

County Uses Extended Monitoring Periods to Effect Long-Term Behavior Change

Kootenai County, ID – Tucked along the sparkling shores of Lake Coeur d’Alene and circled by majestic mountains, Kootenai County is one of the most picturesque places in the northern Idaho panhandle. This attractiveness has led to rapid population growth and the corresponding challenge of increases in DUIs and repeat offenders.

According to Kevin Creighton, director of Adult Misdemeanor Probation with Kootenai County, repeat drunk drivers represent the highest number of supervised probation cases in Kootenai County, and they have the highest recidivism rate. “Back-to-back DUIs, while they’re under supervision, are very prevalent and represent an enormous risk to the community,” says Creighton. “Not to mention the costs involved in managing them repeatedly as they return to community supervision or incarceration.”

To address this, the Kootenai County Adult Misdemeanor Probation department began using SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring in 2009 to manage its repeat DUI offenders. The goal was to transition these high-risk individuals out of the revolving door of the county jail and integrate them safely back into the community.

How is SCRAM CAM Being Used?

With consistent buy-in from judicial and supervisory personnel, Kootenai County has embraced the SCRAM CAM technology and established the following program foundation and criteria:

- All 2nd or higher DUI offenders are required to participate in the SCRAM CAM program
- The program focuses heavily on behavioral change and long monitoring periods to support sobriety long-term
- The SCRAM CAM program is expanding to both the DUI Court and a new Veterans Court docket

Highlights of Success

- Using SCRAM CAM to help repeat offenders safely reintegrate into society while improving the quality of their lives.
- The program is working to increase the average monitoring period to 240 to 250 days on average in order to effect the most behavior change.

SOBER DAYS: 99.7%

What are Sober Days?

Outcomes

As Kootenai County’s SCRAM CAM program has evolved the program is generating a very high 99.7% Sober Days rate. That means on any given day, 99.7% of all drunk drivers monitored with SCRAM are completely sober and compliant.

The county is extending the average monitoring period for repeat DUI offenders based on Chief Creighton’s assertion that SCRAM CAM has a significant impact on those “more mature” offenders with a history of chronic alcohol abuse. According to Creighton, the 240- to 250-day mark is where officials begin to see real behavioral changes. “That’s the threshold, the point where offenders begin to make better choices about their families. They’re maintaining long-term employment and beginning to see the benefits of treatment.”

Chief Creighton’s future plan is to continue to expand the use of SCRAM CAM on other high-risk alcohol offenders in Kootenai County, such as domestic violence offenders, and maintain the optimal length of monitoring that supports long-term behavioral change. “Once we took them to the longer term, we were getting to extended sobriety and less violations. I now believe that with the right tools, you can truly change the course of people’s lives.”