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Cell tower dumps not used locally

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Southwest Florida law enforcement agencies said they do not use tower dumps to gather information.

Combing through so much data would be costly and require extensive manpower, according to the Lee County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff's office only tracks individual cellphone numbers — usually to find a person reported missing.

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The Fort Myers and Cape Coral police departments, along with the Charlotte and Collier sheriffs' offices also denied using tower dumps.

In Florida, virtually all agencies have access to the fake tower devices via regional surveillance task forces and can get aid in requesting bulk cellphone data through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, according to records obtained by USA Today.

Holmes acknowledged that the cost of some of the techniques and tools is high and collaborative efforts provide a way for smaller local departments to benefit from the latest technology. FDLE has spent more than \$3 million buying a fleet of Stingrays, records show.

Wayne Holmes, a prosecutor in the state attorney's office for Brevard County, said the use of techniques such as tower dumps and tools such as the Stingray on cases in Brevard County "is not infrequent." Holmes said his office requires a warrant for using the Stingray.

Requests for tower dumps, he said, come to him three to four times a month. In one local case, police obtained records from a Palm Bay tower near where a body was found burned to death in a car, Holmes said.

USAT Special Report: Police across U.S. gathering data. 1B

---- **Index References** ----

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