

Pennsylvania State Police

PSP Information and Online Services

Department Information On The Use Of Handheld Radar Units



The Department has examined and resolved questions raised by troopers about ancillary readings displayed on some handheld radar units while being used in certain State Police vehicles. As a result, the Department on Dec. 12, 2003, directed troopers to resume using the units in all patrol vehicles as part of the Department's speed enforcement efforts.

The Department in September 2003, temporarily suspended use of 572 Decatur Genesis Handheld radar units in its 2003 and 2004 model Crown Victoria police cruisers after learning that numbers were being displayed on the units' readouts that did not correspond to measuring a vehicle's speed.

Tests conducted by State Police, by an independent, certified facility, and by the manufacturer determined that the isolated readings were caused by frequency noise produced by the alternators in the 2003 and 2004 model Crown Victoria cruisers. The alternators in those vehicles produce a different frequency noise than alternators in the Department's other vehicles.

The testing also showed conclusively that the noise produced by the alternators does not prevent a trooper from using the unit to accurately measure vehicle speed. The radar units have an internal override that suppresses the frequency noise when the radar is aimed at a moving vehicle.

We are fully confident that all of our radar units produce accurate readings while being used for speed enforcement.

By law, each radar unit must be tested every 60 days by an independent, certified facility. In addition, each unit undergoes two separate tests each time it is used in the field by a trooper.

If any radar unit fails the regular calibration and test requirements, it is immediately removed from service. There have been no reports or concerns from troopers regarding the Genesis Handheld radar units while being used to measure the speed of vehicles.

The Department temporarily suspended use of the handheld units in the 2003 and 2004 model Crown Victorias to ensure the concerns were addressed.

The Genesis Handheld radar units are powered by the patrol vehicle's battery. The Department also has about 400 other radar units made by a different manufacturer.

The Department has about 2,600 vehicles used for patrol purposes. About 1,000 of those are 2003 or 2004 model Crown Victorias.