

Electronic Monitoring in the Netherlands by the SVG

Vision of the SVG

The Social Rehabilitation of Addicted Offenders (SVG) is the national umbrella organization of eleven branch offices which offer probation products. SVG contributes to limiting individual and social damages resulting from the use of addictive substances. The goal of SVG is reducing recidivism. Our vision is: reward and punishment alone does not reduce recidivism. In our hybrid approach, penalties are combined with guidance and stimulating motivation for treatment. We have an extensive network of care and treatment settings.

Vision on Electronic Monitoring

EM is best combined with intensive supervision by probation; not only as a means of tracking people. The use of EM is linked to support programmes, such as supervision, work or study, treatment programs, i.e. alcohol or drug therapy, psychological support or social advice. SVG does not use EM as a stand-alone method. EM instruments offer the option to check conditions that are location-related, environment-related and/or time-related. EM provides full transparency to the offenders' whereabouts. This gives the probation officer a better view of compliance of the terms and agreements of supervision. EM enables guidance and control. This contributes to improved risk management. EM helps addicts structure their lives and, in addition, they also experience EM as punishment for the offence.

Reasons for using EM

- EM reduces recidivism;
- EM averts negative prison influences (punishment without incarceration);
- EM adds full transparency to the offenders' whereabouts;
- EM provides structure in the daily life of the offender;
- EM sets clear limits to the permissible;
- EM makes the offender aware of his own behavior;
- EM contributes to the protection of victims.

The EM instruments

At the moment, SVG uses EM instruments equipped with radio frequency (RF) or satellite tracking (GPS) devices. Each technique has a different purpose and operates differently. The choice of a specific technique depends on the following factors:

- type of offense;
- proportionality;
- level of risk management;
- goals during the EM.

In the Netherlands a risk assessment is or can be made by probation services at the request of the court and EM is carried out by the probation services.

The equipment manufacturer is G4S. Although the maximum duration of EM is generally six months, there are no technical limitations as to duration. Formal consent of the offender and household member(s) is required for the use of electronic monitoring, both for ethical and practical reasons.

Offender types

EM is used with:

- sex offenders;
- violently aggressive offenders;
- offenders with a court injunction, for instance local bars (in order not to drink in public reducing risk of recidivism);
- habitual offenders with early-release prison sentences

Judicial possibilities

- Early-release prison sentence (post trial)
- Pre-trial release on probation
- Post-trial release on probation

Habitual offenders and developments

Habitual offenders often have addiction-related problems and for that reason need a specific approach. EM can structure the lives of these offenders, reducing the risk of recidivism. SVG has proven EM can be used with addicted offenders, but it must be monitored carefully by the probation services and should be combined with the right level of supervision and the right treatment to reach the best and most effective results.

SVG is closely following the developments of alcohol and drug monitoring in order to expand current and future possibilities.