

Dane Co. jail testing out UV emitters to eliminate germs



Dane County Sheriff's Office is testing out UV light emitters to kill bacteria within the jail. (WMTV)

By Gabriella Rusk, Nick Viviani | Posted: Wed 11:10 AM, Mar 25, 2020 | Updated: Wed 4:18 PM, Mar 25, 2020

MADISON, Wis. (WMTV) -- The Dane County Sheriff's Office is testing out new technology to help kill germs within the jail.

The Skytron UV Emitters were in the works months before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

"I've very excited that this kind of new technology can be brought into the jail system, into the correctional system, and in particular, into the Dane County Jail as we try to address COVID-19 and it's impact," said Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney.

The Skytron UV Emitters are devices normally used in medical settings and work by emitting germ deactivating UV energy. The devices are reportedly effective on contaminated air and on surfaces.

The emitters arrived on Monday and already, the Sheriff's Office says, some of the staff have been trained to use them. More people will be taught how to deploy them, so they can be used around the clock.

"You put it in a room and what it does is it breaks down the DNA in microorganisms," said Deputy Sheriff Steven Smith. "This machine breaks down those DNA bonds so the organisms are no longer able to reproduce and then it dies."

Deputy Sheriff Smith says the idea is to help eliminate other problem causing bacteria in the jail, such as mold.

"It will stop the growth of microorganisms and it will kill the ones that are present by the UV light," Smith added.

As coronavirus continues to spread across Wisconsin, the Dane County Sheriff Office says it's also committed to getting as many inmates as possible released from its jail.

In approximately the last two weeks, the inmate population at the Dane County Jail has fallen by nearly 200 people, from 746 on March 10 to 562 now, according to the Sheriff's Office. It added that 74 inmates are now at home wearing GPS monitoring devices.

"The health and safety of all our staff and community is of the utmost importance to me and our leadership team. We will continue to look for ways to help our people do their jobs in these uncertain times," said Sheriff Mahoney.

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