

Camden Yards to test using artificial intelligence for security at Orioles games next season

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If you're heading out to a ball game at Oriole Park at Camden Yards next spring, you'll likely become a test subject for a new a security technology that uses low-energy radar with 3D imaging and artificial intelligence to detect hidden threats.

The unobtrusive system could ease and speed up security checks at the ballpark, reducing the need emptying pockets at [metal detectors](#), bag checks and pat downs.

The Maryland Stadium Authority said Tuesday it will be a test site for Hexwave, a walk-through, contactless, portal that can screen 1,000 people per hour. The technology was developed by a Massachusetts Institute of Technology lab and licensed by Liberty Defense Holdings, which is aiming to launch the product on the commercial market late next year.

The stadium authority, which owns and manages Oriole Park and M&T Bank Stadium, signed a memo of understanding with Liberty Defense to beta test Hexwave, the company's flagship product, for an as yet-to-be determined period during the baseball season.

"We believe this type of threat detection technology is the future of keeping fans safe at events," said Vernon J. Conaway Jr., the stadium authority's vice president of safety and security, in the announcement.

Hexwave relies on low-frequency radar and 3D imaging, with artificial intelligence interpreting data to detect concealed weapons.

Unlike metal detectors, the technology also can pick up non-metal weapons such as 3D-printed guns, ghost guns or plastic and liquid explosives.

It is designed for indoor and outdoor use at high volume facilities such as sporting venues, airports, schools and houses of worship, where large crowds can move through efficiently in a socially distanced way.

"We're seeing a significant amount of interest," Bill Frain, CEO of Wilmington, Massachusetts-based Liberty Defense, said Tuesday.

Coming out of the pandemic, "people are getting used to further detection, further examination before they're going into an event," he said. "Unfortunately, we have incidents like the Michigan school shooting, and these things continue to happen at places where you wouldn't expect."

The beta tests are designed to ensure the system works as expected and to allow for customer feedback, Frain said. The first round of beta testing occurred at a Liberty Defense facility in Atlanta and at its Massachusetts headquarters.

Besides Camden Yards, trial runs will be conducted at an international airport, a port, a university and a police department, said Frain, who declined to identify the specific sites.

Conaway said the stadium authority is "extremely confident" in its existing security systems. Participating in Hexwave's beta program will test an emerging technology that can enhance and work with the existing system, he said.

Liberty Defense said it has an exclusive license for Hexwave with MIT Lincoln Labs and a technology transfer agreement for patents related to active 3D imaging technology. The technology has been under development for five years.

Frain said the system's millimeter wave [technology](#) works by taking a reflection off the body, similar to body scanners already in use at most airports but at a lower frequency and that he said pose no safety or health risks.

"It's non radiation and is not penetrating anything on the body," Frain said.

People walking through the Hexwave portal do not need to empty pockets and bags of keys or phones, as such items are automatically detected. Frain said the system will reduce the need for bag checks and pat-downs.

And he contends there are no privacy issues related to the 3D imaging that detects concealed weapons beneath clothing, as none of the information or data is seen by operators. A 3D image of a mannequin appears on a video screen, showing either no threat or a portion of the body where a threat appears.

"There is no imaging data that is produced or saved," he said. "All information and data is recalculated by the system and used for a go, no-go decision."

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