

Re: Certification Application IC: QF7NX15

To Whom It May Concern:

The above-referenced application, filed by Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc., seeks certification for a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) device. The application shows compliance with the Bureau's Rules and does not require waivers.

We request that certain photographs showing the interior of the devices be withheld from public disclosure. The Bureau has previously granted confidentiality under similar conditions to the following applications:

FCC ID: QF762000 EA291754
FCC ID: QF75103A EA870041
FCC ID: QF750400 EA640311
FCC ID: QF7PALMXT EA813498
FCC ID: QF7MINIXT
FCC ID: QF7NX25

FACTUAL BASIS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY REQUEST

Ordinarily the Bureau denies confidentiality to photographs of a device on the ground that the information they contain is freely available to a competitor, simply by purchasing the device and (if necessary) unscrewing the cover.

The devices in question are different. The interior is sealed, and its internal appearance is inaccessible to the purchaser.

To gain access to the views shown in the interior photographs, a competitor would have to purchase the device and then carry out the following steps:

1. Remove all the tamper proof screws securing the cover to the rest of the enclosure. These are custom made security screws and are unique to GSSI. They require a custom security screwdriver which is ONLY sold to GSSI and is never given out to customers. Without this tool access to the interior of the product would require destroying part(s) of the antenna.
2. With the custom antenna enclosure open the various electronic assemblies must be disassembled in a careful and properly ordered manner using enhanced ESD precautions to prevent irreversible damage to the components.
3. Magnetic absorbers are installed in the transmitter element enclosures. These absorbers have specific electrical properties and only work properly in the specific arrangement as built. A competitor is unlikely to have access to the right material, or even to know what grade of materials to use and the proper orientations to install them for use.

GSSI has never released instructions on how to disassemble its units and does not answer questions on how to do so. This information is kept internal to the company. If a unit arrives at the company's repair facility showing evidence of such tampering, the company does not repair it, but charges the customer for a new unit plus freight costs.

The Bureau's posting of the photographs would allow a competitor to bypass this difficult and expensive disassembly. From the photographs, a competitor can estimate:

1. the costs of manufacturing the printed circuit boards and mechanical housing;
2. the man-hours required to assemble the device;
3. any compatibility problems the manufacturer will have in designing new systems; and
4. the age of the electronic design (which gives valuable competitive information on upgrade and R&D efforts).

Access to interior photographs would almost permit a competitor to conduct a complete reverse engineering, to the point of producing a schematic.

We respectfully submit that manufacturers should not be required to hand over to competitors the fruits of years of expensive engineering.

Regards,



Jay Desruisseaux
Quality Manager