

Case Study

Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC)

About GDC

GDC is the tenth largest correctional organization in the country. It runs 33 state prisons, with a capacity of over 38,000 inmates.

The Problem

In 2015, correctional facilities in Georgia started to notice drones in their airspace. To track the threat, in 2016 facilities started to report their drone sightings. But it was difficult to attribute contraband to drone deliveries.

However, after installing full body scanners at some facilities to prevent contraband deliveries from visitors, GDC noticed a significant increase in drone sightings.

At one facility in particular, the approach to the prison began to look like the approach to a runway at busy airport. It was lit up with drones.

Moreover, despite the full body scanners, there was evidence that inmates were still being supplied with contraband. It turns out, Georgia had a serious problem with contraband delivery via drone.



GDC learned that a fast response time can reduce contraband deliveries via drone.



“Out of numerous tests with other drone detection equipment from virtually all the big companies that have drone detection technologies, AeroDefense stands apart from others.”

*Sean Ferguson
New Technology Manager,
GDC*

The Solution

In 2017 GDC began to evaluate drone detection systems. They invited 5 vendors to demonstrate their system capabilities. AeroDefense's system, AirWarden, was among them.

Many had issues. Some struggled to detect the drones. The time to detect varied greatly. And not all systems could detect a controller - which is essential if you want to apprehend a pilot or locate additional evidence, like abandoned contraband or drone batteries.

After the initial trial period, the AirWarden system was left in place at one of Georgia's facilities for an extended evaluation. This enabled GDC to refine its drone threat response protocols, and gather additional data to justify budget for additional systems.

Results

Confiscated Contraband

The AirWarden system provides very early warning of drones near the facility, so staff know when to respond, and have more time to so. This fast response time, combined with GDC's very proactive approach to drone threat response protocol improvement has resulted in the confiscation of the following contraband:

- \$130,000 of Heroin
- \$70,000 of Cocaine
- \$200,000 of Meth
- \$100,000 of Marijuana and Tobacco

After one drone alert, staff recovered 1.4 pounds of marijuana, 10 cell phones, and

Why AirWarden™?



Detects Drone and Controller

Detects both the drone and the controller so you can find the pilot.



Urban Environment Performance

Reliable detection, even in the toughest, busiest urban environments.



Unknown Drone Detection

Detects and locates both known and unknown drones and controllers.



Fully Legal System

Fully legal, passive system that does not decode or demodulate signals.

pounds of tobacco from the inmates' sidewalk. Knowing when to search for contraband lets GDC intercept deliveries before they're picked up by inmates.

Drone Delivery Reduction

However, the most important result is that overall drone detections have dropped at the facility.

In fact, after several contraband interceptions, there were no delivery attempts for a full 12 months. GDC's quick response to drone threats had deterred them. And when another attempt was finally made, it was intercepted.

So it turns out that the best metric for judging the success of a drone detection program is not the number of arrests or volume of contraband recovered, but overall reduction of drone threats.

Learn More

For more information on the AirWarden™ drone detection system, contact us at:

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