

pen register or a trap and trace device by a provider of electronic or wire communication service—

(1) relating to the operation, maintenance, and testing of a wire or electronic communication service or to the protection of the rights or property of such provider, or to the protection of users of that service from abuse of service or unlawful use of service; or

(2) to record the fact that a wire or electronic communication was initiated or completed in order to protect such provider, another provider furnishing service toward the completion of the wire communication, or a user of that service, from fraudulent, unlawful or abusive use of service; or (3) where the consent of the user of that service has been obtained.

(c) **LIMITATION.**—A government agency authorized to install and use a pen register or trap and trace device under this chapter or under State law shall use technology reasonably available to it that restricts the recording or decoding of electronic or other impulses to the dialing, routing, addressing, and signaling information utilized in the processing and transmitting of wire or electronic communications so as not to include the contents of any wire or electronic communications.

(d) **PENALTY.**—Whoever knowingly violates subsection (a) shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title III, §301(a), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1868; amended Pub. L. 103-414, title II, §207(b), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4292; Pub. L. 107-56, title II, §216(a), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 288; Pub. L. 115-141, div. V, §104(3)(A), Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1217.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, referred to in subsec. (a), is Pub. L. 95-511, Oct. 25, 1978, 92 Stat. 1783, which is classified principally to chapter 36 (§1801 et seq.) of Title 50, War and National Defense. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1801 of Title 50 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 115-141 inserted before period at end “or an order from a foreign government that is subject to an executive agreement that the Attorney General has determined and certified to Congress satisfies section 2523”.

2001—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-56 inserted “or trap and trace device” after “pen register” and “, routing, addressing,” after “dialing” and substituted “the processing and transmitting of wire or electronic communications so as not to include the contents of any wire or electronic communications” for “call processing”.

1994—Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 103-414 added subsec. (c) and redesignated former subsec. (c) as (d).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 99-508, title III, §302, Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1872, provided that:

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in subsection (b), this title and the amendments made by this title [enacting this chapter and section 1367 of this title]

shall take effect ninety days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 21, 1986] and shall, in the case of conduct pursuant to a court order or extension, apply only with respect to court orders or extensions made after this title takes effect.

“(b) **SPECIAL RULE FOR STATE AUTHORIZATIONS OF INTERCEPTIONS.**—Any pen register or trap and trace device order or installation which would be valid and lawful without regard to the amendments made by this title shall be valid and lawful notwithstanding such amendments if such order or installation occurs during the period beginning on the date such amendments take effect and ending on the earlier of—

“(1) the day before the date of the taking effect of changes in State law required in order to make orders or installations under Federal law as amended by this title; or

“(2) the date two years after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 21, 1986].”

§ 3122. Application for an order for a pen register or a trap and trace device

(a) **APPLICATION.**—(1) An attorney for the Government may make application for an order or an extension of an order under section 3123 of this title authorizing or approving the installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device under this chapter, in writing under oath or equivalent affirmation, to a court of competent jurisdiction.

(2) Unless prohibited by State law, a State investigative or law enforcement officer may make application for an order or an extension of an order under section 3123 of this title authorizing or approving the installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device under this chapter, in writing under oath or equivalent affirmation, to a court of competent jurisdiction of such State.

(b) **CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.**—An application under subsection (a) of this section shall include—

(1) the identity of the attorney for the Government or the State law enforcement or investigative officer making the application and the identity of the law enforcement agency conducting the investigation; and

(2) a certification by the applicant that the information likely to be obtained is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation being conducted by that agency.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title III, §301(a), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1869.)

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 90 days after Oct. 21, 1986, and, in case of conduct pursuant to court order or extension, applicable only with respect to court orders and extensions made after such date, with special rule for State authorizations of interceptions, see section 302 of Pub. L. 99-508, set out as a note under section 3121 of this title.

§ 3123. Issuance of an order for a pen register or a trap and trace device

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **ATTORNEY FOR THE GOVERNMENT.**—Upon an application made under section 3122(a)(1), the court shall enter an ex parte order authorizing the installation and use of a pen register or trap and trace device anywhere within the

United States, if the court finds that the attorney for the Government has certified to the court that the information likely to be obtained by such installation and use is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation. The order, upon service of that order, shall apply to any person or entity providing wire or electronic communication service in the United States whose assistance may facilitate the execution of the order. Whenever such an order is served on any person or entity not specifically named in the order, upon request of such person or entity, the attorney for the Government or law enforcement or investigative officer that is serving the order shall provide written or electronic certification that the order applies to the person or entity being served.

