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Global Positioning Systems Used in Rental Cars

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In recent years, weights and measures officials have seen an influx of different types of technology being used to measure time and distance. Questions continue to be raised as to who has jurisdictions over these measurements. Weights and measures officials regulating the rental car industry may be interested in recent headlines which report that Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are being used to monitor vehicle speed. Typically, the GPS uses information transmitted from satellites to determine the position of the vehicle. The location information is important to fleet operators when vehicles are lost, stolen, disabled, or overdue. Fleet operators also use the information to monitor vehicle inventory, frequency of use, and whether or not drivers are outside of permissible geographic boundaries.

In the case of rental cars GPS, customers contracting to rent cars were charged extra fees for each event over a specified speed limit and the daily/weekly rental rate. Fees were reported as high as \$150.00 each time the speed exceeded a preset limit. Fleet operators indicated that the practice of tracking vehicle speed was initiated in response to concerns about safety and insurance rates. There have been numerous debates about whether or not the practice of charging extra fees/fines for speeding provides due process to customers. Contract customers are also raising questions about privacy issues. Contract customers may be able to select a car model, but not select cars with or without internal equipment such as GPS.