**Cell Phone Searches Protect**

Police should be allowed to search cell phones upon arrest. There have been several court cases questioning the legality of cell phone searches, and a recent Supreme Court case is still in session over it. Opponents of cell phone searches have called it a violation of privacy and a violation of the 4th Amendment. However, cell phone searches provide vital and often immediately useful evidence in criminal cases. Criminal gangs and organizations often use cell phones as communication devices, and cell phone searches upon arrest can prevent the otherwise easy destruction of evidence.

First, police should be allowed to search cell phones upon arrest because they can gain evidence that might be immediately useful. From pictures and texts on phones, police can determine the criminal activity of accomplices and use that information to protect others. With the evidence from phones, officers can save people who may be in danger. In cases where someone has been kidnapped, hurt, or is in danger, a cell phone search could yield quick results on the whereabouts of that person through GPS tracking on the phone. If the police had to get a warrant first, then it might take too long and a person might not get the help they need in time. Police can search cell phones to find murderers or people who might harm others, and as an illustration, “The device contained photos that linked him to a gang. Phone records also placed Riley at a location near the shooting when it happened.” (Bautista) Cell phone searches also provide evidence for what the person was arrested for. For example, “In 2007, a man was arrested for selling crack cocaine from his car. Police searched his phone and used it to find his home, where they found drugs, cash and guns.” (Hulsey) This illustrates that cell phone searches can be used by police to track down illegal goods or criminal activity. This is important because without these searches, criminals could get away with crime, and it would make it more difficult for police to do their job. Without these searches, we would be less safe and it would be harder to catch criminals.

In addition, Police should be able to search cell phones at the time of arrest in order to prevent the destruction of evidence that might otherwise occur. It is possible for criminals to remotely wipe their phones, for instance, “Phones can be remotely wiped of information in a matter of seconds.” (Vogue) Opponents may argue that the police could simply put the phone in airplane mode, but airplane mode isn’t available for all phones, and we can’t base the law on the hopes that police will arrest people with airplane mode on their phones. Gangs or organized crime can also remotely wipe information with better methods, and searches upon arrest can prevent organized crime from wiping phones. This is especially important because it is vital to get all evidence possible for participants of organized crime to make the community safer. Evidence on phones for drug dealing is also important as illustrated by, “Drug dealers arrange a vast numbers of illicit transactions by text or call, and so it is likely that every cell phone seized during an ordinary street level drug arrest will contain evidence related to that particular deal, as well as other deals and crimes.” (Zanini) Since the evidence on phones can be so relevant for drug dealers, it is especially important to prevent any destruction of evidence. The prevention of the destruction of evidence is important because if evidence is destroyed, then criminals can get away with crimes they have committed, or it could cause police departments to spend more time trying to find alternative evidence when they could be focused on finding evidence in other cases and thereby catching more criminals.

Finally, opponents of cell phone searches at the time of arrest might argue that it would be ridiculous for cell phone searches to occur if someone were to be pulled over for speeding or not wearing a seat belt. Supreme Court Judge Scalia even said, “Should police have access to the phone of a person stopped for not wearing a seatbelt? It seems absurd that you should be able to search that person’s iPhone” (Sorrentino) Of course police should not be able to do a full cell phone search under any circumstance. However, this does not mean cell phone searches at the time of arrest should be made illegal. They should just search cell phones if they have probable cause or reasonable suspicion that the phone holds evidence to crime. For example, if a large amount of drugs are found in someone's car, then the police might reasonably suspect that the person is a drug dealer and has relevant evidence on his phone. It is for the courts to later decide if an officer’s search was not reasonable or warranted. This is important because although officers might not need to search cell phones in all arrest cases, there are some cases where a cell phone search could provide relevant and immediately useful information.

In conclusion, cell phone searches at the time of arrest are important because they allow officers to protect others if they discover important information, and it prevents the destruction of evidence. It is important to allow officers to continue searching cell phones at the time of arrest because it will make the streets a safer place and help them to catch more crime. Without these searches, more criminals will get away, and they will likely continue to commit the crimes that they got away with. Cell phone searches at the time of arrest protect us, and it is important to make sure that they continue to be allowed.

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