

**§ 15A-261. Prohibition and exceptions.**

(a) In General. – Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, no person may install or use a pen register or a trap and trace device without first obtaining a court order as provided in this Article.

(b) Exception. – The prohibition of subsection (a) of this section does not apply to the use of a pen register or a trap and trace device by a provider of wire or electronic communication service:

- (1) Relating to the operation, maintenance, or testing of a wire or electronic communication service or to the protection of the rights or property of the 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 the 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) With the consent of the user of that service.

(c) Penalty. – A person who willfully and knowingly violates subsection (a) of this section is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1104, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 297; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)