

Automated Breath Testing Technology Offers Many Benefits to Alcohol Offender Management

By: Nicola Grun

Lifeloc
TECHNOLOGIES

Automated Breath Testing Technology Offers Many Benefits to Alcohol Offender Management Centers

By Nicola Grun

Recently my travels took me to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin, a corrections facility that has embraced new approaches to dealing with the administrative, workload and cost challenges of court ordered breath alcohol testing. A recently deployed automated breath alcohol screening solution from Lifeloc Technologies has significantly streamlined operations and reduced costs.

Background

The Jackson County Sheriff's Office in Black River Falls, Wisconsin is inundated with offenders sentenced to court or community based treatment. These clients require frequent testing and staff spend a good part of each day, five to seven days a week breath testing alone. Over 6,000 tests and 500 hours of staff testing time were used last year and their portable breath tester was always hard pressed to handle the peak volumes. Manual testing was quickly approaching the point at which a full-time tester was going to be required.

The Solution

In 2013, Jackson County installed a Lifeloc ZT247™ Probation and Parole Alcohol Testing System (powered by Snagpod™ LLC) that automates breath alcohol testing and provides administrative, reporting and tracking tools. The fully automated free-standing kiosk is in the lobby of the Jackson County Courthouse. The kiosk is publicly accessible and video monitored 24 hours a day.

Every day 10 to 20 low risk offenders use the kiosk's touchscreen to log in, identify themselves on the fingerprint scanner and self-administer a breath test. Client BAC levels are automatically recorded in a fully searchable database. The system provides a myriad of individual summary reporting options for supervisors and client managers. Client managers can also opt to receive real-time notifications of alcohol testing violations on their office computers or mobile devices.

Jail Captain Mike Ring stated, "Lifeloc's kiosk was one of the only available products designed for the criminal justice system which suited our needs. The kiosk eliminated the staff's testing workload except for the time it takes me, another supervisor or probation officer to review records."

Jackson County will soon utilize another feature of the kiosk's software to begin random testing: the flexibility to assign and change test interval assignments by day, time, exception and by officer. A computerized call will provide a two hour notice scheduling an offender to test.

"Incorporating random testing with daily testing will enhance the credibility of the kiosk, better serve our needs and truly make the client unaware of when they will be tested," says Captain Ring.

The Solution Benefits

- Total average duration for offender log-on and test time is approximately 30 seconds as compared to the previous manual testing which took up to five minutes per client.
- The hire of a full time testing administrator was avoided. The ZT247™ can handle the same workload faster and more affordably.



- Violations can be electronically reported in real time and immediate action initiated.
- Dramatically reduced phone calls, handwritten records and data entry.

Summary

Court ordered breath alcohol testing and 24/7 offender management programs play an important and necessary part in reducing the overall recidivism rates of alcohol offenders. Effectively managing alcohol testing with just handheld portable breathalyzers can be unnecessarily expensive, resource intensive and administratively burdensome.

Recent technology advances in automated breath alcohol testing can now provide practical and cost effective alternatives to manual breath testing. The above example is proof that Lifeloc's products produce tangible benefits to employees, and as a result offenders served. Lifeloc's mission is to build the most precise, reliable and easiest to use alcohol breath testing devices in the industry. For further information about our products please contact our sales department via email: sales@lifeloc.com or call 303.431.9500.



