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## Crackdown on protection-order violators gets off to a slow start

**Most Illinois counties have not bought the necessary equipment**

January 01, 2009 | By Liam Ford, TRIBUNE REPORTER

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As of Thursday, Illinois judges can require satellite tracking of stalkers who repeatedly violate orders of protection, but officials say most jurisdictions have not yet bought the equipment needed to carry out the new state law.

Hailed as a safety breakthrough, the Cindy Bischof law is named for the Arlington Heights woman who was gunned down in March by a former boyfriend even though he was under an order of protection.

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Under the new law, global positioning systems can be made a condition of bail for people charged with violating protection orders. Judges can apply the law to anyone under an order who is deemed at high risk of attacking someone. But budget constraints and questions about the best technology available for GPS tracking have bogged down county probation offices as they prepare to implement the law, officials said. The devices cost \$8 to \$12 a day.

"The financial impact is quite large -- larger than the \$200 fine that will be coming from those convicted of the crime," said Dawn Dalton, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, an umbrella group of domestic-violence advocacy organizations.

Officials also say they don't know how many GPS devices to order, because only a fraction of those with an order of protection against them will be eligible for tracking.

Even without the technology in place, experts praise the law for giving judges more options to restrict accused abusers without jailing them.

Victims of domestic violence often seek protection orders when they are trying to separate from their abusers -- the time when those abusers are most likely to seriously injure or kill them, experts say. So a willingness by someone to violate an order can be a sign they might be inclined toward greater violence.

"It's not at all about slapping GPS on everybody," said Diane Rosenfeld, a lecturer at Harvard Law School who helped write the Illinois law and a similar statute in Massachusetts. "It's about using our state intervention at the most critical time."

Some observers say the officials charged with making it a reality have focused on trying to adopt small fixes to the legislation instead of urging counties to move forward with buying the devices.

Others say it's unsurprising the law is getting off to a slow start.

"Like with all new and significant bills that affect operations, there's an implementation curve that the counties will go through," said Cara Smith, deputy chief of staff for Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan. "Some of them will have a greater curve than others."

Parole violators already can be fitted with the devices because the Illinois Department of Corrections has GPS tracking in place for sex offenders.

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lford@tribune.com

Who was Bischof? Learn how Cindy Bischof's family changed state law at [chicagotribune.com/bischof](http://chicagotribune.com/bischof)

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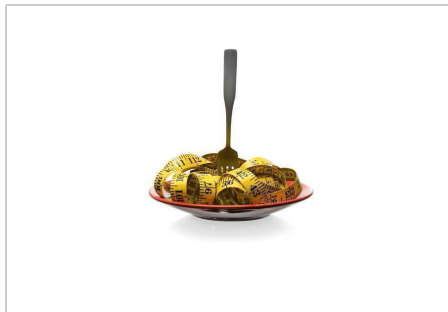
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