



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CENTER
187 HARRY S. TRUMAN PARKWAY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Pamela Harris
State Court Administrator
410-260-1295

February 24, 2021

Honorable Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate
H-107 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
H-101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Report on Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to State Government Article § 2-1257, the Judiciary herein submits its report on wiretapping and electronic surveillance under Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article § 10-409(c).

This report covers the period of January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Walter at (410) 260-1275, or via email at jamie.walter@mdcourts.gov.

Sincerely,

Pamela Harris

State Court Administrator

Enc.

cc: Honorable Mary Ellen Barbera, Chief Judge, Court of Appeals
Yaakov E. “Jake” Weissmann, Chief of Staff, President of the Senate
Alexandra Hughes, Chief of Staff, Speaker of the House
Sarah Albert, Mandated Reports Specialist

Report on Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance

Calendar Year 2020



Administrative Office of the Courts

February 2021

Report on Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance

This is the 42nd report submitted pursuant to § 10-409(c) of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article. The report covers Calendar Year 2020.

During 2020, there were 48 requests for electronic surveillance, an increase of approximately 11.6% from the 43 requests reported in Calendar Year 2019. The 48 applications for surveillance were received by judges in 12 jurisdictions, including 18 in Harford County, 11 in Baltimore City, four each in Allegany and Cecil Counties, two each in Baltimore, Kent, and Washington Counties, and one each in Anne Arundel, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Talbot, and Wicomico Counties. Several investigations involved multiple wiretaps, as indicated in the accompanying tables.

During Calendar Year 2020, most reported surveillances involved investigations concerning possible violations of drug laws. Specifically, narcotics was noted in 24 of the requests (50%), drugs - illegal in seven of the requests (15%), and drug kingpin in six of the requests (13%). The remaining 11 requests for surveillance (23%) involved murder.

Nearly 88% of the applications for interceptions during Calendar Year 2020 involved cellular phones. All except two indicated the location was a portable device carried by or on the person (the other two involved microphones / eavesdropping in vehicles). More than two thirds of the intercepts included text messages in addition to phone calls, while nine involved either an app or a social media account.

There were 479,544 total communications reported intercepted, including 51,497 (11%) of an incriminating nature. For comparison, in Calendar Year 2019, 135,136 communications were intercepted of which 22,299 (17%) were incriminating. The Calendar Year 2020 surveillances resulted in the interception of the communications of 3,151 individuals. While results from many investigations are still pending, and results of several investigations were unknown or unreported, thus far there have been a total of 140 arrests and two persons convicted. Overall, \$869,767 was reportedly spent on electronic surveillance, personnel, and resource costs during Calendar Year 2020. This does not include unknown or unreported costs. Comparatively, \$1,012,061 was expended in Calendar Year 2019 and \$1,922,671 was expended in Calendar Year 2018. In 2020, the Attorney General reportedly expended the greatest amount of money on a single investigation, \$485,865, followed by Harford County with \$137,134 expended on a

single investigation. Other investigations with report costs ranged from \$1,125 to \$81,800 in total costs reported.

A detailed breakdown of each 2020 request is appended to this report. Corresponding numbers are used to relate reports submitted by prosecuting officials to those submitted by judges.

**Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020**

REPORTS BY JUDGES

Reporting Number	Court	Official Authorizing Application	Offense Specified	Type of Intercept	Location	Date of Application	Original Order (Days)	Number of Extensions	Total Length (Days)
Allegany County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/12/2020	30	2	90
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/12/2020	30	2	90
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	04/01/2020	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/04/2020	30	0	30
Anne Arundel County									
1	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	12/13/2019	28	19	690
Baltimore City									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/24/2020	30	4	150
2	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Instagram Account; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/28/2019	30	5	180
3	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Instagram Account; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/28/2019	30	2	90
4	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Instagram Account; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/28/2019	30	5	180
5	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/26/2019	30	1	60
6	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/26/2019	30	3	120
7	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/26/2019	30	1	60
8	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Microphone / Eavesdrop	Other Location - Vehicle	01/16/2020	30	1	44
9	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Microphone / Eavesdrop	Other Location - Vehicle	02/11/2020	30	0	30
10	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/11/2020	30	0	30
11	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/27/2020	30	0	30

