



## GPS devices in motor vehicles

9 February 2007

### 1. Introduction

Navigation devices and other electronic systems that operate on the basis of GPS technology are becoming increasingly popular in Switzerland. It is estimated that around 20 percent of motor vehicles on our roads today are equipped with an electronic navigation device, and the trend is clearly in an upward direction.

Such devices provide many useful functions and certainly make road travel a great deal easier. However, some of the additional functions can also be problematic: for example, navigation systems can easily be turned into devices that warn drivers about traffic controls of all kinds – and this is against the law.

In accordance with the Swiss Federal Road Traffic Act, all devices and installations that hamper official road traffic controls, or interfere with them in any way or even render them completely ineffective, are prohibited.

Click on the following link to view the wording of the relevant provision (Article 57b of the Swiss Federal Road Traffic Act):

[http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/741\\_01/a57b.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/741_01/a57b.html)

Parliament approved this legislation on 1 February 1991 citing the following grounds:

- Devices that detect and warn about radar controls allow drivers to exceed the specified speed limit without punishment, and thus prevent the authorities from penalising the most notorious offenders. These drivers disrupt the homogeneity of road traffic, cause a great deal of ill-feeling and often encourage other road users to disregard the speed limit.
- Article 57b of the Swiss Federal Road Traffic Act not only prohibits radar warning devices, it also stipulates that all other means of hampering or otherwise interfering with official traffic controls are illegal.

### 2. When does a GPS device become an illegal warning tool?

Any GPS device that contains a warning function (“Warn points of interest/POIs”) that warns about traffic controls carried out by the Swiss police, is an illegal tool in accordance with the provisions of the Swiss Federal Road Traffic Act. This applies to all warning devices, i.e. regardless whether they detect mobile police controls or fixed installations such as speed cameras, traffic light monitoring devices, etc.

**It is only devices that warn about mobile or fixed speed controls, traffic light monitoring cameras and all other forms of traffic controls carried out by the police on Switzerland’s roads that are prohibited.** Devices that indicate other points of interest such as car parks, filling stations, hotels, restaurants, etc., are perfectly legal.

**Thus all GPS devices (navigation systems, mobile phones, etc.) as well as all combinations of devices (e.g. GPS combined with a mobile phone or laptop, PDA equipped with navigation software and GPS mouse), are illegal if they contain warn POIs.**

### **3. Information for consumers**

It is against the law to purchase any device that provides warnings about traffic controls, as well as to install, affix or otherwise carry them in a motor vehicle, and to use them in any manner whatsoever.

Furthermore, warn POIs may not be loaded onto a GPS device either by means of downloads or by entering them manually or by any other means.

**If you have a GPS device in your motor vehicle, check that it does not contain any warn POIs concerning traffic controls on Switzerland's roads (speed and traffic light cameras, general police controls, etc.). Delete any existing stored locations and refrain from carrying out any further updates.**

Instructions for deleting stored data can be obtained from the manufacturer's web site or from various suppliers. If your device came equipped with warn POIs or you cannot delete them, contact the sales outlet concerned.

### **4. Information for manufacturers/importers/suppliers/sales outlets**

Bringing GPS devices into circulation in Switzerland that warn about road traffic controls is prohibited. This includes the manufacture, introduction, promotion, supply, sale, installation in motor vehicles and any other means of delivery and supply of such devices.

Furthermore, bringing Swiss warn POIs into circulation is also prohibited. These may not be promoted via any means whatsoever, including via hardware, software, the Internet, operating instructions, device packaging, etc.

Ensure that no GPS devices that you distribute or sell contain any warn POIs. Be sure to consult the manufacturers and importers of such devices, and inform your customers about illegal warn POIs.

### **5. Entering Switzerland with a GPS device**

When entering Switzerland, people who have a GPS device in their possession must ensure that it does not contain any warn POIs concerning Swiss road traffic controls (mobile or fixed speed measurement devices, traffic light cameras, general police controls, etc.).

### **6. Penalties**

It is an offence for anyone to bring devices or installations into circulation in Switzerland that hamper or interfere with official traffic controls or render them ineffective, to acquire such devices and installations, install them, carry them, affix them or use them in motor vehicles in any way whatsoever, and to assist in their promotion in any way.

The traffic control authorities are empowered to take possession of such devices and installations, and the competent courts of law may order their confiscation and destruction, and impose a fine on the offender.

Click on the link below to view the corresponding penal clause (Article 99, paragraph 6, Swiss Federal Road Traffic Act):  
[http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/741\\_01/a99.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/741_01/a99.html)

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