

SATELLITE PHONES GUIDELINES FOR TRAVELLERS



INDIA

Foreign tourists visiting India are advised to be aware of specific regulations regarding the use of satellite phones. India places stringent controls on the import, possession, and usage of satellite phones to ensure national security. Violations can result in confiscation of equipment, monetary fines, or legal consequences.

Key Points

- **Prohibited Use:** The use of satellite phones in India is largely prohibited unless specific permissions have been granted by the Government of India. Unauthorized use is considered a violation of national security regulations.
- **Restricted Import:** Bringing satellite phones into India requires prior clearance from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Unauthorized importation is subject to seizure by customs authorities.
- **Licensing Requirements:**
 - Satellite phones can only be used with a license obtained through authorized channels in India.
 - Permission is typically restricted to government-approved agencies, organizations, or entities involved in emergency services.
- **Customs Declaration:** Tourists carrying satellite phones must declare the device at the customs counter upon arrival and provide documentation proving authorization for its use.
- **Approved Satellite Service Providers:** Only services approved by the Government of India may be used. Tourists should verify compatibility with Indian regulations before attempting to operate any satellite communication devices.
- **Penalty for Violations:** Unauthorized possession or use of satellite phones in India is a punishable offense under Indian law, with penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment.

Advice for Foreign Visitors

- **Check Regulations Before Travel:** Verify whether the type of satellite phone you plan to use is permitted and secure the necessary licenses in advance.
- **Explore Alternatives:** In most areas of India, extensive mobile network coverage eliminates the need for satellite phones. Emergency services are accessible through the nationwide number 112.
- **Compliance with Customs Procedures:** If you must carry a satellite phone, ensure it is declared at customs and all required documentation is in order.

NEPAL

Regulations

Nepal allows the use of satellite phones, but only with prior approval from the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA). This regulation is in place to prevent misuse and ensure security.

Authorization Process

Travelers must apply for a license to import or operate a satellite phone in Nepal. Ensure this process is completed well before your travel dates.

Customs Declaration

Satellite phones must be declared upon entry into Nepal, along with proof of authorization.

Penalties

Unauthorized use or possession can result in confiscation of the device and possible legal action.

Useful Information

Satellite phones are particularly valuable for remote trekking and mountaineering expeditions in Nepal, where mobile network coverage is limited. However, proper authorization is a must.

Recommendations for Travelers

- **For Regular Users:** Purchase or rent satellite devices locally from authorized vendors.
- **For Infrequent Users:** Consider using the Sat Sleeve app for its ease of use and affordability. Its flexibility makes it an excellent choice for those who need satellite connectivity only occasionally.
- **Compliance:** Ensure that all satellite communication complies with Nepalese regulations to avoid legal complications.

SRI LANKA

Regulations

In Sri Lanka, the use of satellite phones is monitored closely. Tourists need to seek approval from the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) before bringing or using satellite phones in the country.

Customs Procedures

Satellite phones must be declared at customs upon arrival. Travelers must present documentation proving approval for their use.

Penalties

Unauthorized possession or use of satellite phones can result in penalties such as fines, confiscation, or legal consequences.

Advice for Tourists

Most areas in Sri Lanka have excellent mobile connectivity, making satellite phones unnecessary in most cases. Explore local communication options for your travel needs.

BHUTAN

Regulations

The use of satellite phones in Bhutan is strictly regulated. Foreign tourists are not permitted to use satellite phones unless prior authorization is obtained from Bhutanese authorities. This is to ensure national security and control over communications.

Authorization Requirements

Travelers must apply for permits through relevant government agencies before carrying or using satellite phones in Bhutan. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Customs Declaration

Satellite phones must be declared upon arrival at customs. Failure to do so can result in the device being confiscated.

Penalties for Violations

Unlicensed use of satellite phones can lead to fines, device seizure, or legal action.

MALDIVES

The Maldives is a popular destination for tourists, but visitors must be aware of specific regulations concerning satellite phone usage in the country. The use of satellite phones is subject to strict controls to ensure national security and compliance with local laws.

Key Regulations

• Authorization Required

- The use of satellite phones in the Maldives is not permitted without prior approval from the government.
- Tourists must obtain necessary licenses or permissions from the relevant authorities before entering the country with a satellite phone.

• Declaration at Customs

- Travelers carrying satellite phones are required to declare them upon arrival in the Maldives.
- Undeclared satellite phones may be confiscated by customs officials.

• Restrictions on Import and Usage

- Only government-approved satellite phones and service providers are allowed for use in the Maldives.
- Unauthorized possession or operation of satellite phones is prohibited and may lead to legal consequences.

• Penalties for Violations

- Violating satellite phone regulations can result in fines, confiscation of the device, and in some cases, legal prosecution.

• Emergency Communication Alternatives

- The Maldives has reliable mobile network coverage across most inhabited islands and resorts. For emergencies, visitors are encouraged to use local communication infrastructure or consult resort services.

Recommendations for Tourists

- Check Permissions Before Travel: Ensure compliance with local laws by securing all necessary permits if you plan to bring a satellite phone.
- Explore Local Options: Given the extensive mobile and internet coverage in the Maldives, satellite phones may not be necessary for most travelers.
- Respect Local Laws: Follow customs and immigration procedures to avoid penalties or legal issues during your visit.

Operational Rules

- Drone flights are generally prohibited near airports, military installations, and sensitive cultural sites like temples.
- Drones weighing less than 1 kg or flown below 100 feet on private property may not require official permission, though local authorities or community restrictions might still apply.
- Unauthorized use of drones can lead to fines and penalties.

Practical Tips

- Check local policies for the specific regions you'll visit, as trekking routes like Annapurna and Everest Base Camp often have strict enforcement.
- Avoid using drones in crowded or sensitive areas to prevent conflicts or confiscation.

These regulations aim to balance safety and privacy while allowing responsible drone use for personal and commercial purposes. For the most updated and specific guidelines, consult the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal or your local Nepali embassy before traveling.

