

County Sheriff Addresses Severe Jail Overcrowding With SCRAM CAM

Spartanburg County, SC – The Spartanburg County Detention Facility uses SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (CAM) in its alcohol offender management program to promote 24/7 accountability, protect the community, save taxpayer dollars, and ease jail overcrowding.

While the facility strives to “provide a humane, safe, secure, and sanitary detention and incarceration for both pre-trial and sentenced offenders (90 days or less),” the reality is that the jail is severely overcrowded on a fairly consistent basis. The jail’s daily capacity is 586 inmates, but that number typically hovers around 800 inmates, reaching as high as 915. Admissions average 52 new detainees per day, but can reach over 100 on any given day.

How is SCRAM CAM Being Used?

To address this severe overcrowding problem, Spartanburg County’s Home Detention Program employs a combination of Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM CAM), house arrest, and GPS for those non-violent alcohol offenders who can safely be released into the community under electronic supervision. Individuals charged with an alcohol-related crime may also be placed in the program as a condition of bond while awaiting trial.

Spartanburg County first began using SCRAM in 2006, and usage of the device has tripled since then. SCRAM CAM is used on offenders with multiple (2 or more) DUIs, and is a self-sustaining and fully offender-paid program that helps save the County over \$1 million annually in incarceration costs (on average, \$52/day per offender).

Because the Detention Facility’s officers and staff monitor and manage the Home Detention Program internally in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies and the courts, program enforcement is swift and certain. If the offender drinks or tampers while on SCRAM CAM, they are picked up by a Home Detention Officer or a deputy from the jail and immediately returned to custody to complete their sentence.

Highlights of Success

- SCRAM CAM addresses severely overcrowded jail conditions—almost double capacity at times
- Sheriff manages program for swift and certain results if offenders violate
- Saves the County \$1+ million annually in incarceration costs

SOBER DAYS: 99.5%

What are Sober Days?

If the offender is out on bond and violates, they will be taken back into custody. A hearing will then be scheduled before the court to determine whether the judge wishes to allow the offender to be released back on bond with any new conditions and/or held in custody pending trial.

In addition to its DUI Court, the York County Court of Common Pleas also operates a Veterans Treatment Court, a Drug Court, and a Mental Health Court.

Outcomes

Home Detention Program supervisor Nancy Vinson works directly with the Sheriffs’ Office, other criminal justice agencies, and the courts to drive SCRAM CAM program compliance. She notes that many of the SCRAM CAM graduates who have successfully completed their monitoring period with no drinking events have achieved positive and insightful results. “When someone is on SCRAM and knows they can’t drink for 60 or more days, it finally sinks in that maybe they don’t need that drink to get through their day,” says Vinson.