

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Sex Offender Electronic Monitoring and Victim Notification

### 1. Why did I receive a letter from the Department of Correctional Services?

- Effective July 1, 2009, the Iowa Legislature enacted a new law, which requires that victims registered with the Iowa Department of Corrections be notified when a convicted sex offender is required to wear an electronic monitoring device – either a GPS or Radio Frequency Unit.
- You received the notification letter because you are registered with the Iowa Department of Corrections as the parent or legal guardian of a minor child who is a victim of a sexual offense.

### 2. What is Global Positioning System or GPS?

- Some people refer to GPS as an “ankle bracelet.” It is a device using wireless satellite technology to track the movements and location of an offender in the community. The GPS system can be programmed for three different levels of supervision:
  1. **Active**- This provides the most intensive level of real-time\* monitoring and includes immediate notification of any violation to the Department of Correctional Services. In addition, corrections officers can program exclusion and inclusion zones into the GPS. For example, if requested, a perimeter around the victim’s residence is programmed into the system and if an offender enters that specified “zone,” an immediate\* notification of the violation is reported. An inclusion zone simply means an area where a sex offender is allowed to be or pass through.
  2. **Alert**- This is a combination of both Active and Passive tracking with real-time\* reporting of specific violations. Exclusion and inclusion zones are programmed into the GPS system and notification of any violation is made within six hours of the event.
  3. **Passive**- This is the least intensive level of monitoring and although exclusion and inclusion zones can be set, notification may not occur until the next day\*.

\*Terms such as “real-time,” “immediate,” and “next day” reports of violations are dependent upon a variety of factors, including cellular coverage.

### 3. What is a radio frequency unit?

- This is a landline-based system typically used to monitor whether a sex offender is at home, or any other location specified by the Department of Correctional Services. If the individual leaves the specified location, an immediate\* notification is sent to the Department of Correctional Services.

### 4. What is the Iowa law?

- Effective July 1, 2009, the Iowa Legislature passed new laws regarding the use of GPS monitoring for sex offenders who are under the supervision of a judicial district department of correctional services:

- 1. A sex offender who is placed on probation, parole, work release, special sentence, or any other type of conditional release, may be supervised by an electronic tracking and monitoring system in addition to any other conditions of supervision;*
- 2. The determination to use electronic tracking and monitoring to supervise a sex offender shall be based upon a validated risk assessment approved by the department of corrections, and also upon the sex offender's criminal history, progress in treatment and supervision, and other relevant factors; and*
- 3. If a sex offender is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, the determination to use electronic tracking and monitoring to supervise the sex offender shall be based upon a risk assessment performed by a juvenile court officer.*

- In addition, new standards were established for the notification of registered victims:

*A judicial district department of correctional services shall notify a registered victim, regarding a sex offender convicted of a sex offense against a minor who is under the supervision of a judicial district department of correctional services, of the following:*

- 1. The beginning date for use of an electronic tracking and monitoring system to supervise the sex offender and the type of electronic tracking and monitoring system used; and*
- 2. The date of any modification to the use of an electronic tracking and monitoring system and the nature of the change.*

- To view the full text of the law, go to <http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=SF340>

## **5. Whom do I contact if I have more questions?**

For specific information about a registered sex offender, you may contact the judicial district Department of Correctional Services where the offender is located. Go to this website and click on the judicial district you wish to contact: <http://www.doc.state.ia.us/Institutions.asp>

For more information about victim registration, you may contact:

Mary Roche  
Director of Victim & Restorative Justice Programs  
Iowa Department of Corrections  
510 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
515-725-5716 or 800-778-1182