

Report on Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance

Calendar Year 2021



Administrative Office of the Courts

February 2022

Report on Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance

This is the 43rd report submitted pursuant to § 10-409(c) of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article. The report covers Calendar Year 2021.

The Administrative Office of the Courts received reports concerning 42 requests for electronic surveillance in 2021, a decrease of 12.5% from the 48 requests reported in Calendar Year 2020. The 42 applications for surveillance were received by judges in eight jurisdictions, including 15 in Anne Arundel County, nine in Harford County, six in Howard County, four each in Baltimore City and Washington County, two in Baltimore County, and one each in Carroll and Montgomery Counties. Several investigations involved multiple wiretaps, as indicated in the accompanying tables.

During Calendar Year 2021, most reported surveillances involved investigations concerning possible violations of drug laws. Specifically, drugs - illegal was noted in 19 of the requests (45%) and narcotics in 13 of the requests (31%). The remaining requests for surveillance involved murder (four requests, 10%) or listed conspiracy as the most serious offense (6 requests, 14%) without indicating the substantive offense.

All of the reported applications for interceptions during Calendar Year 2021 involved cellular phones carried by or on an individual and more than 80% involved text messaging as well. An additional 8 included an app or social media account and seven involved microphones / eavesdropping. Five of the applications noted the application was roving with no location specified in the order, but these applications also listed a portable device carried by or on the individual as the location.

There were 160,643 total communications reported intercepted, including 24,461 (15%) of an incriminating nature. For comparison, in Calendar Year 2020, 479,544 communications were intercepted of which 51,497 (11%) were incriminating. The reported Calendar Year 2021 surveillances resulted in the interception of the communications of 5,221 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 48 arrests and 16 persons convicted. Overall, \$1,897,226 was reportedly spent on electronic surveillance, personnel, and resource costs during Calendar Year 2021. This does not include unknown or unreported costs.

Comparatively, \$869,767 was reported expended in Calendar Year 2020 and \$1,012,061 in Calendar Year 2019. In 2021, the State's Attorney for Baltimore County reportedly expended the greatest amount of money on a single investigation, \$1,178,655, followed by the Attorney General with \$268,636 expended on a single investigation. Other investigations with reported costs ranged from \$78,000 to \$134,145 in total costs reported.

A detailed breakdown of each 2021 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, 2021**

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)
Anne Arundel County									
1	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/13/2020	30	3	120
2	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	12/11/2020	30	2	90
3	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	12/11/2020	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/08/2021	30	1	60
5	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/08/2021	30	1	60
6	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Conspiracy	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/08/2021	30	1	60

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)
Anne Arundel County (continued)									
7	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/15/2021	30	3	108
8	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/15/2021	30	0	30
9	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/06/2021	30	2	87
10	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/06/2021	30	0	30
11	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/04/2021	30	1	58
12	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/04/2021	30	0	30
13	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/04/2021	30	1	58
14	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	11/10/2021	30	0	30
15	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	12/02/2021	30	0	30

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)
Baltimore City									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Murder	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/01/2021	30	1	60
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Murder	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/01/2021	30	4	150
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Murder	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/15/2021	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	03/01/2021	30	5	180
Baltimore County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/18/2021	30	1	60
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/05/2021	30	2	90
Carroll County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	08/11/2021	30	2	90

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)
Harford County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/08/2021	30	0	30
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/08/2021	30	0	30
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	09/08/2021	30	0	30
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual; Roving No Location Specified in Order	09/17/2021	30	0	30
5	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual; Roving No Location Specified in Order	10/06/2021	30	0	30
6	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual; Roving No Location Specified in Order	10/06/2021	30	1	60
7	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual; Roving No Location Specified in Order	10/08/2021	30	1	60
8	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	10/19/2021	30	0	30

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)
Harford County (continued)									
9	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual; Roving No Location Specified in Order	10/18/2021	30	0	30
Howard County									
1	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/14/2021	30	0	30
2	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/14/2021	30	0	30
3	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/26/2021	30	0	30
4	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/09/2021	30	1	60
5	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	02/24/2021	30	1	59
6	Circuit Court	Attorney General	Drugs - Illegal	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	01/26/2021	30	1	59
Montgomery County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Murder	Cellular Phone; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	06/15/2021	30	2	90

