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REPORT: Repeat Drunk Drivers with SCRAM Anklets in Lancaster County Avoid Drinking

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Repeat drunk drivers in Lancaster County wearing alcohol-detection anklets rarely have a drink, recently-released data shows.

In fact, only 11 of more than 500 individuals who wore SCRAM anklets under the county's DUI Repeat Offender Program (DROP) last year violated by having a drink. None of them were charged with a new DUI.

Individuals on SCRAM were sober on 99.5 percent of days – when multiplying the total individuals who wore anklets by the number of days they wore them. In all, that accounts for 50,914 combined days.

Local officials said that is quite a success when considering the high-risk group of individuals who wear the devices as part of conditions under DROP.

“Those sober days are days that, without this supervision, could present dangers to all drivers on Lancaster County roads,” Lancaster County District Attorney Craig Stedman said Friday. “I am comfortable saying the anklets, without a doubt, are saving lives.”

Repeat offenders make up about 20 percent of the entire DUI caseload in Lancaster County. Last year, over 1,600 separate DUI dockets were filed, in line with the county's recent annual averages.

Previously, those repeat offenders would have little or no supervision until they were sentenced in Lancaster County Court.

DROP, including the SCRAM initiative, kicked into full gear in 2015 under the leadership of District Attorney Stedman and then-President Judge Joseph Madenspacher.

Defendants are fitted with the anklet as part of bail conditions from arraignment, often within days of a charge being filed.

Currently, there are 250 people with pending DUI cases in Lancaster County wearing SCRAM anklets.

Last year, 519 individuals in the program wore a SCRAM anklet, according to data released by Vigilnet America, which supplies and monitors the anklets. Most violations were due to tampering with the devices, not drinking.



Lancaster County Assistant Court Administrator Dan Scarberry and his Pretrial Services staff supervise defendants wearing SCRAM anklets. The Pretrial Services department receives morning reports from Vigilnet regarding the clients and any violations in the previous day. If there is a violation, a petition is filed with a judge within 48 hours to have the defendant's bail revoked and a bench warrant issued. A judge then rules on ramifications.

DROP is 100 percent defendant-paid, including the monitoring and device rental costs related to SCRAM.

District Attorney Stedman's office collaborates with the Lancaster County Court in sustaining the program's success.

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<https://lancaster.crimewatchpa.com/da/11617/post/report-repeat-drunk-drivers-scam-anklets-lancaster-county-avoid-drinking>