



GREY PHONES

“Grey mobile phones” is the terminology used by the cellular phone importers and networks to describe the mobile phones that are brought to South Africa by sources other than the authorized mobile phone importers.

These mobile phones enter the South African market through a number of avenues. They may be “sell-offs” from overseas companies whose supply exceeds their demand; they may be mobile phones that have been physically taken; usually with violence and often with grievous bodily harm, from another individual either here in South Africa or in another country; it may be a mobile unit a friend has brought back from overseas for you; they may be illegally brought into the country and the customs duties and taxes have not been paid on them. The South African systems has no record of their entry so warranty on these phones is not recognized by the authorized distributors. The consumer is left with the burden of repair and maintenance costs as warranty is invalid.

To protect yourself, you the customer should be asking the following questions to ensure the phone you buy will be covered by a manufacturer’s warranty:

If the phone is very cheap and not being offered as part of a contract is it legally imported into South Africa?

Ask the seller to give you a written warranty on this phone.

If I use the following code with the phone keypad—#06# is the number displayed on the mobile phone screen the same as that on the back of the phone?

The cellular industry refers to this as IMEI number and the number on the screen must be the same as that on the back of the phone.

Ask the seller if the phone you are interested in has been previously locked to an international network and has been unlocked in South Africa.

Unlocking of a mobile unit that was originally used in another country will change the phone's specifications.

Did you know that a mobile unit bought in a foreign country is only covered under warranty in the country it was purchased in?

This means that if you buy a phone while on holiday in the UK, this phone will not have valid warranty in South Africa—only in UK, to where you must return it if it needs repair and maintenance.

To conclude ALWAYS ASK FOR A WRITTEN WARRANTY THAT INCLUDES FULL DETAILS OF THE SUPPLIER AND DATES COVERED BY THE WARRANTY.