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Cell phones in prisons do lots of damage howstuffworks

[Illegal Cell Phones to Be Jammed by Prison Officials](#)

Threatening calls may trigger illegal response from authorities

It's a known fact that cell phones get smaller, lighter, better and harder to detect, since they're largely made of non-metallic materials, and can easily fit into hardly accessible places. This has caused the number of smuggled phones in some state prisons to increase by as much as 100% this year, as compared with 2007. Furthermore, allowing a convicted felon to own such a device is the equivalent of permitting him to continue his ill-intended business as if he wasn't even imprisoned. A Texan death row inmate by the name of Richard Tabler, sentenced for double homicide on Thanksgiving 2004, owned a phone from which 2,800 calls were made. One of the persons called was state Senator John Whitmire, chairman of the Criminal Justice Committee overseeing the penitentiary system. Tabler reported some abuses supposedly taking place on death row, and he also made sure to let Whitmire know he was aware of his daughters' address. "It's very scary to have a convicted capital murderer on death row inquiring about my children by name," declared Whitmire following the lockdown and thorough search that yielded 132 illegal cell phones, as cited by [MSNBC](#). Tabler paid \$2,100 to a guard to get his phone, and he even got access to a recharger for that money. Usually, phones are smuggled in by family or friends in food jars, toilet paper rolls or even brought in hidden inside the prisoners' bodies. Many penitentiary systems reported an increase of up to 100% in the amount of smuggled phones this year. "Jam the damn things and let's see what happens. What are they going to do? We're talking about cell phones on death row," burst Whitmire. But "they," namely the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), could easily fine the state for a hefty amount for violating the "outdated" 1934 Communications Act, although it claimed to be open to requests for changing it. "Everyone thinks the fences keep people in, and that's true. That's our No. 1 priority," shared J. Michael Stouffer, state Division of Corrections' commissioner. "But they're also to keep things out." Otherwise, prisons are only doing half of their jobs.