



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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TWENTY ONLINE RETAILERS OF ILLEGAL JAMMING DEVICES TARGETED IN OMNIBUS ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Washington, D.C. – The FCC Enforcement Bureau has issued 20 enforcement actions against online retailers in 12 states for illegally marketing more than 200 uniquely-described models of cell phone jammers, GPS jammers, Wi-Fi jammers, and similar signal jamming devices. These devices have the capacity to prevent, block, or otherwise interfere with authorized radio communications in violation of section 302(b) of the Communications Act and sections 2.803 and 15.201(b) of the Commission’s rules.

The Enforcement Bureau’s actions are intended to warn retailers and potential purchasers that marketing, selling, or using signal jamming devices in the U.S. is illegal and that the FCC will vigorously prosecute these violations.

Enforcement Bureau Chief Michele Ellison said, “Our actions should send a strong message to retailers of signal jamming devices that we will not tolerate continued violations of federal law. Jamming devices pose significant risks to public safety and can have unintended and sometimes dangerous consequences for consumers and first responders.”

In the Omnibus Citation and Order, the Bureau emphasized that because signal jamming devices work by indiscriminately interrupting or interfering with communications, the use of a jamming device in a classroom, theater, church, restaurant, or other public place could prevent someone in the vicinity of the jammer from making an emergency call to 9-1-1, the police, a fire department, or a family member in trouble.

Accordingly, the Bureau directed each online retailer to take immediate steps to cease marketing signal jamming devices to consumers in the United States and its territories. Such steps may include removing the illegal signal jamming devices from online display, expressly excluding consumers in the United States as potential customers, and declining to sell signal jamming devices or complete any sales transaction to consumers in the United States.

In a Request for Information attached to the Omnibus Citation, the Bureau also ordered the online retailers to provide information about their signal jammer suppliers, distribution channels, and sales—including the manufacturer of each illegal signal jamming device, the websites that the online retailer has used to market the devices in the United States or its territories, and the corrective actions the online retailer has taken or will take to comply with federal law prohibiting the marketing and sale of jamming devices.

Because these enforcement actions were taken against retailers who are not otherwise regulated by the Commission, the Communications Act requires the Commission to first issue a “citation” describing the violation and warning against future misconduct. The Omnibus Citation and Order emphasized that a second violation could lead to monetary penalties of \$16,000 to \$112,500.

The Omnibus Citation and Order also noted, for example, that a separate penalty could be imposed for *each* jamming device sold or *each* day on which a jamming device is marketed, and that additional violations could result in the seizure of equipment and imprisonment.

Ellison said, “We expect that these retailers will take immediate steps to ensure future compliance. If they continue to offer jammers to consumers in the U.S., we will work closely with our law enforcement partners to prosecute them to the full extent of the law. Consumers deserve no less.”

The Enforcement Bureau has taken several actions against retailers and users of jamming devices, and in February of this year, released two Enforcement Advisories as part of its “outreach, educate, and enforce” approach to preventing the spread of these illegal devices. (*See* Retailer Advisory, available at http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/Public_Notices/DA-11-249A1.html; and Consumer Advisory, available at http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/Public_Notices/DA-11-250A1.html).

The signal jamming devices listed in the Omnibus Citation and Order include GPS blockers for vehicles, high-tech signal blockers with remote control capabilities, jammers disguised as paintings and cigarette packs, and other small, easily-concealable cell phone jammers, as well as high-powered industrial jammers that have the potential to disrupt radio signals in areas as large as a football field. In addition, the signal jammers offered by the online retailers claim to target a wide variety of frequencies, services, and technologies.

The full text of the Omnibus Citation and Order is available at:
http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-11-1661A1.pdf

In order to help answer consumer questions about signal jammers, the Enforcement Bureau has published Frequently Asked Questions on GPS, Wi-Fi and Cell Phone Jammers, available on the FCC’s Jammer Enforcement webpage, at <http://transition.fcc.gov/eb/jammerenforcement/jamfaq.pdf>.

To file a complaint alerting the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau to illegal cell, GPS, or other jamming devices, please visit www.fcc.gov/complaints, or call 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY.

For further information, contact John D. Poutasse, Acting Chief, Spectrum Enforcement Division, Enforcement Bureau, or Daudeline Meme, Assistant Chief, Spectrum Enforcement Division, Enforcement Bureau, at (202) 418-1160 or at jammerinfo@fcc.gov.

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