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# Maharashtra Orders Digital Locks on Liquor Trucks

The state will require GPS-tracked locks on vehicles carrying liquor and spirit products starting June 1.

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Maharashtra will require digital locks with real-time GPS tracking on all vehicles carrying liquor and spirit products starting June 1, in a move the state says is aimed at curbing theft, illegal diversion and tax evasion in one of India’s largest alcohol markets.

The rule, announced in a government resolution issued Tuesday, applies to transport vehicles moving liquor within Maharashtra, across state borders and through ports. It also covers tankers carrying molasses and rectified spirit from distilleries, as well as consignments of imported foreign liquor leaving customs bond warehouses. Vehicles carrying denatured spirit, excluding ethanol, are included too.

State excise officials said the system is meant to replace manual checks with electronic monitoring that can show where a vehicle is in real time, who opened the lock and how much stock was delivered along the route. The locks will be linked to the excise department’s command-and-control network and supply chain management system.

The decision follows a pilot program launched last May and comes after a series of bootlegging cases in which transporters and dealers were accused of mixing spurious liquor and water into original bottles before selling them outside the legal market. Officials said those practices posed health risks for consumers and caused revenue losses for the state.

Under the new framework, vehicles moving molasses, rectified spirit and liquor from outside Maharashtra to another state through the state will also need the digital locks. The same requirement will apply to vehicles issued a Through Transport Pass at the border when entering and exiting Maharashtra.

The government said supplier companies will have to meet the conditions set out in the resolution. Officials expect the change to tighten surveillance across the supply chain and reduce leakages in transport from factories, distilleries, warehouses and ports.