DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ENHANCES SAFETY AND SECURITY WITH MAILSECUR®

INDUSTRY
Corrections

CUSTOMER
Douglas County Sheriff's Office
Lawrence, KS
Small-to-mid-sized facility with 186 beds

CHALLENGE
The Douglas County Sheriff's Office faced growing concerns about contraband, particularly methamphetamine, entering the facility through inmate mail.

Despite traditional security measures such as body scans, pat-downs, and other standard procedures, contraband continued to enter the facility undetected. Leadership recognized these vulnerabilities and understood that existing protocols were no longer enough to keep the facility secure. To address this escalating risk, they sought a stronger, more proactive layer of defense to safeguard mail flows and protect staff and inmates.

OVERVIEW

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Kansas operates an 186-bed facility, which is considered small-to-mid-sized. Despite its size, the jail faces the same security challenges as larger facilities: preventing the introduction of contraband and ensuring officer safety.

After two methamphetamine incidents within three months, leadership recognized the need for a stronger layer of defense. MailSecur® was selected to address vulnerabilities in incoming inmate mail and enhance officer safety.

CHALLENGE: UNEXPECTED CONTRABAND EXPOSURES

Despite body screeners, pat-downs, and other standard procedures, contraband still found its way into the facility. Two troubling methamphetamine incidents occurred, raising questions about mail as a potential entry point.

Lt. Jennifer Carlson explained:

- The facility already had strong visitation controls (all visits are virtual, with the exception of legal, chaplain, and medical professionals).
- Mail remained an open channel: officers visually inspected envelopes, but without additional screening, harmful substances could slip through.
- Staff safety was a growing concern after an officer experienced a fentanyl exposure during a pat-down.

For command staff, "even one incident was unacceptable." Leadership tasked Lt. Carlson with researching advanced mail screening solutions.

FUNDING THE SOLUTION

Initially, budget constraints prevented the immediate purchase. But after the second incident, command staff prioritized the acquisition. Funding was secured through a combination of county commission approval, existing reserves, and reimbursement funds (from housing individuals awaiting mental health placement under state care).

Carlson noted:

> " *... after the second incident, our major said... Make it happen. We'll find the money.* "
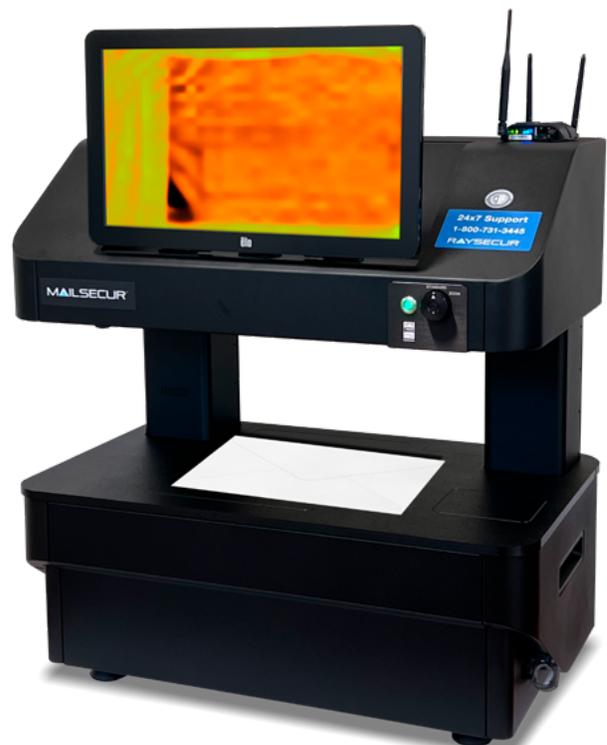

SOLUTION: DEPLOYING MAILSECUR®

Douglas County selected MailSecur® after demos and peer recommendations. Johnson County, a nearby agency, had recently deployed two of the same system and vouched for its reliability.

Implementation was fast and straightforward:

- Officers were trained on-site by RaySecur law enforcement subject matter experts to quickly process and screen original unopened mail items with MailSecur.

- Mail was stamped "Screened" with a date before being distributed to inmates.

- Transparency reinforced trust, while inmates quickly realized smuggling attempts would be detected.

One intercepted inmate phone call revealed the deterrence effect: an inmate instructed an accomplice to "cancel everything" after learning the facility had installed a screener.

RESULTS & IMPACT

1. **Officer & Inmate Safety**

   a. Reduced risk of exposure to fentanyl and other dangerous substances, since MailSecur allows officers to screen unopened mail items, preventing contact with potentially dangerous or toxic substances inside

   b. Officers now have greater confidence opening and handling mail after being screened and determined to be safe.

2. **Strong Deterrence Effect**

   a. Inmates aware of the new system stopped planning smuggling attempts.

   b. MailSecur® became a psychological barrier as much as a physical one.

3. **Versatility Beyond Mail**

   a. With the Mobile Cart configuration and battery operation, the device can be used as a multipurpose screening tool outside of the mail room, detecting contraband regardless of how it comes in.

   b. MailSecur is used in shakedowns to screen commissary items, clothing, shoes, and even coffee bags.

   c. Transport officers use MailSecur® to check inmates returning from other facilities with different contraband policies.

4. **Operational Fit for a Mid-Sized Jail**

   a. Unlike outsourcing mail scanning, MailSecur® fit Douglas County's lower mail volume while still providing a high level of protection.

   b. The system's ability to detect anomalies such as powders, liquids, and drug-laced papers via real-time imaging—without relying on a chemical library—ensured flexibility against constantly evolving synthetic drugs.

5. **Preserving Privacy and Confidentiality**

   a. With MailSecur, mail operators can quickly identify suspicious mail items, and it is the only solution that can do so without the need to open protected mail, such as legal and religious mail, meeting strict privacy and confidentiality requirements.

CONCLUSION

Douglas County Sheriff's Office successfully closed a critical security gap with MailSecur®. By addressing contraband at its entry point, the facility improved both safety and efficiency, while also deterring smuggling attempts altogether.

Lt. Carlson summarized the impact:

> *It's not only something that's going to catch it if it comes in, but if it acts as a deterrent that it's not even going to come in now—that is perfect.*

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