



## **GPS 101: What's It All About?**

If you're one of those travelers who inevitably makes the wrong turn at the wrong time, you understand the frustration. Gas stations and fast-food joints are your friend - not for fuel, but for directions. If you decide to take a jaunt up to Quebec or Tijuana and aren't bilingual, those wrong turns can get downright frightening.

But, thankfully, we now have GPS, short for Global Positioning System. With this handy guide, your travels are led by more than a dozen satellites. GPS devices for cars come pre-installed in your dash or as stand-alone portable models, typically mounted by suction cup on your window. Using satellite information, which tracks your geographical location, and your car's speed, it knows precisely where you are at any given time.

Using this technology, road blocks and construction are a thing of the past. Your GPS device can pull real-time traffic information feeds to spot trouble areas and re-route you around the problem area using the best, most convenient route.

Touch-screen capabilities let you type in your destination and receive turn-by-turn audio commands letting you know where to turn or get off the highway. This feature dramatically enhances driving safety, as you no longer have to look down or read a map while driving.

For safety, route programming and on-screen map viewing should be conducted when your vehicle is stopped. GPS graphical maps are typically 2D, though some newer models also offer 3D and aerial views. Other benefits include text details with driving

distances, time between turns and estimates on arrival based on your driving speed.

While the price tag can be frightening, selling for \$300 or more, GPS devices can ultimately save time, fuel costs and mileage wear and tear due to less frequent, if any, missed turns.

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