

# Press Release

State of Maryland  
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services



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## Fewer Cell Phones Finding Their Way into State Prisons

*DPSCS continues to explore technology options as statistics show a dramatic decline*

**Towson, MD (July 27, 2010)**---The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) today announced that its intense three-year battle to reduce illegal cell phone use in its correctional facilities is paying dividends: fewer cell phones are finding their way behind bars, even as the Department continues to be a national leader in exploring technology and cell phone detector dogs to locate illegal phones and prevent their use.

In fiscal year 2010, DPSCS saw a decline of captured cell phones of 32%, with 530 less than FY2009. This is after a two-year percentage decline in the amount of cell phones – in FY2008 the Department found 67% more than the previous year, and in FY2009 that increase slowed to 34% over FY2008. The decline in the total numbers found in FY2010 means DPSCS officials believe they are past the tipping point after catching up with the flow of illegal cell phones getting into Maryland's prisons over the last three years.

Made possible by focusing on greatly increasing gang intelligence gathering capabilities, a \$1.1 million dollar investment in security and entrance technology, increased search and seizure efforts, including the nation's first ever in-house K-9 cell phone detector dog training program, DPSCS, FY2010 total decline is the first drop in the number of cell phones interdicted since DPSCS began tracking them in FY2006.

This has occurred despite the fact that during that same timeframe, random cell searches have dramatically increased: in other words, officers have been searching more cells, yet finding fewer phones.

“By increasing intelligence and security capabilities, we are not only stopping new crimes and violence, but also intercepting cell phones more quickly than before,” said DPSCS Secretary Gary D. Maynard. “So much in fact that we think we have caught up the flow after realizing we had a legitimate issue just a few years ago.”

A key trend in this success has been an increase of cell phones caught outside our facilities before they get in, data which the Department has been tracking since February of 2009. In the last five months of FY2010, DPSCS captured 36% more cell phones before they got into our facilities were found in FY2009 during the same period of time. Much of this is due in part to new investments in entrance security technology that were a part of the \$1.1 million security package unveiled by DPSCS last year, including 24 new Body Orifice Security Scanners

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**DPSCS News release**  
**Cell Phone Progress**  
**Page Two**

designed to find cell phones and other contraband hidden inside inmates' bodies.

And its Division of Correction (DOC) K9 Unit was the first in the nation to successfully breed and train its own cell phone detector dogs. Since going on the job two years ago, DOC K9 cell phone detector dogs have located 229 cell phones. Together, the new entrance technology and the detector dogs have created a significant deterrent against cell phone smuggling.

With strong support from Governor O'Malley and Senator Barbara Mikulski, DPSCS has been a leading proponent of cell phone "jamming," which is currently not allowed by the Federal Communications Commission. DPSCS Secretary Gary Maynard has testified before Congress urging lawmakers to allow jamming inside the nation's prisons.

In the meantime, DPSCS has become a national leader in testing other techniques and cell phone detection technology in the battle against illegal cell phones. Last year the Department conducted two cell phone detecting pilots in an effort to find the best technology available; one of these a live test lasting 11-days. Out of these efforts, DPSCS this summer issued a Request for Proposal to vendors for the use of this technology, a crucial first step in using these tools inside the State's prisons.

The Department has also begun using cell phone forensics in an effort to gather evidence for building better cases for future prosecution. Even without it, DPSCS has taken an aggressive stance on prosecuting every viable case involving a cell phone. In November of 2009, the DPSCS Internal Investigative Unit hired a criminal investigator who is responsible for cell phone cases in Baltimore City, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties. That investigator has helped prosecutors bring criminal charges in 96 of 125 cell phone cases since that time. Eighty percent of the cell phone cases that have gone to trial have resulted in convictions.

In the fall of 2009, Secretary Maynard and other top DPSCS leaders met with local prosecutors across the State and Baltimore City to emphasize the importance of prosecuting cell phone cases. Since the Department has taken a pro-active approach, there have been no cases declined outright by any of the prosecuting agencies.

Detection, confiscation, and prosecution, better entrance and internal security, technology, training, and partnerships with law enforcement have yielded tangible results in the ongoing battle against illegal cell phones in prison.

"While we may never be 100% cell phone free, we have become tireless in our efforts to get in front of this problem affecting every prison system in the country," Division of Correction Michael Stouffer said at today's announcement. "But our success in the last three years should put people on notice that we now have the ability and expertise to prosecute if you are caught with an illegal cell phone inside our prisons."

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The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services protects the public,  
its employees and the detainees and offenders under its supervision.