLOGY

- BI ExacuTrack® AT
- BI HomeGuard® 200
- BI GuardServer®



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