Baltimore County

**Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020**

REPORTS BY JUDGES

Reporting Number	Court	Official Authorizing Application	Offense Specified	Type of Intercept	Location	Date of Application	Original Order (Days)	Number of Extensions	Total Length (Days)
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/10/2020	30	5	160
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/10/2020	30	0	30
Cecil County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/04/2020	30	1	60
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/04/2020	30	1	60
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/04/2020	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/04/2020	30	0	30
Dorchester County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Murder	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	12/03/2020	30	0	30
Harford County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/04/2020	30	0	30
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/04/2020	30	1	60
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/04/2020	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/21/2020	30	0	30
5	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/21/2020	30	0	30
6	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/13/2020	30	0	30
7	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/13/2020	30	0	30
8	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/13/2020	30	0	30

**Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020**

REPORTS BY JUDGES

Reporting Number	Court	Official Authorizing Application	Offense Specified	Type of Intercept	Location	Date of Application	Original Order (Days)	Number of Extensions	Total Length (Days)
9	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/28/2020	30	0	30
10	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/28/2020	30	0	30
11	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/28/2020	30	0	30
12	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/28/2020	30	1	60
13	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	04/22/2020	30	0	30
14	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	04/22/2020	30	0	30
15	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/05/2020	30	0	30
16	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/05/2020	30	0	30
17	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/05/2020	30	0	30
18	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/05/2020	30	0	30
Kent County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/22/2020	30	0	30
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/22/2020	30	0	30
Queen Anne's County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics CR § 5-602	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/07/2020	30	1	60
Talbot County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	06/16/2020	30	1	60
Washington County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/19/2020	30	1	60

**Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020**

REPORTS BY JUDGES

Reporting Number	Court	Official Authorizing Application	Offense Specified	Type of Intercept	Location	Date of Application	Original Order (Days)	Number of Extensions	Total Length (Days)
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/19/2020	30	1	31
Wicomico County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/21/2020	30	0	30

*Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020*

REPORTS BY PROSECUTING OFFICERS

Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of			
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)		Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted
Allegany County											
1	74	Unknown	Unknown	21	Unknown	\$55,290	\$7,200	21	Pending	21 Pending	Pending
2	74										
3	55										
4	21										
	224	Unknown	Unknown	21	Unknown	\$55,290	\$7,200	21	Pending	21 Pending	Pending
Anne Arundel County											
1	690	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	\$485,865	\$38,361	51	[blank]	[blank]	[blank]
	690	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	\$485,865	\$38,361	51	0	0	0
Baltimore City											
1	150	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2	180	419	75,338	Unknown	15,847	\$0	\$0	18	0	0	0
3	90	51	4,557	Unknown	779	\$0	\$0				

Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020

REPORTS BY PROSECUTING OFFICERS

Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of			
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)	Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted	
4	180	98	17,605	Unknown	8,333	\$0	\$0				
5	60	35	2,102	Unknown	287	\$775	\$0				
6	120	17	1,982	Unknown	1,081	\$2,168	\$0				
7	60	183	10,978	Unknown	4,401	\$1,084	\$0				
8	30	Unknown	Unknown	7	Unknown	\$30,000	\$30,000				
9	30	Unknown	Unknown	12	Unknown	\$30,000	\$30,000				
10	30	4	130	Unknown	0	\$1,600	\$0				
11	30	121	3,630	Unknown	1,357	\$1,600	\$0				
	960	Unknown	116,322	19	32,085	\$67,227	\$60,000	18	0	0	0
Baltimore County											
1	160	139.7	22,350	593	1,913	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

