



# High-security unit of US prison finally safe from cell phone usage

**Correctional facility in North Carolina successfully banks on MobileWall technology to fight illegal communication**

**Meckenheim, May 2015**

North Carolina, April 2014: A prosecutor's father is abducted, his family threatened. Police investigations reveal that the kidnappers' calls can be connected to a cell phone transmitting from inside the high-security unit of a correctional facility in the state of North Carolina. Its owner is identified as Kelvin Melton who is serving a life sentence for attempted murder. With the abduction that he ordered and plotted from inside his prison cell and that, as intercepted phone calls have shown, was meant to culminate in the hostage's killing, Melton wanted to take revenge for his conviction.

## Enforcement task „Public protection“

Cases like this cause fear. Victims, witnesses, society as a whole – they all should be protected by the penal system. Yet rapid technological progress, especially in media applications, makes it increasingly harder for correctional facilities to maintain control over inmates' communication. At present, contraband cell phones and usage are the biggest security gap in prison services worldwide.

## Decision to technologically “arm” the prison

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety knew they had a serious cellular contraband problem in their prisons. The abduction orchestrated from within the high-security unit of an US prison was an incident that hit the headlines, but unfortunately, it is far from being an exception. With this in mind, the authorities decided to upgrade the technical infrastructure of the facility that had become the focus of public attention in such a negative way. They opted for MobileWall, the most technologically advanced and reliable solution to fight illegal mobile communication.

The system was officially put into operation on January 19, 2015. Two days before that, the whole complex had been searched and cleaned out by a special team of the State Department of Public Safety, in order to start with a clean state. Only one cell phone was confiscated. Activation day, however, revealed that this was far from being the only mobile device behind prison bars at that time.

## Target: Total protection of the high-security unit

The high-security unit of the correctional facility concerned consists of 96 one-man cell rooms in four separate blocks. These were meant to be reliably secured against the illegal use of contraband cell phones. The facility at that time already used walk-through and handheld metal detectors to combat the problem, in addition to the so called CellSense poles. Yet, these had proved insufficient.

## Detection only

The technology installed in the building's high-security zones is a detection solution. It detects, locates and monitors any kind of mobile activity within milliseconds. After that, it is up to the prison staff to find the contraband mobile devices and to collect them.



Fig.: Typical MobileWall indoor installation in an European facility

## From activation to the status „safe from cell phones“

During installation of the system, cellular activity was already regularly being detected in the facility's high control unit. And that is what also happened at its official activation. Once the system was switched on, a MobileWall device immediately raised the alarm. Since the search radius was now limited to 2 – 4 prison cells, a raid was promptly ordered, locating and confiscating three cell phones. Several detections and seizures occurred in the following weeks, all resulting in heavy penalties. The current status: Since May, no further alarm has occurred. The facility's high-security unit is considered to be safe from cell phones.



Fig.: Green = no cell phone activity.



**Latest news:** Almost 1300 mobile phones seized just in Berlin prisons # booming contraband

## Steadily growing security issue in prisons: illegal mobile phones

**Influencing witnesses, purchasing drugs, contracting murder, orchestrating perfect jailbreaks - mobile and smartphones make it all possible**

**Meckenheim, 18 June 2015**

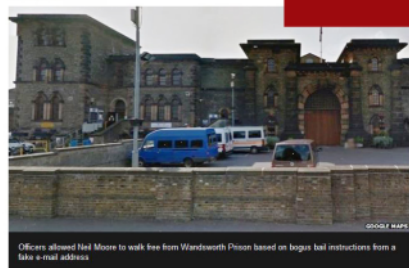
They are a well-known and ever-increasing problem in prisons: illegal mobile phones smuggled into detention facilities. Ever smaller, smarter and faster, they provide tech- and communication-savvy inmates with unlimited communication possibilities not entitled to them during custody - at least not without every form of control by prison authorities.

Prison security measures are failing to keep pace with technology, a fact that leads to serious security gaps that put not only the public and other prisoners at risk, but also, and most especially, the facility personnel.

### Wandsworth Prison escapee faked bail email

27 March 2015

BBC news from March 27th, 2015: Ingenious fraudster releases himself from a London prison with the help of a smuggled mobile phone.



Officers allowed Neil Moore to walk free from Wandsworth Prison based on bogus bail instructions from a fake e-mail address.  
A convicted fraudster used an "ingenious" escape plot to trick prison officers into letting him go free, a court has heard.  
Wandsworth prisoner Neil Moore was on remand when he used an illicit mobile phone to create a fake email account.

**BBC NEWS**

### Vast opportunities for abuse

The media regularly report about the incidents - some of them bizarre - resulting from the illegal use of smuggled mobile and smartphones in prisons. The latest one, which attracted a great deal of attention, happened in London at the beginning of March, when a clever prisoner escaped pretrial detention by releasing himself then and there with no more than the help of Internet access gained by an illicit smartphone. Just like that, the prisoner managed to waltz right out of the facility, completely unhindered by the prison personnel.

Stories like this may appear to be funny, but at the same time, they reveal the huge range of possibilities open to suspected and convicted criminals when they illegally tap into unsecured telephony and Internet networks. And they exemplify the frightening helplessness of prison facilities to combat them.

### Secure protection through technology

Mobile detection and elimination systems offer an effective weapon against the misuse of mobile and smartphones in prisons. Once installed, they efficiently and reliably disrupt any kind of mobile activity on site. As soon as a system is put into operation, every smuggled mobile device becomes instantly worthless - useless for communication purposes - while there in the facility.

One of the most advanced technological solutions for reliably detecting and suppressing illegal mobile activity is **MOBILEWALL**.

MobileWall was specifically designed for use in prisons and has found a wide range of applications in a number of them already. The devices are usually installed in the facilities' interior, such as in distribution boxes and suspended ceilings, thereby being placed out of the inmates' eyes and reach.



### No increased health risk through radiation

MobileWall's elimination signal is only activated when an active mobile device is detected and is deactivated again once the signal has been disrupted. Since even during these short intervals radiation is never higher than the one of a mobile phone during use there is no increased health risk.



Fig.: Outdoor installation at Orleans Parish Prison, New Orleans