



NEWS FROM THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

FCC Takes Aim at Contraband Cellphones in State and Local Prisons

Agency Begins Rulemaking to Clarify That Signals from Mobile Devices Smuggled Into Prisons Are Not Authorized and Can Be Jammed by Officials with FCC-Approved Tools

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2025—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed new rules to empower local and state correctional authorities to jam signals from illegal contraband cellphones. Thousands of contraband cellphones have poured into prisons across the country and inmates have been using them to coordinate violent gang activity, call in hits, and aid criminal enterprises.

Jamming devices are not currently allowed in non-federal prisons. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today looks to pave the way for phone jamming solutions in non-federal correctional facilities, while preventing harmful interference to authorized users. Specifically, the Commission will take public input on a proposal to make clear that, while jamming of authorized radio transmissions is not allowed, signals from illegal mobile devices smuggled into prisons are not authorized and thus can be actively blocked by FCC-approved devices.

Today's action looks to build on FCC efforts to combat contraband cell phones in prisons and jails. The FCC has an established process for the use of Contraband Interdiction Systems, which correctional institutions can use to capture and drop calls from contraband phones and to obtain identification information about the targeted devices. Today's action looks to take a further step in these efforts to combat crime and support the safety of prison officials and employees, the prison population, and members of the general public.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking aims to facilitate cooperation between departments of correction and wireless carriers to implement targeted jamming solutions, leveraging the FCC's existing leasing process. As part of the proposed process, the FCC would require good faith negotiations between wireless providers and correction facilities – and a licensing structure for correctional facilities should those negotiations falter. The FCC's rulemaking will also focus on preventing harmful interference to wireless carrier networks, and in particular, wireless devices of Americans who live, work, and travel near prisons.

This proposal would require any jamming solution used by a non-federal correctional facility to go through the FCC's equipment authorization process and looks to ensure that jamming solutions are limited to the correctional facility context. The FCC will also seek public input on technical protections that might achieve this balance.

Action by the Commission September 30, 2025 by Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 25-65). Chairman Carr, Commissioners Gomez and Trusty approving and issuing separate statements.

GN Docket No. 13-111

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