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Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of			
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)	Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted	
2	30	78.4	2,353	90	325	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	190	130.0	24,703	683	2,238	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Cecil County											
1	41	109.8	4,502	216	1,098	\$81,800	\$5,000	5	1	[blank]	1
2	41	49.4	2,024	100	680						
3	41	57.7	2,366	68	1,493						
4	41	34.3	1,406	51	248						
	164	62.8	10,298	435	3,519	\$81,800	\$5,000	5	1	0	1
Dorchester County											
1	1	52	52	3	0	Unknown	Unknown	0	0	--	0
	1	52	52	3	0	Unknown	Unknown	0	0	0	0
Harford County											
1	30	135	4,050	53	644	\$137,134	\$25,888	22	0	4 Pending	0

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JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020*

REPORTS BY PROSECUTING OFFICERS

Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of		
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)	Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted
2	43	249	10,697	218	1,121					
3	57	128	7,321	518	849					
4	18	267	4,798	164	258					
5	18	55	984	59	559					
6	12	122	1,467	12	36					
7	30	316	9,485	100	1,729					
8	4	362	1,448	61	204					
9	25	169	4,221	89	474					
10	28	289	8,095	122	658					
11	26	756	19,647	42	277					

Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Pursuant to Section 10-409(C) of The Courts Article
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2020

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Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of			
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)	Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted	
12	52	2,338	121,551	196	963						
13	8	434	3,470	9	61						
14	21	1,211	25,422	33	649						
15	14	3	40	9	Unknown						
16	4	11	44	0	Unknown						
17	14	241	3,377	16	Unknown						
18	8	2,189	17,510	38	118						
	412	591.3	243,627	1,739	8,600						
Kent County											
1	29	61	1,759	50	582	\$41,325	\$6,000	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2											
	29	60.7	1,759	50	582	\$41,325	\$6,000	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

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REPORTS BY PROSECUTING OFFICERS

Reporting Number	Number of Days in Operation	Average Number of Intercepts Per Day	Number of			Costs		Number of			
			Intercepts	Conversations of Individuals Intercepted	Incriminating Intercepts	Total Cost(\$)/ Non-Personnel Cost(\$)	Persons Arrested	Trials	Motions to Suppress Intercepts	Persons Convicted	
Queen Anne's County											
1	42	83.8	3,518	31	1,383	Unknown	\$7,400	9	Pending	Pending	Pending
	42	83.8	3,518	31	1,383	Unknown	\$7,400	9	Pending	Pending	Pending
Talbot County											
1	No report received										
	0	Unknown	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	0	0	0	0
Washington County											
1	28	855	23,948	Unknown	1,012	Unknown	Unknown	3	0	0	1
2	30	100	2,986	Unknown	1,036	\$1,125	\$0	3	0	0	0
	58	464.4	26,934	Unknown	2,048	\$1,125	\$0	6	0	0	1
Wicomico County											
1	14	3,737.9	52,331	170	1,042	Unknown	Unknown	8	8 Pending	8 Pending	0
	14	3,737.9	52,331	170	1,042	Unknown	Unknown	8	0	8 Pending	0
Total			479,544	3,151	51,497	\$869,767	\$149,849	140	1,8 Pending	33 Pending	2

<i>Statewide Summary of Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance for January 1 - December 31, 2020</i>						
Offense	Number	%		Number of Arrests	140	
Narcotics	23	48%		Number of Persons Convicted	2	
Narcotics CR § 5-602	1	2%				
Drugs - Illegal	7	15%				
Drug Kingpin CR § 5-613	6	13%		Intercept Information	Number	
Murder	11	23%		Intercepts	479,544	
				Incriminating Intercepts	51,497	
Total	48	100%		Communications of Individuals Intercepted	3,151	
Location	Number	%		Type of Intercept	Number	%
Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	46	96%		Cellular Phone	42	88%
				Text Messaging	33	69%
Vehicle	2	4%		App or Social Media	9	19%
				Microphone / Eavesdrop	3	6%
Total	48	100%				
				Total	48	100%
				(Many applications listed more than 1 type of intercept.)		