(2) STATE INVESTIGATIVE OR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—Upon an application made under section 3122(a)(2), the court shall enter an ex parte order authorizing the installation and use of a pen register or trap and trace device within the jurisdiction of the court, if the court finds that the State law enforcement or investigative officer has certified to the court that the information likely to be obtained by such installation and use is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation.

(3)(A) Where the law enforcement agency implementing an ex parte order under this subsection seeks to do so by installing and using its own pen register or trap and trace device on a packet-switched data network of a provider of electronic communication service to the public, the agency shall ensure that a record will be maintained which will identify—

(i) any officer or officers who installed the device and any officer or officers who accessed the device to obtain information from the network;

(ii) the date and time the device was installed, the date and time the device was uninstalled, and the date, time, and duration of each time the device is accessed to obtain information;

(iii) the configuration of the device at the time of its installation and any subsequent modification thereof; and

(iv) any information which has been collected by the device.

To the extent that the pen register or trap and trace device can be set automatically to record this information electronically, the record shall be maintained electronically throughout the installation and use of such device.

(B) The record maintained under subparagraph (A) shall be provided ex parte and under seal to the court which entered the ex parte order authorizing the installation and use of the device within 30 days after termination of the order (including any extensions thereof).

(b) CONTENTS OF ORDER.—An order issued under this section—

(1) shall specify—

(A) the identity, if known, of the person to whom is leased or in whose name is listed the telephone line or other facility to which the pen register or trap and trace device is to be attached or applied;

(B) the identity, if known, of the person who is the subject of the criminal investigation;

(C) the attributes of the communications to which the order applies, including the number or other identifier and, if known, the location of the telephone line or other facility to which the pen register or trap and trace device is to be attached or applied, and, in the case of an order authorizing installation and use of a trap and trace device under subsection (a)(2), the geographic limits of the order; and

(D) a statement of the offense to which the information likely to be obtained by the pen register or trap and trace device relates; and

(2) shall direct, upon the request of the applicant, the furnishing of information, facilities, and technical assistance necessary to accomplish the installation of the pen register or trap and trace device under section 3124 of this title.

(c) TIME PERIOD AND EXTENSIONS.—(1) An order issued under this section shall authorize the installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device for a period not to exceed sixty days.

(2) Extensions of such an order may be granted, but only upon an application for an order under section 3122 of this title and upon the judicial finding required by subsection (a) of this section. The period of extension shall be for a period not to exceed sixty days.

(d) NONDISCLOSURE OF EXISTENCE OF PEN REGISTER OR A TRAP AND TRACE DEVICE.—An order authorizing or approving the installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device shall direct that—

(1) the order be sealed until otherwise ordered by the court; and

(2) the person owning or leasing the line or other facility to which the pen register or a trap and trace device is attached or applied, or who is obligated by the order to provide assistance to the applicant, not disclose the existence of the pen register or trap and trace device or the existence of the investigation to the listed subscriber, or to any other person, unless or until otherwise ordered by the court.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title III, §301(a), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1869; amended Pub. L. 107-56, title II, §216(b), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 288.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2001—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(b)(1), reenacted heading without change and amended text generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: "Upon an application made under section 3122 of this title, the court shall enter an ex parte order authorizing the installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device within the jurisdiction of the court if the court finds that the attorney for the Government or the State law enforcement or investigative officer has certified to the court that the information likely to be obtained by such installation and use is relevant to an ongoing criminal investigation."

Subsec. (b)(1)(A). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(b)(2)(A), inserted "or other facility" after "telephone line" and "or applied" before semicolon at end.

Subsec. (b)(1)(C). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(b)(2)(B), added subpar. (C) and struck out former subpar (C) which read as follows: “the number and, if known, physical location of the telephone line to which the pen register or trap and trace device is to be attached and, in the case of a trap and trace device, the geographic limits of the trap and trace order; and”.

