



Idaho State Police

Service Since 1939



Colonel Bill Gardiner
Director

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Governor

To: Idaho Law Enforcement Agencies and Prosecutors

From: Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services Laboratory System Director

Subject: Apple iOS 18 (released 9/16/2024) New Security "Inactivity Reboot" Feature

Date: January 7, 2025

Dear Colleagues:

This is notification of law enforcement implications of a recent change in the iApple iOS 18 software (released 9/16/2024). The release has a new security "Inactivity Reboot" feature that can be problematic for law enforcement.

This software upgrade automatically reboots an iPhone that has been inactive/not unlocked for 7 days or 72 hours (iOS 18 version dependent); such a reboot can substantially limit the amount of data that can be extracted from a device.

This does not affect Android/"Droid" devices.

This is a timer-based default feature and activates regardless of Law Enforcement (LE) measures to disconnect devices from the network (e.g., Faraday bag).

For iOS 18.0/18.0.1, reboot occurs 7 days from last lock; iOS 18.1, 72 hours from last lock.

This severely limits the amount of time to submit iPhones to the lab for full data retrieval. Without access or specialized software/info, iPhone systems make it impossible to determine time since last user lock or to confirm iOS 18 is running.

Current available intel indicates this feature will continue in all future iOS updates.

If advised by LE, Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFs) Digital Forensic Examiners (DFEs) will prioritize the data acquisition of Apple devices before reboot.

Cellular device data extraction software providers have confirmed data acquisition will be unaffected, so long as device data is acquired prior to reboot.

LE should prioritize obtaining search warrants for iPhones as soon as possible or, if applicable, address forensic search of the phone contents in the original search warrant affidavit.

Consult with your local prosecutor for clarity on this security feature and how it may create an exigency exception to the search warrant requirement regarding iPhone data extraction depending on facts of the case (e.g., articulation of ownership of the evidence, evidence pertinent to the case is on the device, severity of the crime, etc.).

When submitting an iPhone to ISPFs, in Prelog, advise that an exigency exception to a search warrant requirement has been granted by your prosecutor; this will allow DFEs to start processing/analysis. As usual, a search warrant is the ideal in each data acquisition for a case. Also, LE should work to acquire passcode/PIN of seized devices on scene and advise DFEs.

Advise ISPFs DF of these priority iPhones by calling Vinnie Montoya (208) 631-4397 or John Helton (208) 880-3064. If neither are available, contact Idaho State Police Regional Communications Center at RCC-South (208) 846-7550.

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