

**Transcript: “A Message from IG Horowitz: The BOP’s Contraband Interdiction Efforts”
June 2016**

Hello. I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today our office issued a report about efforts by the Federal Bureau of Prisons to keep weapons, drugs, cell phones, tobacco, and other contraband out of federal prisons.

The BOP has taken important steps to prevent inmates from getting their hands on these prohibited items, but the smuggling of contraband remains a critical security concern.

Any weapon brought illegally into a prison represents an obvious danger to inmates, BOP staff, and visitors. But other items can be equally dangerous in the hands of an inmate.

For example, inmates with cell phones can direct criminal activities from behind bars, including intimidating witnesses and victims. Inmates also have used cell phones to coordinate escapes. We found that cell phones are one of the most prevalent and dangerous contraband items that the BOP recovers in federal prisons, with over 8,000 phones confiscated during a recent 3-year period.

Our review identified several areas where the BOP can improve its efforts to address contraband smuggling.

- First, the BOP’s security cameras have several deficiencies that limit their effectiveness and jeopardize safety and security.
- Second, the records BOP keeps about contraband are incomplete, unreliable, and often confusing. This limits the ability of prison officials to identify trends that might help address this problem.
- Third, the BOP still does not have an effective policy for searching staff when they enter prisons, despite our raising this issue more than 13 years ago. For example, we found that correctional officers and other staff entering federal prisons are rarely subject to random pat down searches.

Our report makes eleven recommendations to the BOP to help it keep contraband out of federal prisons.

To learn more, please visit our website, oig.justice.gov, where you can read the full report.

Thank you for joining us.