



RESPONSE FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN CELLULAR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION (“SACTA”)

Health and safety aspects of Mobile telecommunications:

Health, safety and education, together form a cornerstone for the work undertaken by the South African Cellular Communications Association (SACTA).

In an area often rife with misinformation, SACTA is committed to researching and presenting facts to the public, in a manner that is both accessible and understandable.

Guided by international standards and globally accepted forms of “best practice,” SACTA works with manufacturers and operators to monitor developments, sharing knowledge and information.

SACTA’s Chairperson, Ms Nunan, says it is important to note the global approach being undertaken relating to health and safety issues within the global community.

“Governments worldwide have adopted comprehensive international safety guidelines governing exposure to electromagnetic emissions, including emissions from mobile phones and cellular networks. Mobile phones and cellular networks, in areas of public access, are generally designed to operate within these stringent limits,” Nunan said.

The most commonly endorsed safety guidelines for all emissions throughout the electromagnetic spectrum, including those pertaining to mobile phones and cellular networks, were developed by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection, otherwise known as ICNIRP. The ICNIRP guidelines were internationally endorsed by the European Commission in July 1999 and subsequently by the UK government in May 2000. The World Health Organisation (WHO) also advocates the use of ICNIRP as a suitable safety standard for exposure to electromagnetic emissions.

Locally the Department of Health has also supported the use of the ICNIRP guidelines and with this in mind, and in accordance with “international best practice”; local suppliers and networks are in compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines.

The electromagnetic waves specific to mobile technology, that is RADIOFREQUENCY EMISSIONS, are known as “non-ionising radiation”. Radiofrequency energy is not capable of breaking chemical bonds in biological structures or removing electrons (ionisation). In this respect they are very different, and should not be confused with, ionising radiation produced by x-rays and gamma rays produced by nuclear processes.

SACTA relies on the expert advice of international health authorities, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and on guidance from the South African Department of Health. The consensus of these organisations, having reviewed relevant research and noted the findings of independent and authoritative expert scientific review panels on RF, is that there is no substantiated evidence of health effects from the low levels of RF generated by mobile phones and base stations, which comply with national and international safety guidelines:

“Considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak RF signals from base station and wireless networks cause adverse health effects”. World Health Organisation fact sheet No 304 May 2006

About SACTA:

SACTA is an independent non-profit association representing the mobile cellular public switched and fixed mobile telecommunications industry within South Africa. More information can be obtained from www.sacta.co.za.