

Electronic monitoring trial

(updated August 2024)

Amendments to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* to introduce electronic monitoring as a condition of bail for children aged 15 and over, in certain circumstances, commenced on 30 April 2021.

Evidence as to the effectiveness of electronic monitoring for children is equivocal (open to interpretation), so the provisions are time-limited, to facilitate a trial.

The *Youth Justice Regulation 2016* prescribes 13 trial sites:

- Townsville
- North Brisbane
- Moreton
- Logan
- Gold Coast
- Toowoomba
- Cairns
- Mount Isa
- South Brisbane
- Ipswich
- Fraser Coast
- Mackay
- Rockhampton.

The trial is intended to target serious repeat offenders. Electronic monitoring can only be imposed on repeat offenders charged with prescribed indictable offences, who would benefit from more intensive bail conditions.

Electronic monitoring devices

An electronic monitoring device is a device fitted to a young person's ankle that monitors their location using GPS coordinates. It provides real-time alerts of any unauthorised movements.

A beacon is also located at the young person's home.

Eligibility

To be eligible, a young person must:

- be at least 15 years of age
- be appearing for a prescribed indictable offence (serious indictable offences such as breaking and entering)
- have either:
 - previously been found guilty of at least one indictable offence, or
 - been charged with a prescribed indictable offence in the preceding 12 months
- live within one of the trial sites
- be appearing in court in a prescribed location.

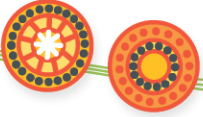
What the court must consider

The court must consider a range of factors, including the child's capacity to understand the condition, and whether the child is likely to comply, having regard to the personal circumstances of the child, such as if they:

- have stable accommodation
- have the support of a parent or another person to assist with compliance
- have access to a mobile phone to facilitate contact with the monitoring service
- have access to an electricity supply to keep the device charged.

Before ordering an electronic monitoring device as a bail condition, the court must order an assessment of the young person's suitability.

The Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) will prepare a suitability assessment report. It will cover the factors listed above, and anything else that is relevant.



How the device is fitted

Police will fit the device in the watchhouse near the court. If the young person is in a youth detention centre when the order is made, DYJ will transport them to a watchhouse.

The fitting may take several hours. Information about bail conditions must be uploaded into the monitoring system, and the device needs to be linked with the system, then tested.

The court may make an order that the young person be detained until the device is fitted.

How it works after that

The young person is responsible for:

- keeping the device charged
- keeping their mobile phone charged
- always having their phone with them so they can be contacted at any time if there are any issues (which may prevent the police being called).

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) monitors the young person's location and will know if there is a breach of a condition such as a curfew. They will also know the status of the device.

QCS may contact the young person directly by phone for minor issues such as a low battery. The young person's nominated support person may also be contacted as required.

For more serious issues, such as a breach of curfew or tampering with the device, QCS will contact police.

DYJ or a bail support service will be able to help if the young person is having trouble with the device or any of their bail conditions.

Supervision and support

Intensive bail support services are available in each of the trial sites. These are funded by

DYJ and provided by non-government organisations.

When practicable, police responses are provided by Youth Co-responder Teams (YCRTs) rather than general duties police. YCRTs are a joint DYJ and Queensland Police Service initiative. They have specialised teams of DYJ workers and police officers who work responsively with youth to prevent or reduce offending and increase community safety.

After-hours support is also available to families of these young offenders to help them manage their children's compliance.

How we will know if electronic monitoring works

The trial will be reviewed prior to its expiry.