

CHAPTER 119—WIRE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION AND INTERCEPTION OF ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

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AMENDMENTS

1994—Pub. L. 103-414, title II, §201(b)(3), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4290, added item 2522.

1988—Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, §7035, Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4398, substituted “wire, oral, or electronic” for “wire or oral” in items 2511, 2512, 2513, 2516, 2517, 2518, and 2519.

1986—Pub. L. 99-508, title I, §§101(c)(2), 110(b), Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1851, 1859, inserted “AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS” in chapter heading and added item 2521.

1970—Pub. L. 91-452, title II, §227(b), Oct. 15, 1970, 84 Stat. 930, struck out item 2514 “Immunity of witnesses”, which section was repealed four years following the sixtieth day after Oct. 15, 1970.

1968—Pub. L. 90-351, title III, §802, June 19, 1968, 82 Stat. 212, added chapter 119 and items 2510 to 2520.

§ 2510. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

(1) “wire communication” means any aural transfer made in whole or in part through the use of facilities for the transmission of communications by the aid of wire, cable, or other like connection between the point of origin and the point of reception (including the use of such connection in a switching station) furnished or operated by any person engaged in providing or operating such facilities for the transmission of interstate or foreign communications or communications affecting interstate or foreign commerce;

(2) “oral communication” means any oral communication uttered by a person exhibiting an expectation that such communication is not subject to interception under circumstances justifying such expectation, but such term does not include any electronic communication;

(3) “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any territory or possession of the United States;

(4) “intercept” means the aural or other acquisition of the contents of any wire, elec-

tronic, or oral communication through the use of any electronic, mechanical, or other device.¹

(5) “electronic, mechanical, or other device” means any device or apparatus which can be used to intercept a wire, oral, or electronic communication other than—

(a) any telephone or telegraph instrument, equipment or facility, or any component thereof, (i) furnished to the subscriber or user by a provider of wire or electronic communication service in the ordinary course of its business and being used by the subscriber or user in the ordinary course of its business or furnished by such subscriber or user for connection to the facilities of such service and used in the ordinary course of its business; or (ii) being used by a provider of wire or electronic communication service in the ordinary course of its business, or by an investigative or law enforcement officer in the ordinary course of his duties;

(b) a hearing aid or similar device being used to correct subnormal hearing to not better than normal;

(6) “person” means any employee, or agent of the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof, and any individual, partnership, association, joint stock company, trust, or corporation;

(7) “Investigative or law enforcement officer” means any officer of the United States or of a State or political subdivision thereof, who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of or to make arrests for offenses enumerated in this chapter, and any attorney authorized by law to prosecute or participate in the prosecution of such offenses;

(8) “contents”, when used with respect to any wire, oral, or electronic communication, includes any information concerning the substance, purport, or meaning of that communication;

(9) “Judge of competent jurisdiction” means—

(a) a judge of a United States district court or a United States court of appeals; and

(b) a judge of any court of general criminal jurisdiction of a State who is authorized by a statute of that State to enter orders authorizing interceptions of wire, oral, or electronic communications;

(10) “communication common carrier” has the meaning given that term in section 3 of the Communications Act of 1934;

(11) “aggrieved person” means a person who was a party to any intercepted wire, oral, or electronic communication or a person against whom the interception was directed;

(12) “electronic communication” means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photooptical system that affects interstate or foreign commerce, but does not include—

(A) any wire or oral communication;

¹ So in original. The period probably should be a semicolon.