

Statewide Corrections Agent Safety Monitoring

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Customer background

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) is a state-run organization recognized nationally for operating secure, humane correctional institutions that have low levels of violence and are safe for both inmates and staff. While most US states are struggling to deal with increasing inmate populations, the Minnesota DOC has managed to deal with increases in population through facility expansion, as well as through the construction of a new facility that opened its doors in 2000.

Problem: field worker safety plan

The Minnesota Department of Corrections chose Loner® GPS after the meticulous selection of a safety monitoring solution for its Corrections Agents. After identifying a need for better monitoring processes, the DOC performed a search for products that could meet its needs specifically. Because travel played a crucial role in the work performed by DOC agents, 12 – 14 hour shifts were occasionally necessary. The solution selected by the DOC would need to have a robust, high-capacity battery that could allow the device to continue operating throughout even the longest shift.

Several different solutions were identified for field tests and trials. In the end, the Minnesota DOC selected Loner® GPS as the best solution due to its overall combination of performance and functionality. Upon selection, the DOC established a set of safety policies, procedures and expectations in order to ensure that the devices would be adopted and used properly by agents. Additional custom training modules were developed by the DOC to provide corrections specific device training.

Solution: Loner GPS

Loner GPS allows the Minnesota DOC to maintain control over its own monitoring processes, a crucial requirement according to Victor Wanchena, Corrections Security Technology Manager of the Minnesota Department of Corrections, “It was important to us that Department of Corrections personnel be monitored by other Department of Corrections personnel.”

The safety monitoring staff working at the Minnesota DOC have integrated Loner Portal into their existing workflows and monitor the status of other employees through the web application and have been successful in meeting the challenge of improving the safety of their employees. “[Loner GPS] has allowed us to provide isolated workers with an extra life line and a way to send alerts more effectively”, says Victor Wanchena.

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– Victor Wanchena,
Corrections Security Technology Manager

Challenges

- » Telephone and smartphone app-based alerting did not provide a rapid or feasible alerting method.
- » Employees occasionally work 12 – 14 hour days and require coverage during the entire work-day.
- » The solution needed to meet a variety of requirements including state-wide area coverage, provide instant duress alerting, and provide location tracking.

Solution

- » Deployed Loner GPS devices to employees in the field.
- » Established robust safety monitoring policies, procedures and expectations for employees.
- » Worker locations are reported at standard intervals for a balance of accurate reporting and battery operating times.
- » Alerts are followed up immediately to ensure that no false alerts are reported to authorities.
- » Monitoring personnel use the Loner Portal web application for safety monitoring.
- » Verified alerts are escalated and passed to emergency responders.

Benefits

- » Allowed the DOC to monitor employees in most areas state wide.
- » Provided convenient and easy duress alerting.
- » Added an extra layer of protection for workers in the field.
- » Robust battery allowed field workers to be monitored even throughout extra long shifts.

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