Subsec. (d)(2). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(b)(3), inserted “or other facility” after “leasing the line” and substituted “or applied, or who is obligated by the order” for “, or who has been ordered by the court”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective 90 days after Oct. 21, 1986, and, in case of conduct pursuant to court order or extension, applicable only with respect to court orders and extensions made after such date, with special rule for State authorizations of interceptions, see section 302 of Pub. L. 99-508, set out as a note under section 3121 of this title.

§ 3124. Assistance in installation and use of a pen register or a trap and trace device

(a) PEN REGISTERS.—Upon the request of an attorney for the Government or an officer of a law enforcement agency authorized to install and use a pen register under this chapter, a provider of wire or electronic communication service, landlord, custodian, or other person shall furnish such investigative or law enforcement officer forthwith all information, facilities, and technical assistance necessary to accomplish the installation of the pen register unobtrusively and with a minimum of interference with the services that the person so ordered by the court accords the party with respect to whom the installation and use is to take place, if such assistance is directed by a court order as provided in section 3123(b)(2) of this title.

(b) TRAP AND TRACE DEVICE.—Upon the request of an attorney for the Government or an officer of a law enforcement agency authorized to receive the results of a trap and trace device under this chapter, a provider of a wire or electronic communication service, landlord, custodian, or other person shall install such device forthwith on the appropriate line or other facility and shall furnish such investigative or law enforcement officer all additional information, facilities and technical assistance including installation and operation of the device unobtrusively and with a minimum of interference with the services that the person so ordered by the court accords the party with respect to whom the installation and use is to take place, if such installation and assistance is directed by a court order as provided in section 3123(b)(2) of this title. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, the results of the trap and trace device shall be furnished, pursuant to section 3123(b) or section 3125 of this title, to the officer of a law enforcement agency, designated in the court order, at reasonable intervals during regular business hours for the duration of the order.

(c) COMPENSATION.—A provider of a wire or electronic communication service, landlord, custodian, or other person who furnishes facilities or technical assistance pursuant to this section shall be reasonably compensated for such reasonable expenses incurred in providing such facilities and assistance.

(d) NO CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST A PROVIDER DISCLOSING INFORMATION UNDER THIS CHAPTER.—No cause of action shall lie in any court against any provider of a wire or electronic communication service, its officers, employees, agents, or other specified persons for providing information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a court order under this chapter, request pursuant to section 3125 of this title, or an order from a foreign government that is subject to an executive agreement that the Attorney General has determined and certified to Congress satisfies section 2523.

(e) DEFENSE.—A good faith reliance on a court order under this chapter, a request pursuant to section 3125 of this title, a legislative authorization, a statutory authorization, or a good faith determination that the conduct complained of was permitted by an order from a foreign government that is subject to executive agreement that the Attorney General has determined and certified to Congress satisfies section 2523, is a complete defense against any civil or criminal action brought under this chapter or any other law.

(f) COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANCE ENFORCEMENT ORDERS.—Pursuant to section 2522, an order may be issued to enforce the assistance capability and capacity requirements under the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title III, §301(a), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1870; amended Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, §§7040, 7092(b), (d), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4399, 4411; Pub. L. 101-647, title XXXV, §3575, Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4929; Pub. L. 103-414, title II, §201(b)(2), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4290; Pub. L. 107-56, title II, §216(c)(5), (6), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 290; Pub. L. 115-141, div. V, §104(3)(B), Mar. 23, 2018, 132 Stat. 1217.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act, referred to in subsec. (f), is title I of Pub. L. 103-414, Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4279, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§1001 et seq.) of chapter 9 of Title 47, Telecommunications. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1001 of Title 47 and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 115-141, §104(3)(B)(i), amended subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “No cause of action shall lie in any court against any provider of a wire or electronic communication service, its officers, employees, agents, or other specified persons for providing information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with a court order under this chapter or request pursuant to section 3125 of this title.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 115-141, §104(3)(B)(ii), amended subsec. (e) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “A good faith reliance on a court order under this chapter, a request pursuant to section 3125 of this title, a legislative authorization, or a statutory authorization is a complete defense against any civil or criminal action brought under this chapter or any other law.”

2001—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(c)(6), inserted “or other facility” after “the appropriate line”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 107-56, §216(c)(5), struck out “the terms of” before “a court order”.

1994—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 103-414 added subsec. (f).