



STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS

## **DELAWARE CORRECTION & SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

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See link below for video of today's system demo with Gov. Markell

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAzsIUYNtIA&list=UUFhL5YN4s5KFJwNFPex6olA&index=1&feature=plcp>

# **New 700 MHz Radio System Improves Communications in Delaware Prison Facilities**

## **Gov. Markell conducts a live demo of the system showing enhanced capabilities**

A newly installed 700 MHz communications system within the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) greatly enhances communication capabilities within all prison facilities and, for the first time, provides a direct connection to emergency responders statewide.

"The new system has vastly improved communications," said Governor Jack Markell. "It allows better connections within the correction system and with first responders. The public safety community and the public are safer because of it."

This new \$7 million trunked system, funded through a Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) grant from the federal Office of Emergency Communications, utilizes tower sites to transmit and receive information and process messages through a system server giving DOC a state-of-the-art system with many new capabilities.

These include:

- Multiple channel, P25 digital, trunked system allowing multiple users to communicate simultaneously
- Prison-to-prison communications with all facilities linked statewide
- External Communications with 95% in-street reliability
- Internal communications coverage at 95% or better regardless of user location
- Public Safety interoperability with 18 channels to reach all partner agencies
- Emergency Button Function on all personnel radios monitored 24/7 by dispatchers

"Having direct communication among all DOC facilities, as well as to outside first responders, enhances our ability to provide a safe environment for staff and those individuals we supervise. The ability to implement this communications system is a great example of cooperation between state agencies, and we are grateful for the assistance provided by the Department of Safety and Homeland Security," said DOC Commissioner Carl Danberg.

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"As chair of Delaware's Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC), I am extremely proud of this project because we provided a comprehensive system that supports internal and external communications at no cost to the State," said Safety and Homeland Security Secretary Lewis D. Schiliro. "Making certain the DOC as well as other public safety agencies are able to talk to each other every day is important. But, ensuring communications during an emergency is critical and can save lives. The most important tool we can provide our public safety community is reliable and efficient communications."

DOC was previously operating on a conventional system which relied on a single channel radio-to-radio configuration allowing only one conversation to take place at a time. Additionally, the radio-to-radio communications was limited and required the use of repeaters to extend the range of the signal. Delaware's Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) was formed to help public safety agencies like the DOC identify and fund communications solutions that support interoperability.

With more than 740 users of the new system, which include correctional officers and probation and parole officers, building a system that met the needs of Corrections was priority for the SIEC. Since turning the system on in February of this year, there have been over 1.5 million transmissions with only 20 transmissions not getting through on the first try.

"As the DOC Director of Emergency Preparedness, I am acutely aware of how critical passing minutes - and even seconds - can be as an unexpected situation unfolds. Being able to directly request assistance, from both inside and outside an impacted area, will reduce response times and allow us the best opportunity to minimize the incident," said Dave Hall.

In 2008, Delaware applied for and received funding through the PSIC Grant. This funding allowed Delaware to build a statewide 700MHz P25 compliant Land Mobile Radio system. This system was designed and built with the idea of migrating DeIDOT from the current 800MHz system to the 700 MHz system. During the final project stages, and upon reviewing the intended use of this system, it became evident that DeIDOT was using the 800MHz system effectively and that the more pressing need for Delaware was to shift the Department of Correction (DOC) to the new 700 MHz system.

"This project was the result of our Division of Communications and DeIDOT staff thinking outside of the box and working together truly for the benefit of the people of this State," Schiliro said.

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