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)
Washington County									
1	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	04/27/2021	30	3	120
2	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/14/2021	30	0	30
3	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	05/27/2021	30	1	60
4	Circuit Court	State's Attorney	Narcotics	Cellular Phone; Microphone / Eavesdrop; Text Messaging; App	Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	06/24/2021	30	1	60
Wicomico County									
1	No Report Received								

**WIRETAPPING AND ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 10-409(c) OF THE COURTS ARTICLE
JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2021**

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	
Anne Arundel County											
1	111	105.6	11,717	471	6,466	\$78,000	\$8,000	15	0	0	5
2	77	49.4	3,802	273	279						
3	44	70.9	3,118	220	157						
4	55	18.1	996	64	106						
5	55	81.6	4,489	434	616						
6	55	29.8	1,638	142	440						

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	
Anne Arundel County (continued)											
7	85	114.6	9,740	542	448	\$268,636	\$35,480	7	0	3 Pending	0
8	12	78.8	946	145	30						
9	64	23.2	1,485	157	48						
10	13	28.5	370	43	4						
11	28	25.0	700	29	468						
12	15	1.1	16	6	2						
13	35	110.1	3,852	355	329						
14	35	25.5	891	64	38						
15	12	72.1	865	137	68						
	696	64.1	44,625	3,082	9,499	\$346,636	\$43,480	22	0	3 Pending	5

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	
Baltimore City											
1	60	33.5	2,010	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1	0	0	0
2	150	107.2	16,076								
3	60	122.9	7,373								
4	No Report Received										
	270	94.3	25,459	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1	0	0	0
Baltimore County											
1	48	109.3	5,246	156	1,105	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2	90	53.9	4,849	87	544	\$1,178,655	\$497,787	11	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	138	73.2	10,095	243	1,649	\$1,178,655	\$497,787	11	0	0	0
Carroll County											
1	76	260.0	19,763	392	4,215	\$134,145	\$20,003	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	76	260.0	19,763	392	4,215	\$134,145	\$20,003	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

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
Harford County										
1	14	16.0	224	10	111	\$123,789	\$27,500	3	0	Unknown
2	15	23.9	358	12	17					
3	21	93.2	1,957	94	221					
4	13	40.2	523	45	168					
5	15	17.4	261	17	117					
6	39	122.6	4,780	106	384					
7	36	39.7	1,428	60	71					
8	29	52.1	1,510	114	152					

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
Harford County (continued)											
9	26	27.7	721	15	62	Reported Above	Reported Above	Reported Above	Reported Above	Unknown	Reported Above
	208	56.5	11,762	473	1,303	\$123,789	\$27,500	3	0	0	0
Howard County											
1	29	8.3	240	43	123	Unknown	Unknown	11	0	0	11
2	30	20.4	611	65	53						
3	30	66.2	1,986	244	565						
4	52	71.7	3,726	270	280						
5	38	43.3	1,644	228	289						
6	59	238.0	14,042	181	607						
	238	93.5	22,249	1,031	1,917	Unknown	Unknown	11	0	0	11
Montgomery County											
1	88	303.3	26,690	Unknown	5,878	\$114,001	\$6,300	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	88	303.3	26,690	Unknown	5,878	\$114,001	6,300	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

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	
Washington County											
1	No Report Received										
2	No Report Received										
3	No Report Received										
4	No Report Received										
Wicomico County											
1	No Report Received										
Total	1,714	93.7	160,643	5,221	24,461	\$1,897,226	\$595,070	48	0	0	16

Statewide Summary of Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance for January 1 - December 31, 2021

Offense	Number	%
Drugs - Illegal	19	45%
Narcotics	13	31%
Conspiracy	6	14%
Murder	4	10%
Total	42	100%

Location	Number	%
Portable Device - Carried by/on Individual	42	100%
Roving No Location Specified in Order	5	12%
Total	42	100%

(5 Applications listed 2 locations.)

Number of Arrests	48
Number of Persons Convicted	16

Intercept Information	Number
Intercepts	160,643
Incriminating Intercepts	24,461
Communications of Individuals Intercepted	5,221

Type of Intercept	Number	%
Cellular Phone	42	100%
Text Messaging	35	83%
App or Social Media	8	19%
Microphone / Eavesdrop	7	17%
Total	42	100%

(Many applications listed more than 1 type of intercept.)