

Israel bans imports of Apple iPad

April 15 2010, By KAROUN DEMIRJIAN , Associated Press Writer



In this photo taken April 3, 2010, a customer uses an Apple iPad on the first day of Apple iPad sales at an Apple store in San Francisco. Although the advertised price for Apple Inc.'s least expensive iPad may be enticing to more than just the well-to-do geek elite, the actual cost of owning one quickly turns out to be much higher. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

(AP) -- Israel has banned imports of Apple Inc.'s hottest new product, the iPad, citing concerns the powerful gadget consumes too much capacity on wireless networks and could disrupt other devices.

Customs officials said Thursday they have already confiscated about 10 of the lightweight tablet computers since Israel announced the new regulations this week. The ban prevents anyone - even tourists - from bringing iPads into Israel until officials certify that they comply with local transmitter standards.

"If you operate equipment in a frequency band which is different from the others that operate on that [frequency band](#), then there will be interference," said Nati Schubert, a senior deputy director for the Communications Ministry. "We don't care where people buy their equipment. ... But without regulation, you would have chaos."

The U.S. [Federal Communications Commission](#) allows Wi-Fi broadcasting at higher power levels than are allowed in Europe and Israel - meaning that the iPad's stronger signal could throw off others' wireless connections, Schubert said.

The iPad combines the features of a [notebook computer](#) with the touch-pad functions of the iPod. It went on sale in the U.S. on April 3. Apple this week delayed its international launch until May 10, citing heavy sales in the U.S.

Israeli officials said the ban has nothing to do with trade and is simply a precaution to assure that the [iPad](#) doesn't affect wireless devices already in use in Israel.

Although Israeli standards are similar to those in many European nations, Israel is the only country so far to officially ban imports.

Schubert said he expects the problem to be resolved as Apple moves closer to the international release.

In the meantime, confiscated iPads will be held by customs - for a daily storage fee - until their owners depart the country or ship the [gadgets](#) back to the U.S. at their own expense.

Apple's chief distributor in Israel, iDigital, declined to comment on the Communications Ministry's decision, and a message left at Apple's headquarters in California was not immediately returned.

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