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## Ankle bracelets help track DUI offenders

By JIM SECKLER/*The Daily News*

KINGMAN - No, it's not the latest fashion statement but SCRAM bracelets are helping county probation officers keep track of drunken driving offenders.

Mohave County probation officers are using Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitors on 21 offenders who have been released from prison or on probation for a felony DUI charge. The bracelet fits around the probationer's ankle and is worn on average for 90 days. The monitor checks the perspiration of the probationer for signs of alcohol use, deputy probation officer Jennifer Juenke said.

About the size of a cell phone, the bracelet, made by Alcohol Monitoring Systems of Denver, is strapped to the ankle and transmits a signal to a modem that is hooked up to a phone line in the probationer's home. The signal continuously checks for alcohol 24 hours a day, seven days a week and randomly takes samples every 45 minutes or so.

The information is then sent to Phoenix-based PCI Corp., which notifies the probation officer if alcohol is detected by the bracelet. If alcohol is detected, the probation officer may submit a petition to revoke probation. If that happens, a revocation hearing is conducted by a judge.

Offenders can take showers but are warned not to submerge the bracelet in a bath, swimming pool or hot tub, or swim in lakes or other bodies of water. Probation officers also warn the wearer not to use perfumes, deodorants, shampoos or mouthwashes that contain alcohol, which the monitor could pick up. If the offender damages the bracelet, they will be charged the \$1,500 to replace it.

Chief Probation Officer Friend Walker said a \$50,000 grant obtained by the county for the fiscal year 2007-08 paid for the bracelets. With most of the grant money gone, the department now charges the offenders \$12 a day plus a \$50 hookup fee.

"If they can afford alcohol, they can afford the bracelet," Juenke said.

So far, out of about 15 of Juenke's probation cases who have been fitted with the monitor in the past year, only one person had been caught using alcohol again. The probation department started the program in June 2008.

About 70 percent of the offenders fitted with the SCRAM bracelets are men. The bracelets are used on adult offenders only. It is up to a judge or the probation officer to decide who wears the bracelet but usually repeat offenders are the ones chosen to wear the device, Juenke said.